

He's not making this up: Lovelorn turtle attacks

YOU can imagine how alarmed I was when I found out that I had been swimming in the same waters as the Giant Perverted Turtle.

I found out about this story when numerous alert readers sent me an article from The Reporter, a newspaper published in the Florida Keys, headlined TURTLE ATTACK IS REPORTED.

If you have not yet heard about the Giant Perverted Turtle, please be advised that, until we get this thing cleared up, you should avoid submerging yourself in any body of water unless it has a drain and a soap dish.

Immediately, I interrupted my regular journalism routine of staring fixedly at individual pieces of ceiling dirt, because it just so happens that my major hobby, aside from turning off lights and appliances that have been turned on days earlier by my son, is scuba diving off the Florida Keys.

You go out to the reef, bouncing over the waves, then you dive in and admire the incredible variety of marine life that is attracted by other diving enthusiasts barfing over the side of the charter boat.

You see some fascinating things down there.

I once got to see what fishing looks like from the fish end. There, dangling in the current, was a largish hook, to which had been attached a disgusting thing such as you might be served in a sushi restaurant.

Staring at this thing was a small formal gathering of filefish, which is a fish with pursed lips and a bulging forehead that make it look very serious, as though it should be carrying a little briefcase and doing the other fishes' tax returns.

As the other filefish watched, the first one would swim forward, take the sushi in its mouth, spit it out immediately, then swim to the end of the line. Then the next fish would repeat this procedure, and the next, and so on ("Yuck! You try it, Norm!" "OK! Yuck! You try it, Walter!" "OK! Yuck! You try...").

If I'd had a waterproof pen and paper with me, I'd have stuck a little note on the hook saying, "THEY DON'T LIKE IT."

But getting back to the Giant Perverted Turtle, according to The Reporter article, written by outdoor writer Bob T. Epstein, there's a very aggressive male 300-pound loggerhead turtle that lurks in the water under one of the bridges in the Florida Keys and - I am not making this up - keeps trying, very forcefully, to mate WITH HUMAN DIVERS.

I'm not going to give details of this occurrence in a family newspaper, except to say that if we ever decide we need some form of punishment harsher than the death penalty, this would be a strong candidate.

JUDGE: I sentence the defendant to be put in the lagoon with Bart.



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Dave
Barry

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DEFENDANT: NO! NOT THE TURTLE!

I called up one of the divers who'd reportedly been attacked, a real estate agent named Bruce Gernon, who confirmed the whole thing, but asked me to stress that he successfully fought the turtle off. So let the record show that the turtle did not get to first base with Mr. Gernon.

Fortunately this alarming story is getting attention from leading science authorities: Epstein told me he has been contacted by both the Letterman AND Sajak shows.

So action is being taken, and not a moment too soon, either, because - this appears to be a related story - several alert readers have sent me an Associated Press article stating that two marine biologists in a submarine 690 feet deep, far off the coast of Alaska, discovered, lying on the ocean floor: a cow.

I am still not making this up. Needless to say the cow was deceased. God alone knows how it got there. One obvious possibility is prankster skindivers, but we cannot rule out the possibility that the cow was abducted by lust-crazed walrus.

Fortunately the biologists were able to make a videotape, starring Rob Lowe, so we should have some answers soon. Until then, I'm not going to even take a SHOWER.