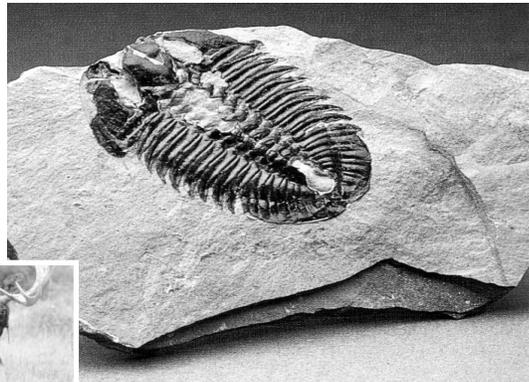
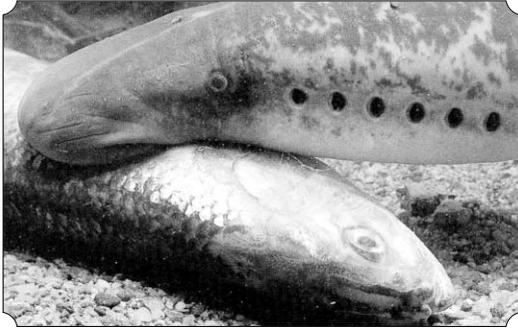

B I O L O G Y I

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1.1

Parasitic Species



Most parasitic species are harmful to their hosts.

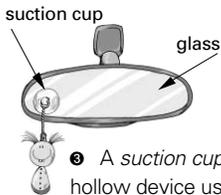
Animals and plants have different ways of living. Some species live at the expense of others. That is, they take their food and energy from other organisms on which they live. Such species are called “parasites.” The species on which they live are called their “hosts.”

One famous parasitic plant in the southern United States is called “Spanish moss.” It hangs in long, delicate, gray lines from the branches of trees.

Another well-known parasitic plant is mistletoe. It is a familiar symbol of the Christmas season. Very few people know that the pretty, green and white mistletoe is really a parasite!

❶ *Mistletoe* is a vine with dark green leaves and red berries. It is often used as a Christmas decoration.

❷ There are five Great Lakes, Lake Huron, Lake Ontario, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, and Lake Superior. They are located in the northern U.S., along the border with Canada. They are some of the largest lakes in the world.



❸ A *suction cup* is a round, hollow device used to apply suction or attach one object to another.

❹ *Gills* are organs deep in a fish’s throat which allow fish to breathe in water. They serve the same function that lungs do in mammals.

Animal parasites are more familiar. Fleas and ticks are animal parasites. Dogs serve as their hosts. The fleas and ticks live on the dogs’ blood. They can also cause disease!

Fish have parasites too. In America’s Great Lakes, for example, an eel-like animal called a lamprey preys on fish. The lamprey has a round mouth like a suction cup, and a sharp tongue like a file. First, the lamprey uses its round mouth to attach itself to a fish. Then the lamprey uses its file-like tongue to drill into the fish’s body and live on the fish’s body fluids.

Other fish parasites are strange animals called “isopods.” They have oval bodies and many legs. Sometimes they live inside a fish’s mouth. Other parasites may attack a fish’s gills. One of the oddest parasites on fishes is the “remora.” A fish itself, the remora has a suction tool on its head. With the suction tool, the remora attaches itself to the side of a shark. When the shark kills and eats something, the remora eats bits and pieces of the shark’s food. If too many remoras ride along with it, however, the shark may have trouble swimming!



Parasites can live either on the inside or the outside of a host. The first kind of parasite is especially dangerous. It can live, unseen and unsuspected, for a long time inside a host. Such **internal** parasites can kill an animal before anyone knows they are there!

- 🔊 mistletoe [mɪsltəʊ]
- 🔊 lamprey [læmpri]
- 🔊 isopod [aɪsəpɒd]
- 🔊 remora [rémərə]

📖 WORDS FOR BIOLOGY

- ✓ attach
- ✓ fluid
- ✓ host
- ✓ internal
- ✓ organism
- ✓ prey
- ✓ species
- ✓ suction



Questions

- 01** Explain the terms parasite and host in your own words.
- 02** The article mentions several parasites. Name two of them, and describe how they live.
- 03** Look at the word **internal** in the passage. What do you think **internal** means in this context?
- 04** In your own words, describe one problem that parasites can cause.