

How DARPA wants to create spies from genetically modified sea life

The US military wants to enlist fish and other sea life to help it track enemy submarines at sea. The Persistent Aquatic Living Sensors program could also modify existing species to make them better underwater spies, an effort that would face stiff opposition from environmental groups.

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The idea is that marine life—everything from bacteria to plankton and corals to fish and mammals—senses and in some way reacts to the presence of nearby ships. To DARPA, those reactions represent valuable data. “The program simply plans to observe the natural, unique behaviors of marine organisms in the presence of targets of interest, and to process those data to provide an alert,” Jared Adams, a DARPA spokesperson, told me via email.

If the military can develop a system for detecting ocean life's reactions to passing vessels, it could in theory monitor all the world's oceans for enemy activity—and do so more cheaply and effectively than with purely manmade sensors.

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DARPA proposes to modify some species in order to optimize their senses for detecting manmade objects. The resulting breeds would essentially be genetically-modified organisms and could disrupt or even collapse existing ecosystems.

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For now, DARPA is moving forward with its effort to enlist sea life. The agency has announced a meeting in Virginia on March 2 for interested researchers.

Read full, original post: [The Military Wants Genetically-Modified Sea Creatures to Snitch on Enemy Ships](#)