Weird Fish Lady

January 2026

The Weird Fish Lady - Gloria Barnett, MA, BSc,

Science Presenter, Author, Educator, Real-Life Adventurer

To see the images in this newsletter and to watch the videos - please press 'load remote content' at the top of the page - on your computer or phone.

Hi Everyone,
Welcome to my newsletter
I hope you had a peaceful Christmas and
I wish you all a Happy New Year !

Content in this issue of the newsletter is:
See the latest 'Did You Know Facts'
View: the video of a stingray.
Read the latest environmental news and
Hear about what's happening in the world of the Weird Fish Lady.
Everyone can still **visit** the website shop, of course, to see the
books for children and adults,
plus the Resources for Teachers.
Go to : www.barnettauthor.co.uk

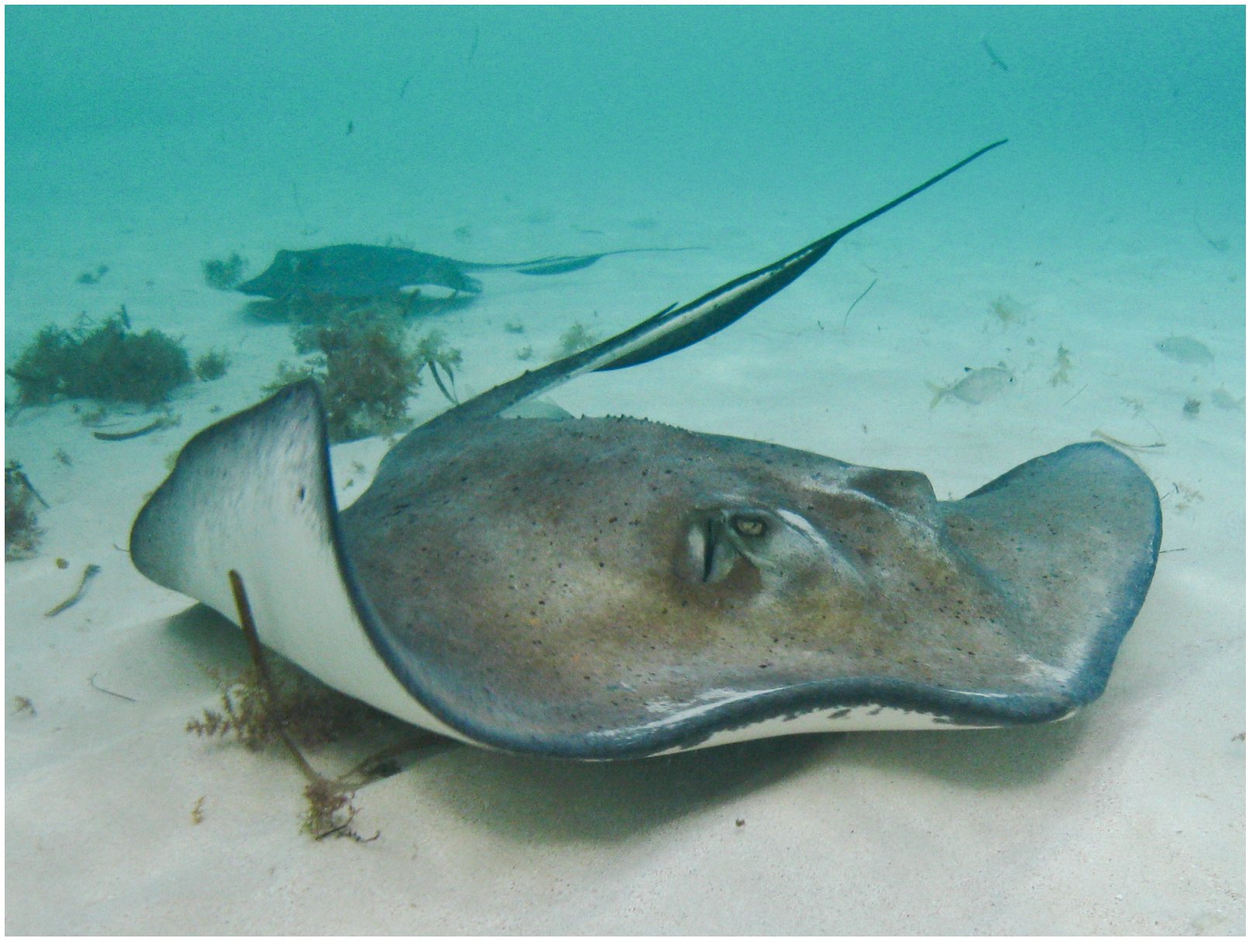
Let's start the year with some facts and an original film.

Did You Know?

TODAY'S FABULOUS FACT!

STINGRAYS

There are over 220 known species of stingray, with over 90 of these in the whiptail stingray family.
Stingrays are carnivorous fish. They eat worms, clams, oysters, snails and shrimp.
Stingrays in the wild live from 15 to 25 years.
Stingrays are big - growing up to 2 metres in length and weighing up to 360 kg.
Some species of stingray have venomous stings which can protect them from predators. Not all stingrays have venom but it's best to avoid them as the venom is deadly to humans.
Stingrays are related to sharks. Both sharks and stingrays are cartilaginous fish. They don't have a skeleton of bones. Their bodies are constructed of hard material called cartilage. Humans ears are made of cartilage!
Whilst sharks have hard fins, stingrays fins have evolved to look like a wing.
Stingrays move their whole body in a wavy motion that pushes them through the water.
Stingrays are some of the most majestic swimming animals in the ocean.



(Photo credit: Tiki Graves)

The star of the film below, is an amazing creature - a Stingray. Filmed during a scuba dive in Antigua. I saw the stingray on the sea bed, and swam down, settling myself as close as I could without frightening him.

The stingray was very aware of me. At first, it just kept still, then it started to turn, putting its tail closer and closer to me. The tail is where the sting is - and if it had managed to sting me, then it would have been very nasty indeed!

Do you remember Steve Irwin? He was a celebrity from Australia, who was always picking up crocodiles and other dangerous animals. He died when he was scuba diving and got too close to a stingray. The sting was inserted in Steve Irwin's chest and he died from a heart attack. When I saw this stingray, I was well aware of the dangers of the sting and the need to keep away from the tail.

As I continued to film him, the stingray kept on turning, with the sting getting closer, so I decided to move away and relocated myself to be looking at its' 'face'.

At this point, the stingray decided on a different method to try to get rid of me - he lifted his head and slammed it down on the sand. The particles of sand rose up, creating a 'smoke' effect in the water. The stingray kept hitting the sand, and as more sand rose up, I could hardly see him.

I was very aware that this creature could move very quickly and the sting in the tail could be suddenly used as a weapon, so I decided to move away.

This film, however, does show the behaviour of a sea creature when it feels threatened.

(Film credit: Gloria Barnett - The Weird Fish Lady)

Click here to watch the video clip

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O93j-uXS0QU

Environmental News

2025 has been the UK's strongest year for solar energy generation on record

2025 has been a landmark year for UK renewable energy, with both solar and wind power achieving record-breaking milestones, driven by favourable weather conditions, increased capacity, and supportive government policies.

The UK produced free solar and wind energy for 98% of the days in 2025. That's 357 days out of 365! Wind energy started slowly, but record-breaking energy generation by solar produced a record 9.91 TWh in the first six months of the year, then went on to break energy generation records for five months in a row from March. There was a 32% increase in solar generation and the UK made the most of the sunniest year ever recorded. The UK recorded 1622 hours of sunshine and solar installions reached an all-time high. Total solar capacity reached over 18GW during 2025.

The Future of Solar

The government is pursuing a 95% clean energy grid by 2030, with projections to reach a total solar capacity of 59GW within a decade.

Planning approvals for renewable energy projects continued to hit a record high in 2025 with capacity for new wind, solar and battery projects being 96% higher than previously recorded. New regulations requiring solar panels on new-build homes are about to be confirmed and 0% VAT is still in place for solar installations.

Whilst the UK retains a strategic gas reserve which remains useful, energy storage capacity for solar and wind is targeted to double by 2030, reducing the need for expensive regular gas and biomass back-up in the future power system.

The outlook looks good. With falling upfront costs, rising energy independence for households, and record-high project approvals, 2025 was considered a "golden year" for splar energy, strengthening the UK's position as a clean energy superpower.

Met Office Forecast for 2026

The UK's Met Office has said '2026 will likely be among the warmest years on record again'. The weather forecasters estimate the global temperature for the year to be around 1.46C above the average for the pre-industrial period (1850-1900). This would make 2026 the fourth in a row to be above 1.4C.

Climate Disasters Report

The past year, 2025 has been one of the costliest years for climate disasters.The top-10 costliest climate disasters include wildfires, cyclones, extreme rainfall and flooding, and droughts spanning four continents. Together, they resulted in economic losses of $120 billion.

Exciting French Innovation for Renewable Energy

The French government are backing scientific study of 'osmotic energy' which is a lesser-known form of energy generation that captures the energy generated from the natural salinity gradient between freshwater and saltwater.

This type of energy – also known as "blue energy" – is generated through the natural phenomenon of osmosis. This occurs when water moves from an area of lower solute concentration (freshwater) to an area of higher solute concentration (saltwater) across a

semi-permeable membrane. When freshwater and seawater meet, a natural gradient in salinity is created, prompting ions to migrate from the saltier side to the less salty side in pursuit of equilibrium. The movement of water and ions generates a pressure differential that can be harnessed to produce electricity. The process resembles a “silent lightning strike” occurring continuously at the confluence of rivers and oceans.
I think this is great. If the French can pull this off, then we could start reducing our reliance on the solar and wind technologies which have high costs of manufacture. Can you imagine a future where an osmotic capture plant is available around our coastline? If you connect into that capture plant - the water itself, and put that through a desalination system you could produce fresh water at the same time!
In the future we will need to think about our freshwater supplies - just think what has been happening in Kent in 2025 - with dried up reservoirs because of increased heat in the summer, and broken pipes from the Victorian era creating havoc with freshwater supplies for homes for days at a time. Surely, our future has to be thought about now … I vote for osmotic energy and desalination facilities around our coast. Let’s get thinking and planning now. Who is going to listen in whichever Government we have in the future??

Pollution Update
Every year, millions of tons of plastic waste are exported from wealthy nations to poorer countries, with a commitment to recycling them. In most cases, however, this waste ends up in landfills or is burned, with serious implications for the health of receiving communities and the surrounding environment. This unfair system is known as plastic colonialism.
Unfortunately, the UK is part of this recycling ‘scam’. The world is now at a critical juncture with plans for a Global Plastic Treaty becoming an opportunity to set enforceable rules and real accountability for plastic production and waste. Serious actions are fundamental: bold policies, clear responsibilities, and global cooperation are needed to confront waste colonialism and its consequences. Let’s hope they come to some satisfactory conclusions about waste disposal. Read more about this at: https://earth.org/key-players-and-positions-in-the-global-plastic-treaty-negotiations/

The Good and the Bad News about Oceans
Firstly, the bad news. 1.Ocean acidification - we have now reached the seventh year when scientists have warned about the high acidity of the oceans, caused by excess heat in the atmosphere, 2. Coral Reefs are also still under threat from excess heat, causing bleaching and coral death, and 3. In October, 2025, a new threat was discussed: ‘*the Mesoplagic layer of the ocean is underthreat from overfishing. Beneath the waves, between 200 and 1,000 metres deep, lies one of Earth’s most mysterious and vital ecosystems: the mesopelagic zone, also known as the Ocean Twilight Zone. Though shrouded in darkness, this vast layer spans the globe and contains an estimated 90% of all fish biomass, making it the largest unexploited ecosystem on the planet.’*
Until recently, this deep sea zone remained largely unknown. But as scientific discovery begins shedding light on the mesopelagic’s immense ecological and climate value, a new threat is Fishing fleets are eyeing this zone for extraction as demand for fish meal and fish oil increases. This and other potential activities threaten the integrity of the mesopelagic ecosystem and its services. We need to ensure that fishing is regulated to protect this amazing ecosystem.

And finally, **some good news about oceans**
Artificial reefs, powered by bold science and visionary conservation groups, are transforming damaged coastlines into vibrant marine sanctuaries, one structure at a time.

Read more at https://earth.org/artificial-reefs-how-scientists-and-green-groups-are-rebuilding-ocean-ecosystems/

I'm now in touch with a local diver,who is involved with a conservation group, and who has just returned from spending his leisure time working to rebuild coral reefs. I'm hoping to get his full story soon, and will share this with you in the future.

Latest News from the Weird Fish Lady

In the last few months, I have totally restructured the Teachers' Resources I have available for busy teachers. See below for all the details.

If you know any primary teachers, then please share this newsletter and let everyone know what is available for their school.

Ocean Adventures' - a Resource for Primary Schools

Suitable for Primary Teachers: (and Parents, Scout leaders and more)

Watch the video below to hear all about it !

More information at :
https://barnettauthor.co.uk/resources/ZDjMEJjq4Oc

News About the Books

📚🌳 Exciting News! 🌳📚

I'm thrilled to announce:
For every book ordered through my website 'Buy from the author' I will continue to plant a tree! 🌱 Together, let's nurture a love for reading while giving back to our planet.
Join me in making a difference—one book at a time!
🌟 **Get involved today! Order a book!**🌟

In 2025, I was delighted to win THREE INTERNATIONAL BOOK AWARDS:

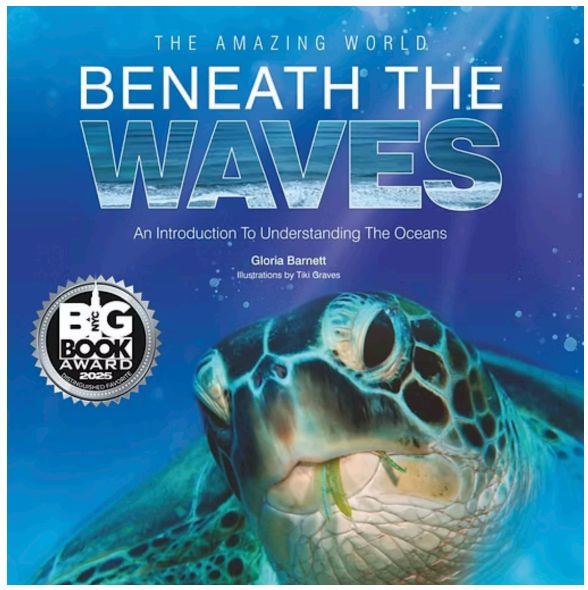
Firstly, '*Eye of the Turtle*' - the first story in the series of the Lucy Morgan Adventure Series - won the Independent Press Award. which I collected in New York last May.

Secondly, the second book in the Lucy Morgan Adventure Series '*The Secrets of the Shallows'* was awarded from the International Impact Awards in June, 2025.

Book Awards
The Final Count for 2025 !

The third award was presented to my non-fiction book, *'The Amazing World Beneath the Waves'*. This book collected the BIG NYC Book award in two categories: Nature and Education.
I've been receiving amazing reviews, too.

Well done, 2025 - what a year that was!



Want to buy ocean -themed books? There is a book suitable for any age group:

Fiction:

For ages: 3-6 -
The Fishy Tale Storybooks
 Logan the Lobster,
Prickle the Puffer Fish,
Ravi the Ray

For ages 8-13+ -
The Lucy Morgan Adventure Stories
Eye of the Turtle
The Secrets of the Shallows
The Hidden Cave

Non-Fiction

The 50 Facts Series
For ages: 6 - 13+ - 50 Fabulous Facts about Ocean Animals
For ages 8 - 13+ - 50 Incredible Facts about Oceans
For ages: 10-18+. - 50 Essential Facts about Climate Change

The BIG Book:
For Ages: 10 - 110 - The Amazing World Beneath the Waves.

All books available from : https://barnettauthor.co.uk

A robot has not been used to write this newsletter and all opinions and grammatical errors are those of the author.

Gloria Barnett - Author
Temple Ewell, Kent, UK
www.barnettathor.co.uk