



Cabrillo
Marine
Aquarium

FISHIN' FOR F.A.Q.'S

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SEA JELLIES

Jellies have been on Earth for over 650 million years, even before the dinosaurs.

A group of sea jellies is called a smack.

SOME JELLIES CAN TRAVEL OVER HALF A MILE DAILY, TRAVELING UP AND DOWN IN THE WATER COLUMN. A REMARKABLE FEAT IN DEPTH WITHOUT A SUBMARINE!

The Drukandji is one of the most toxic types of Jellyfish in the world.

AN ADULT JELLYFISH IS CALLED A MEDUSA.

Q. Is it true, that jellies are known to be the largest type of plankton?

A. Yes, most people think of plankton as tiny or microscopic plants and animals, but plankton includes any animals not strong enough to swim against the current, and this includes sea jellies.

Q. How do jellies develop and grow?

A. Sea jellies complex life cycle has been the focus of many research projects. The moon jelly develops from an egg & begins life as a planula larva that settles and becomes a polyp (resembling a tiny anemone). The polyp stage can last many years, until it strobilates (becomes a budding polyp), and produces many ephyrae. Each ephyra (juvenile) can grow into a bell-shaped medusa (adult) jellyfish!

Q. How do jellies protect themselves from predators?

A. Most have tentacles imbedded with powerful, toxic stinging cells called nematocysts. Some stings are lethal and can kill a human in minutes, while others like moon jellies will rarely cause any irritation.

Q. Do adult jellies have brains?

A. Unlike the characters in the classic tale of The Wizard of OZ, jellies have no brain, no heart, and no spine. Just a simple digestive system, gonads, and tentacles. On the edge of the bell is a bundle of sensory nerves that allows the jelly to detect light, to smell, and stay upright while floating.

Q. Do jellies have lungs to breathe?

A. No, to breathe they absorb oxygen through their thin, membrane-like skin.

At CMA

Check out the "Moon Jelly Life Cycle" in the Exhibit Hall and our growing Sea Jellies in the Aquatic Nursery

Just for Laughs!

Q. What did the loyal jellyfish say to their friend?

A. "We'll never drift apart."

FAST FACTS ON A LOCAL SPECIES

Common Name: Moon Jelly

Scientific Name: *Aurelia aurita*

Range: coastal waters from Alaska to California

Size: up to 18 inches in diameter

Diet: zooplankton; small shrimp, fish eggs & other larvae

Life Cycle: egg to (planula) larva, polyp stage, juvenile (ephyra) phase to adult (medusa)

Average Lifespan: as an adult, can live an average of 3 to 6 months

Predators: large fish, sea turtles & marine birds

Common Relatives: sea anemones & corals

