{rokbox title=|Frames extracted from the videos :: Image: Authors| thumb=|images/stories/ieo/imagenespublicaciones/centro-oceanografico-baleares-ieo-csic-best-defense-is-good-offense-octopus-conger-eel-salvador-et-al-2024-thumb.jpg|}images/stories/ieo/imagenespublicaciones/centro-oceanografico-baleares-ieo-csic-best-defense-is-good-offense-octopus-conger-eel-salvador-et-al-2024.jpg{/rokbox}

Beatriz Salvador, **Miguel Cabanellas-Reboredo**, Manuel E. Garci, Ángel F. González, Jorge Hernández-Urcera, 2024. **The best defense is a good offense: Anti-predator behavior of the common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*) against conger eel attacks**

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Abstract: We present the description of defensive behavior in wild *Octopus vulgaris* against conger eel (*Conger conger*) attacks based on three video sequences recorded by recreational SCUBA divers in the eastern Atlantic off the coast of Galicia (NW Spain) and in the Cantabrian Sea (NW Spain). These records document common traits in defensive behavior: (1) the octopuses enveloped the conger eel's head to obscure its view; (2) they covered the eel's gills in an attempt to suffocate it; (3) they released ink; (4) the octopuses lost some appendages because of the fight. In the third video, the octopus did not exhibit the defensive behavior described in the first two videos due to an inability to utilize its arms in defense, and the conger eel's success in capturing octopuses is discussed. Additionally, both the cost that the octopus could face by losing some arms during the fight and whether the experience it acquires can be an advantage for future encounters are analyzed. The defensive behavior exhibited by octopuses in this study highlights their ability to survive in a hostile environment and serves as an example of the extensive repertoire of anti-predator strategies employed by these cephalopods.

Keywords: cephalopods, conger eel, defense strategy, octopus, survival tactics