

THE PIKE

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Both friends looked at the drawing Skubba had drawn in the sand. “Nella! Nella!” they yelled together. Nella couldn’t possibly ignore them. She put her equipment aside for a moment and approached the boys.

They both pointed to the drawing Skubba had made in the sand.

“Nice drawing,” said Nella on seeing the sketch.

“That is the fish we saw on our dive,” Skubba told her.

After having a close look at it, she said, “That is indeed the fish we have seen!”

“You see, I’m right,” Skubba said, pushing Fred.

“Yes, but that’s not a carp. Is it, Nella?” asked Fred.

“No, that is not a carp,” she answered. Now Fred poked Skubba.

“An eel?” tried Skubba.

“No, not an eel either.” Nella took the sketching twig from Skubba and began to draw another fish in the sand.

“Voila, that is what an eel looks like,” she explained. “An eel looks a bit like a fish with the body of a snake. It has a small head, and a long body with a tail fin. It swims along the bottom”.

Both boys looked at the drawing and nodded in agreement with Nella’s explanation.

“The fish in Skubba’s drawing does not have these characteristics. His snout resembles a shoe. Do you see that?”

“Yes,” they answered in unison.

“Its body is thicker and shorter than that of an eel, and its fins are bigger,” she further explains, indicating the differences between the drawings.

“The fish we saw, is a...”

“PIKE!” exclaimed Fred.

“Right, Fred. How did you know?” Nella asked while Skubba stared at him.

“If I look at its dorsal fin, tail and head, and I compare this with the drawings in my book, it looks a lot like a pike,” Fred explained pointing to the large drawing. The fish in the sand was indeed like the one in his book, Skubba had to admit that. His friend was right again.

“You did well Fred. Fish identification is not easy. Even with a book,” she explained.

“A good place to learn to identify fish is at an aquarium.

There you will have the time to identify fish by the book and make sure you’ve got it right by checking it with the information panel of the aquarium.”

“Wait,” she said. She walked to her car and returned with a large plastic card.

“This is a Fish ID card that you can take underwater on your dives to recognise fish in your local area. See? Here is the eel and here is the pike.”

Fred took the card and together with Skubba, they looked for the pike.

“Can I take this with me on my next dive?” asked Skubba.

