

Get informed about

# STINGING JELLYFISHES

in these waters.

**SEA NETTLES** (*Chrysaora quinquecirrha*) are a type of stinging jellyfish present in the waters of the Barnegat Bay and other coastal waterways of New Jersey.

## WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?



SEA NETTLE

(*Chrysaora quinquecirrha*)

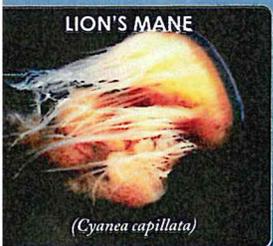
**SEA NETTLES** are bell-shaped; the bell is pale white and often has reddish markings along its surface. They have long thin tentacles around the edge of the bell. Sea nettles may be present in large numbers during the summer months, and have a painful sting.



MOON JELLY

(*Aurelia aurita*)

**MOON JELLIES** (*Aurelia aurita*) have a flattened disk shape; the disk is translucent in appearance. Moon jellies have numerous small tentacles around the edge and a horseshoe-shaped white or pinkish body in the center of the disk. They are abundant during the summer months, but have a mild sting and do not pose a threat to swimmers.



LION'S MANE

(*Cyanea capillata*)

**LION'S MANE JELLYFISH** (*Cyanea capillata*) are yellowish-brown or reddish in color and are saucer-shaped with fairly thick jelly. This species **does** pose a threat to swimmers because of its painful sting, but lion's mane are more common in the ocean than in the bay.



**IS IT SAFE TO SWIM HERE?** Generally, it is safe to swim and enjoy the water in the bay and its tributaries. However, swimming when sea nettles and lion's mane are clearly visible does increase your likelihood of being stung. *Precautionary measures* to avoid being stung include checking with the lifeguard at the beach regarding the presence of stinging jellyfishes and covering unprotected skin with petroleum jelly or lightweight protective clothing, such as a Lycra "swim skin" or pantyhose.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'M STUNG?** Clean the affected area with salt water (using fresh water may cause more stings) to help remove any remaining tentacles. Apply shaving cream, or a paste of baking soda and salt water, and scrape it off to help remove any remaining stingers. Ice may help with pain and itching. Seek medical attention for any serious reactions. Please notify the lifeguard on duty about your sting.

**WHY ARE THEY HERE?** Sea nettles have always been a part of the Barnegat Bay's ecosystem; their apparent increase in abundance may have more than one cause: ① Increased development around the bay, including bulkheads, pilings, and floating docks, may be providing more structure to which an early life-stage of jellyfish can attach and reproduce. ② Sea nettles prefer a narrow salinity zone, so large-scale changes in salinity, such as during dry years, may affect their abundance and distribution in the bay. ③ Increasing water temperatures accelerate growth and reproduction rates. ④ The removal of predators and potential competitors for food through increased fishing pressure may also affect sea nettle abundance. However, we do not know which species, if any, prey on sea nettles in Barnegat Bay. ⑤ Lastly, poor water quality (*i.e.*, high nutrient concentrations and/or low dissolved oxygen) may contribute to greater food supplies for jellyfishes or to lower abundances of the competitors and predators, such as fishes.

**CAN WE GET RID OF THEM?** Since jellyfishes have always been a part of the bay's ecosystem, eradicating them could have unpredictable effects on the bay. Attempts to control jellyfishes worldwide have largely failed. A combination of actions that target the potential reasons for their increase as outlined above may be the best long-term solution.

**CHECK** with the lifeguard regarding the presence of sea nettles **BEFORE** you enter the water. Many lifeguarded bay and river beaches are part of the Sea Nettle Warning System network. At these beaches, a Sea Nettle Warning System sign will be posted with a color-coded probability of encountering jellyfish (see below).

**NOTIFY** the beach's lifeguard if you are stung or if you spot sea nettles in the water.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** about sea nettles in Barnegat Bay, contact the Barnegat Bay Partnership at (732) 255-0472, or visit <http://bbp.ocean.edu>. For more information about the Sea Nettle Warning System, visit the Ocean County Health Department's seasonal Jellyfish Warning Webpage at [www.ochd.org/jellyfish.htm](http://www.ochd.org/jellyfish.htm).

## SEA NETTLE WARNING SYSTEM

LOW	ELEVATED
No jellyfish observed. Low probability of encountering jellyfish.	Few jellyfish observed. Elevated probability of encountering jellyfish.
MODERATE	HIGH
Many jellyfish observed. Moderate probability of encountering jellyfish.	Abundant jellyfish. High probability of encountering jellyfish.

THIS WARNING SYSTEM IS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY. The Ocean County Health Dept., the Barnegat Bay Partnership, and this municipality are NOT responsible for injury caused by jellyfish stings.