



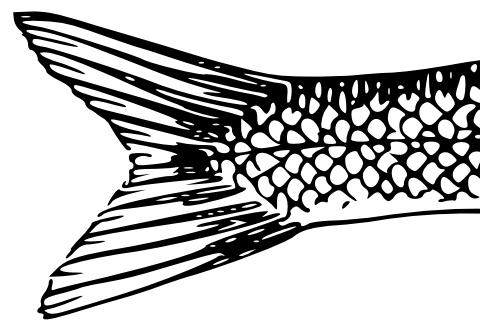
The Sounds Beneath the Sea: Sweden, the Cold War, and a Very Strange Mystery

Listening lesson, B2

Warm-up

Imagine you are in the navy. It's the 1980s. You are listening to the sea. Suddenly, you hear strange sounds from the bottom of the ocean. Loud. Rhythmic. Mechanical. No one knows what they are...

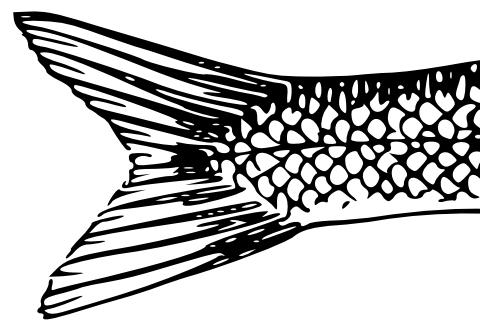
**What could the sounds be?
Would you feel scared? Why / why not?
Which country do you think would be blamed first?**



Warm-up

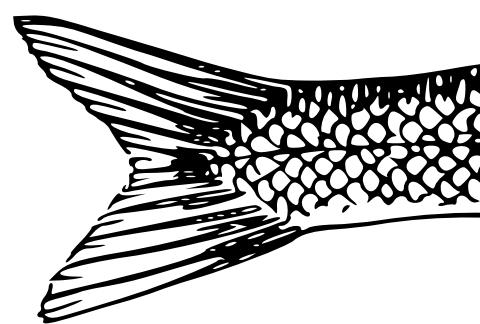
“Operation: Listen to the Sea”

What could that be? Who was involved? What was the goal?



Vocabulary

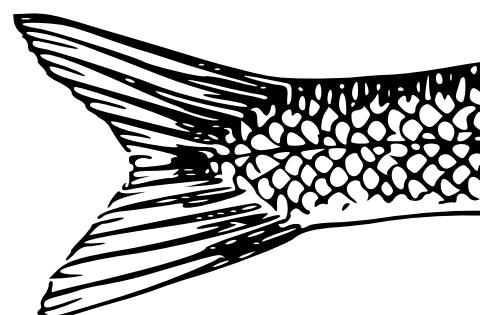
- 1.surface
 - A. to make a sound or feeling stronger or louder
- 2.random
 - B. not known or not recognized
- 3.suspicious
 - C. to appear or become visible
- 4.navy
 - D. happening without a clear reason or pattern
- 5.submarine
 - E. a group of ships and soldiers that protect a country at sea
- 6.to emerge
 - F. a ship that can travel under water
- 7.to amplify
 - G. to secretly watch or collect information
- 8.unidentified
 - H. the top or outside part of something
- 9.to spy / spying
 - I. causing doubt or mistrust



Vocabulary - fill in the gaps

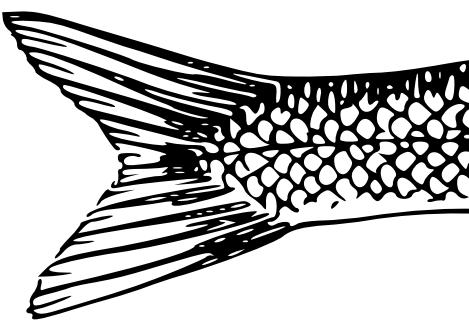
surface - random - suspicious - navy - submarine - to emerge - to amplify - unidentified - spying

1. The detective found an _____ object near the airport, so the area was closed for safety reasons.
2. After hours of discussion, a new problem began to _____ during the meeting.
3. His explanation sounded _____, and nobody fully trusted his story.
4. Please don't choose a number at _____ – think carefully before deciding.
5. When you speak quietly in a large hall, the building can _____ even a small sound.
6. The country decided to invest more money in its _____ to protect its coastline.
7. The diver slowly moved toward the _____ of the water to catch his breath.
8. Modern technology allows a _____ to stay underwater for weeks without being seen.
9. She was accused of _____ on her colleagues by secretly reading their messages.



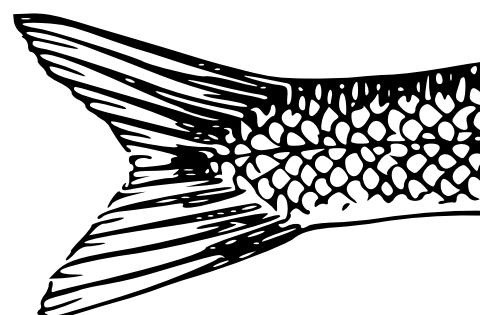
Vocabulary - odd one out

1. random – accidental – controlled – suspicious
2. navy – army – submarine – coast guard
3. to emerge – to disappear – to appear – to surface
4. unidentified – unknown – secret – obvious
5. amplify – reduce – strengthen – increase



Vocabulary - let's talk!

1. Can something **unidentified** be harmless? Give an example.
2. Do social media **amplify** conflicts and emotions, or help people understand each other better? Why?
3. Do people always show their real feelings on the **surface**, or do they usually hide them? Why?
4. What kind of behaviour makes you **suspicious** of someone? Is it usually justified?
5. Why do you think some countries invest a lot of money in their **navy** instead of other parts of the military?
6. Would you feel comfortable travelling in a **submarine**? What do you think would be the most difficult part?
7. Can you think of a situation where a problem **emerged** too late? What happened?
8. Where do you think **spying** crosses the line and becomes unacceptable? Can spying ever be justified?

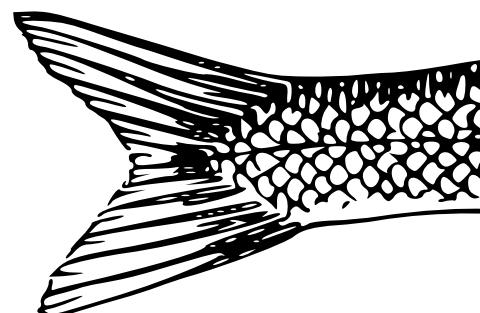


Listening 1: “Something Is Out There”

Choose the best summary:

- A. Sweden discovered secret Russian submarines in its waters.
- B. Sweden believed it was under attack because of strange underwater sounds.
- C. Sweden ignored the sounds because they were not important.

How did the navy feel?
Was their reaction logical?



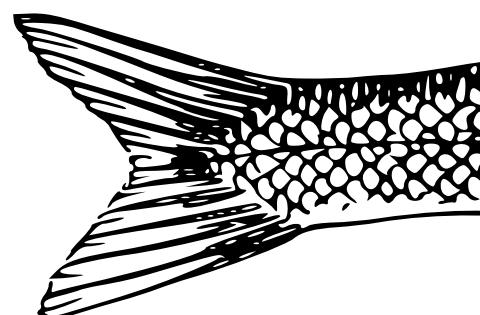
Listening 2: “A Hidden Enemy”

Listen and complete with one word:

1. Advanced listening ___ was used to follow the noise as it moved slowly through the water.
2. The Soviet Union was seen as an ___ enemy.
3. The idea of foreign ___ hiding beneath Swedish waters felt terrifying – but ___.
4. Millions of kronor were spent on ___.
5. The sound was – patient, ___, and unseen.

If it wasn't submarines, what else could it be?

- animals?
- natural sounds?
- machines?



Listening 3: “The Truth Beneath”

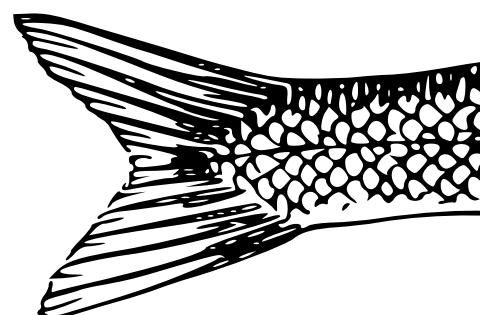
Listen and decide if the statements are true or false:

1. Scientists were involved in the investigation from the very beginning.
2. The sound was finally identified as something natural, not mechanical.
3. The noise was created by a single large sea animal.
4. The underwater environment made the sound stronger than it actually was.

Were you surprised?

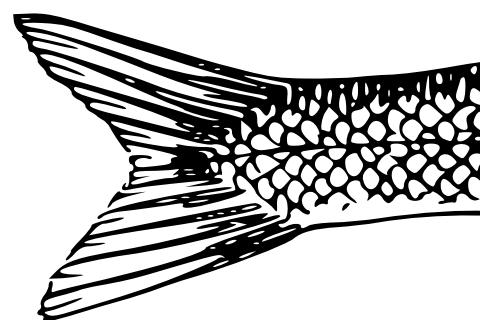
Why do you think people didn't consider this explanation earlier?

Do you think politics influenced the interpretation?



Let's talk!

1. Why are people more afraid during political conflict?
2. Can fear change how we interpret information?
3. Do you know any modern examples of “false alarms” or moral panic?
4. Was Sweden wrong to worry, or was it understandable?



Creative follow-up: Journalist's perspective

Imagine you are a journalist reporting on a mysterious situation in Swedish waters. You will create **two short news stories** about the same event, but at two different moments in time.

Story 1 – At the Beginning

Write a news report from the moment when the strange underwater sounds are first discovered.

Include:

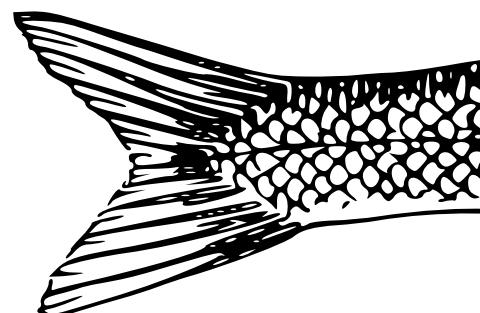
- a title
- a short description of the situation
- the mood of uncertainty or tension
- what people believe is happening

Story 2 – At the End

Now write a second news report after the mystery has been explained.

Include:

- a new title
- a short description of the situation
- the true explanation
- how people now understand the events



Wrap-up vocabulary taboo

F

SURFACE

top
outside
water

NAVY

ships
military
sea

AMPLIFY

increase
louder
stronger

SONAR

sound
detect
underwater

INVASION

attack
enter
force

SCIENTISTS

researchers
experts
study

HERRING

fish
sea
silvery

RANDOM

chance
planned
pattern

SUBMARINE

underwater
ship
navy

UNIDENTIFIED

unknown
named
clear

COAST

shore
sea
border

INVESTIGATION

research
examine
search

ORGANIC

natural
living
biological

FEAR

afraid
danger
emotion

SUSPICIOUS

doubt
trust
fear

EMERGE

appear
surface
come

SPY

secretly
watch
information

NEUTRAL

side
conflict
war

DEPTH

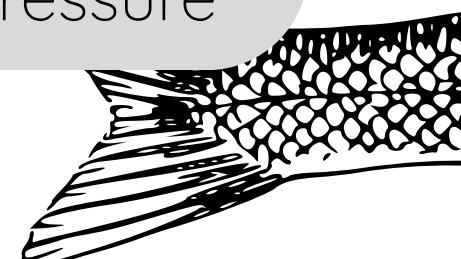
deep
surface
below

PHENOMENON

event
happening
strange

TENSION

stress
conflict
pressure



Transcripts

Listening Part 1 – “The First Sound”

It was late at night when the operators first noticed it.

Deep beneath the surface of the Baltic Sea, a strange sound appeared on their sonar screens. It was not random. It came and went, slowly and rhythmically, like something moving with intention.

The sound was low and dull, but impossible to ignore.

The location was worrying. The noise came from waters close to the Swedish coast – an area that should have been calm and secure. Sweden was officially neutral, but the Cold War had made everyone suspicious. Nothing felt truly safe anymore.

The navy officers listened carefully. Some believed it was mechanical. Others said it was too regular to be natural. Soon, one thought became impossible to avoid. What if it was a submarine?

Listening Part 2 – “A Hidden Enemy”

As the weeks passed, the sounds returned again and again.

The Swedish navy began secret operations. Ships were sent out at night. Advanced listening equipment was used to follow the noise as it moved slowly through the water. Each time, the same fear returned – the fear of being watched.

At the time, the Soviet Union was seen as an invisible enemy. Newspapers reported possible invasions. Military experts spoke about underwater borders being crossed in silence. The idea of foreign submarines hiding beneath Swedish waters felt terrifying – but believable. Millions of kronor were spent on investigations. Depth charges were dropped into the sea, hoping to force the submarines to the surface. But nothing appeared. No metal. No periscope. Only the sound – patient, steady, and unseen. And still, no one could prove what was really there.

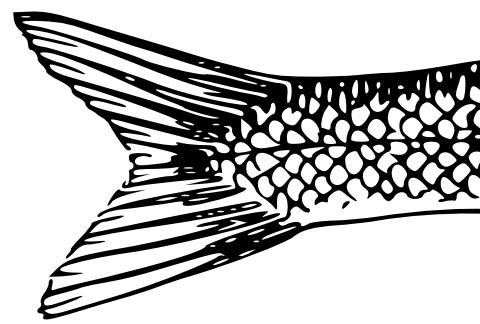
fluentlicious.com

Listening Part 3 – “The Truth Beneath”

Years later, the mystery refused to disappear. Scientists were finally invited to listen – not as soldiers, but as observers. They noticed something the navy had missed. The sound was organic. It was not produced by machines or engines.

After careful research, the answer emerged. The strange underwater noise came from fish. Large groups of herring were producing the sounds as they released gas from their bodies. Underwater, these noises travelled far and became strangely amplified. What had once sounded like a secret military operation was, in reality, a natural phenomenon.

For decades, fear had shaped the interpretation of the sound. In a time of tension and distrust, even fish had become enemies. The sea had been speaking all along – but no one was truly listening.



Answer key

Listening Part 1 – “The First Sound”

It was late at night when the operators first noticed it.

Deep beneath the surface of the Baltic Sea, a strange sound appeared on their sonar screens. It was not random. It came and went, slowly and rhythmically, like something moving with intention.

The sound was low and dull, but impossible to ignore.

The location was worrying. The noise came from waters close to the Swedish coast – an area that should have been calm and secure. Sweden was officially neutral, but the Cold War had made everyone suspicious. Nothing felt truly safe anymore.

The navy officers listened carefully. Some believed it was mechanical. Others said it was too regular to be natural. Soon, one thought became impossible to avoid. What if it was a submarine?

Listening Part 2 – “A Hidden Enemy”

As the weeks passed, the sounds returned again and again.

The Swedish navy began secret operations. Ships were sent out at night. Advanced listening equipment was used to follow the noise as it moved slowly through the water. Each time, the same fear returned – the fear of being watched.

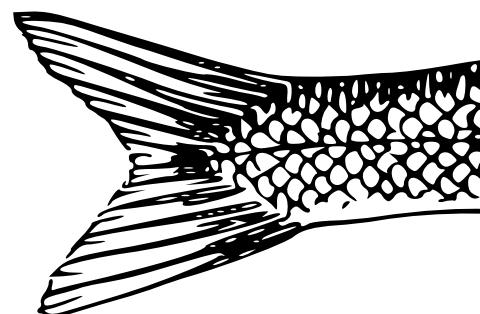
At the time, the Soviet Union was seen as an invisible enemy. Newspapers reported possible invasions. Military experts spoke about underwater borders being crossed in silence. The idea of foreign submarines hiding beneath Swedish waters felt terrifying – but believable. Millions of kronor were spent on investigations. Depth charges were dropped into the sea, hoping to force the submarines to the surface. But nothing appeared. No metal. No periscope. Only the sound – patient, steady, and unseen. And still, no one could prove what was really there.

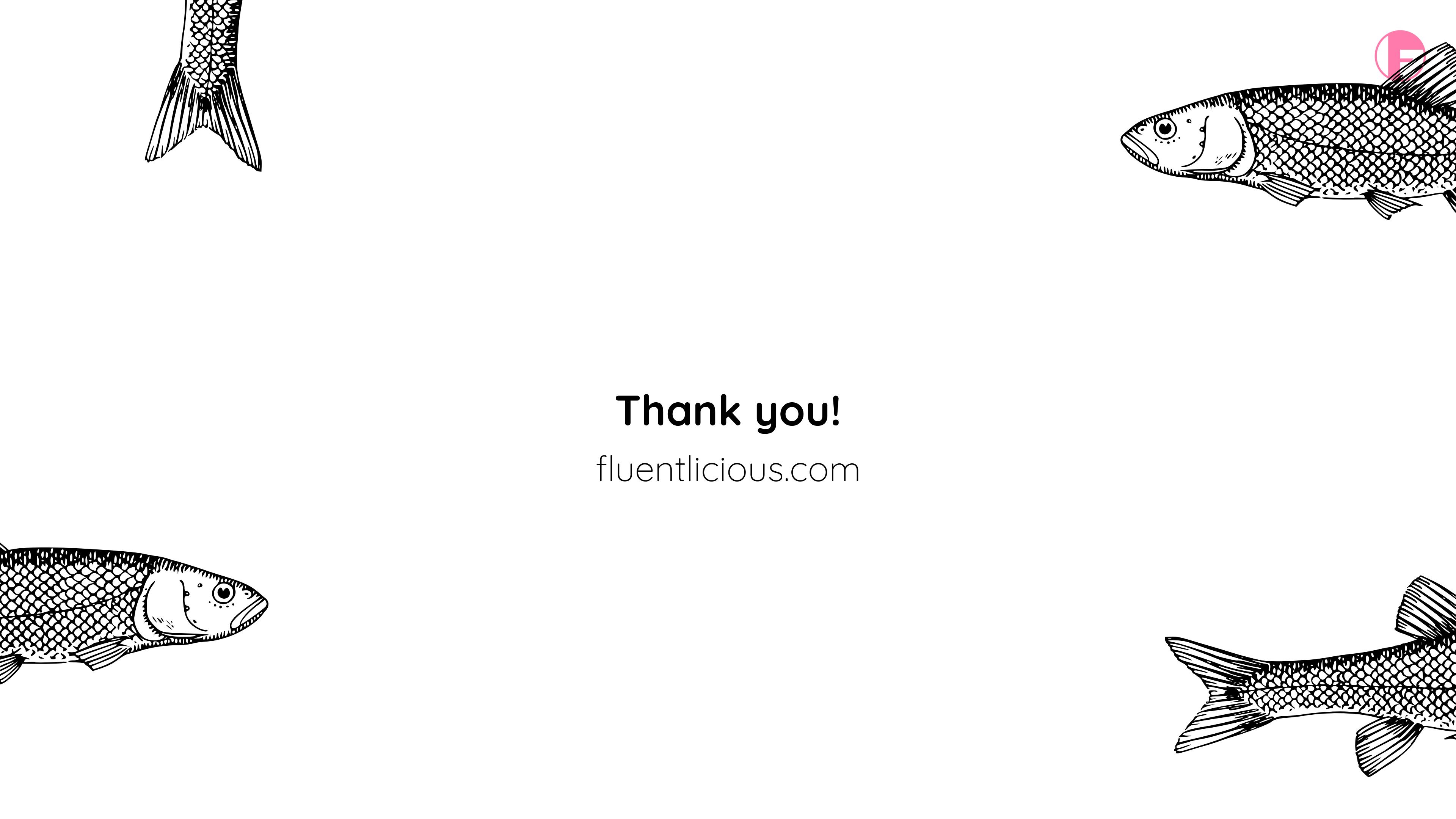
Listening Part 3 – “The Truth Beneath”

Years later, the mystery refused to disappear. Scientists were finally invited to listen – not as soldiers, but as observers. They noticed something the navy had missed. The sound was organic. It was not produced by machines or engines.

After careful research, the answer emerged. The strange underwater noise came from fish. Large groups of herring were producing the sounds as they released gas from their bodies. Underwater, these noises travelled far and became strangely amplified. What had once sounded like a secret military operation was, in reality, a natural phenomenon.

For decades, fear had shaped the interpretation of the sound. In a time of tension and distrust, even fish had become enemies. The sea had been speaking all along – but no one was truly listening.





Thank you!

fluentlicious.com