This live stream of a whale skeleton getting eaten is metal as hell

An ocean exploration team just discovered a whale skeleton on the seafloor, and it's live-streaming the bone-eating worms and other critters gnawing away at what's left of the carcass.

"What an amazing find in preparation for Halloween," one of the scientists on board the ship said during the broadcast.

Even in death, the whale has a lot to give to its fellow sea creatures. When it dies, its remains — called a whale fall — provide food and important nutrients to the ecosystem on the seafloor. It's what brought all the critters to the party we get to view today.

It was all caught on camera by the Nautilus vessel expedition team, which has been out at sea along the western US since May and ends their season with their last dive today. They're backed by the same guy who found the Titanic: deep-sea explorer Robert Ballard. There's a round-the-clock live stream as the Nautilus vessel and its submersibles search for new discoveries along the seafloor. The pilots and scientists on board are even taking questions submitted through the Nautilus Live website.

The team got the largest audience they've ever had as they poked around the whale skeleton. Taking a request to zoom in, their cameras homed in on the backbone, covered in red bone-eating worms (*Osedax*) bobbing in the current.

At one point, the crew hung out with an octopus that attached itself to their equipment. "I think we do have a stow-away," a crew member laughed. "Excuse us, octopus."

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“The octopus is photobombing us right now,” the crew quips. Then we get an anatomy lesson. One of the octopus’ eight limbs is a “hectocotylus,” we learn, which is used to “transfer sperm packets from the male to inside the cavity of the female.”

Although the researchers couldn’t definitely say how long the skeleton had been there, one listener identified as someone “in the science community” suggested that the whale probably died about four months ago, judging from how much tissue was left.

Watch the rest of the live stream below.

[embedded content]

https://www.theverge.com/2019/10/16/20918013/livestream-whale-fall-skeleton-nautilus-bone-eating-worms-octopus-fish