



That is exactly what happened in the remote Australian village. Raining fish, especially more than 300 miles from an ocean, seems like it must be an elaborate hoax. In some places, however, it happens so often that it doesn't even surprise residents any longer. In Yoro, Honduras, it happens so regularly that they have begun to predict the Lluvnia de Peces, or Rain of Fishes, once or twice a year.

As these waterspouts reach land, they begin to dissipate, or lose momentum. But since warm air rises, the water and all of the things in it tend to move upward, into the atmosphere, in the form of clouds. When the clouds, carried by wind, travel rapidly over land, they become laden with too much weight, and it begins to rain. This is how the fish and frogs seem to fall from the sky.

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Scientists couldn't figure it out at first. To make matters stranger still, the fish in Yoro were very much alive when they rained down to the ground, but they were all blind. In England, it rained fish, frogs, spiders, and snakes, and none were blind. In Lajamanu, Australia, the fish were not only alive, but some were large enough to eat. It was difficult to puzzle out, but the blind fish in Yoro gave them a place to start.

Scientists knew that some fish that lived in deep, underground caves with no light sources often lost their eyesight over generations of adaptation. They simply no longer needed to see. So when blind fish rained down on Yoro, scientists began to connect some dots. Clearly, these particular fish were pulled from an underground water source by force. The waterspout theory began to seem more and more possible.

It has rained fish on every continent, and each time, people have tried in various ways to explain this strange phenomenon. Historically, villagers thought the "fishes from the heavens" might be answers to prayers for food. Others proposed that flashfloods overran river banks and oceans, depositing the fish on the city streets. No scientist had actually seen the rain as it occurred, only the fish left on the ground. But in 1970, a National Geographic team happened to be in Yoro when the Rain of Fishes began. They recorded what was happening and made history by finally proving that the fish really did fall from the sky.

This huge breakthrough wasn't just a spot of good luck. It changed thousands of years of myths and legends into true stories and provided scientific explanations for how fish came to live in deep caves and isolated ponds. It explained ancient cave paintings and shed new light on how species have spread over time. It turned out to be a lot more than just a little fishy weather.