

Ireland's Jellyfish

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All Ireland - Easy Guide to Jellyfish

IDENTIFICATION, LIFE-CYCLE AND TREATMENT FOR STINGS

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Jellyfish predators including fish and turtles are on the decrease. The knock on effect is booming Jellyfish numbers. Most Jellyfish that frequent the waters off Irish coastal waters are 'conceived' in previous seasons. Males release sperm into the water and some females swim through this so that brood eggs, situated on her external arms get fertilised. In other jellyfish the sperm has to swim into the inside of the female where fertilisation occurs, the fertilised eggs then move to the outside attaching themselves to her arms. Embryonic development takes place and after a while they hatch and swim free as 'Planula'. This oval shaped structure has beating hairs along its margins. These are responsible for propelling the animal through the water. Ocean currents disperse the planula and carry them to different places. It is at this stage that they are eaten by fish but with decreasing fish populations, more planula survive. After a few days floating around they descend to the bottom substrate and attach themselves to it. Another transformation takes place and an animal shaped like a cylinder emerges. Called a 'Polyp' their basal disc is what sticks them to the hard surfaces while their mouth, complete with tentacles sucks in water and food. As they grow they begin to bud and form new polyps (Schyphistoma) that are connected to each other via feeding tubes. They continue to grow and

after a few years they transform into stacked saucer shaped animals called 'Ephyra'. The final stage is when these bud off as tiny baby Jellyfish and launch themselves into the water. Once again they can be predated upon. As they feed and grow their shape becomes the medusa that we have come to fear.

Throughout coastal Ireland I have encounters with many different species of Jellyfish and most of these are at the medusa (final) stage in their life cycle. As an underwater filmmaker I am fascinated by their elegance and differing pulsating shapes. But behind this outer beauty lies the potential menace within, for they all possess thousands of

stinging cells which house stinging threads. Each sting contains a neurotoxin and is capable of paralysing its unsuspecting victim. We humans have varying degrees of allergic reactions to Jellyfish stings, ranging from mild to severe. Kids in particular can be badly stung and for anyone who suffers from allergic reaction, a Jellyfish sting can be life threatening.

Please refer to my photographic guide for information on the types of Jellyfish encountered, relative size and the severity of their sting. Also included is a guide in how to treat

Jellyfish stings. Contrary to popular belief, peeing on a Jellyfish sting is not recommended. See the full guide at Irishwater Safety's website www.iws.ie

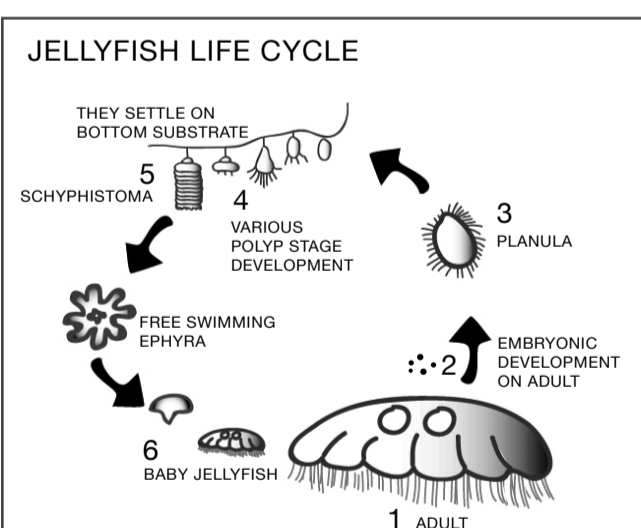
Check out more of Vincent Hyland's Wild Derrynane. More info

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 COMMON JELLYFISH (Mild) April-September Up to 40cm (diameter)	 LIONS MANE (Severe) April-September Up to 2m (diameter)
 BLUE JELLYFISH (Strong) April-September Up to 30cm (diameter)	 CRYSTAL (not detectable) April-September Up to 40cm (diameter)
 COMPASS JELLYFISH (Mild to Strong) April-September Up to 40cm (diameter)	 MAUVE STINGER (Strong) June-September Up to 40cm (diameter)
 BARRELL JELLYFISH (Mild) April-September Up to 90cm (diameter)	

Non Jellyfish Species



MAN OF WAR (Severe)
August-November Up to 40cm



BY THE WIND SAILOR (Not noticable)
Year round Up to 06cm



PHRONIMA & SALP
Very tiny deep water visitors. May wash ashore during storms



COMB JELLIES
Sea Goosberry and comb Jelly (very mild)
Year round Up to 01 - 08 cm

Unusual Jellyfish



STALKED JELLYFISH
These beautiful jellyfish are tiny and can be found on the undersides of seaweeds. Found Spring to Autumn. Up to 03cm

Treatment

- 1) Leave the water immediately
- 2) Seek help and advice from Lifeguards (if available)
- 3) Remove tentacles by flushing with sea water. (Use a sand castle bucket to get seawater) Otherwise use a tweezers or gloved hand or by scraping gently with a credit card to remove them.
- 4) Mild symptoms can be treated with ibuprofen or paracetamol.
- 5) Itchy burning areas can be treated with anti-histamine cream.
- 6) Apply a dry cold pack (ice in a bag, cold drinks can in a bag or some such) to the area.
- 7) Breathing difficulties, chest tightness, swelling of the lips, mouth or tongue, nausea, sweating, cramps, headaches, dizziness, vomiting, diarrhoea, muscle spasms seek medical attention.
- 8) See also Irish Water Safety www.iws.ie