



KIDS

MENU



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Mobula rays may jump to show off for a potential mate, get rid of parasites, or communicate.  
PHOTOGRAPH BY ISTOCKRENACAL1, ISTOCKPHOTO

# Mobula Ray

Launching itself six feet above the ocean's surface, a fish called a mobula ray does a flip before plunging back into the water with a splash. The fish is traveling with about a hundred other rays that also jump, twirl, and belly flop as they move through the sea. These marine animals are expert acrobats. But their moves remain a mystery to scientists.

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## WINNING AT SWIMMING

Mobula rays live in warm oceans throughout the world. These fish have a pair of winglike fins that can extend up to 17 feet. The fins help the rays rocket from the sea when they leap. Scientists aren't exactly sure why all nine species of mobula rays do these jumps. But they think it may be to show off for a potential mate, get rid of parasites, or communicate.

Mobula rays are as good at swimming as they are at jumping. As they travel, they move their fins up and down to steer through the water. Even baby mobula rays, born at 25 pounds with their fins curled, are gifted gliders. The babies, called pups, immediately unfold their fins and swim off.

and swim off.



Mobula Ray Range Map

PHOTOGRAPH BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAPS

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## FAMILY DINNER

Mobula rays tend to swim in schools of a hundred or more fish, especially while feeding. These marine animals snack on tiny fish and small sea creatures called zooplankton. They eat by scooping prey into their mouths with the floppy lobes that hang from either side of their heads. When the rays find an area rich with food, they make sure to share the grub with the group. These jumping fish make us want to leap for joy!



### WHEE! - LEAPING MOBULA RAYS

Check out an acrobatic fish called a mobula ray that likes to leap out of the sea in Baja, California. This episode of Moment of will make you go "Whee!"

California. This episode of *Moment of... Will Make You Go, Where?*

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