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Leaf Sheep: the only Animal Which Can Photosynthesize

By bestfolkmedicine · 29/08/2020 · 1 min read

The 'leaf sheep' or the sea slug has gone viral lately, and for a good reason. It doesn't just have this cute name, but a very cute face. Plus, this sea critter is the sole multicellular animal clade able to photosynthesize light into food.

ezstandalone.cmd.push(function () { ezstandalone.showAds(122); });

The photos of the precious leaf sheep were first shared by a user Le on Twitter. The photos show his eyes and mouth and its cerata.

The cerates are the leaf-like appendages which cover its body and have algal chloroplasts. These are the organelles which conduct photosynthesis with the help of chlorophyll.

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Stunning Sea Slag Can Photosynthesize

Kleptoplasty is the process through which the centimeter-long leaf sheep grazes on green algae and then keeps the consumed chloroplasts. Then, it uses them to photosynthesize energy from light into food.

Solar power alone can satiate them for months.

If you're wondering if they're as cute in motion as in stillness, the answer is yes. The undersea cuties can be seen in the video below using their Heffer-like mouths to scour for algae on the ground.

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https://youtu.be/v5C68aoORAE

It seems every aspect is cute. Their wiggly horns even, known as rhinophores. They look so cute smelling out surrounding seawater.

Where Can You See the Cute Leaf Sheep?

Unfortunately, they're native to Japanese waters, so it's not easy for everyone elsewhere to see them. Even though there's the emerald elysia, another sea slug from the Sacoglossa clade you can see in the US east coast.

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Like the leaf sheep, the emerald elysia can do photosynthesis and transform light into food. But, bear in mind-it's nowhere near cute as the leaf sheep!

Sources:

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