

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.

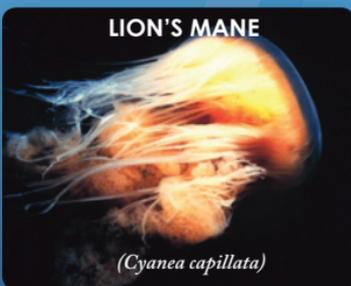
WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?



SEA 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 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 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.



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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? Liberally sprinkling meat tenderizer or baking soda on the afflicted area may reduce the irritation. 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 Changes in the bay's salinity or hydrology may also have an effect. 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 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. ④ 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. Thus, poor water quality may increase the abundance of jellyfishes.

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 for the presence of sea nettles BEFORE you head out for a swim by visiting the Ocean County Health Department's Jellyfish Warning Webpage at www.ochd.org/jellyfish.htm

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 www.bbneq.org

SEA NETTLE WARNING SYSTEM

Coming to an Ocean County bay beach near you.

LOW

No jellyfish observed.
Threat level is low.

MEDIUM

Few jellyfish (1-5) observed/low abundance. Threat level is moderate.

HIGH

Many jellyfish (6-10) observed/abundant.
Potential threat is present.

DANGEROUS

Abundant jellyfish (10 or more).
Threat level is high.

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.