

Local Hazards

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Stonefish at Shorncliffe (Why we wear shoes)



This stonefish was found at the VMR pontoon. Despite measuring only 30 to 40 centimetres long, the venom that the stonefish produces is some of the most venomous in the world, and is fatal to not just marine animals but humans too.

The stonefish has 13 sharp dorsal fin spines along their back, each armed with two venom glands which release the deadly substance when the fish is disturbed or stepped on.

In addition, the stonefish also has two pelvic and three anal spines hidden underneath its thick skin. With their encrusted brown or grey skin, and red or yellow patches, the stonefish has the ability to blend incredibly well with its surroundings.

Stonefish sink in the sand and wait patiently for shrimps or small fish to swim by so they cannot be seen easily. Unlike most species of fish, the stonefish is able to survive for up a full day out of water, which is an uncommon trait among the deep-sea animal kingdom. Sharks, stingrays and sea snakes prey on stonefish so perhaps the evidence of stingray indentations in the sand in front of our base is a good thing!

Treatment for Stone Fish Stings

- A bucket of warm water (not too hot otherwise it will cause scolding)
- Place both feet in the warm water (the good foot

with act as a thermometer)

- Seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Jelly Fish

Moreton Bay, is home to a variety of jellyfish species. Some of the jellyfish commonly found in Moreton Bay include:

Blue Blubber Jellyfish (*Catostylus mosaicus*)

- **Appearance:** This jellyfish is typically blue, though it can range from brown to pink depending on the location and water conditions.
- **Size:** They can grow quite large, with bell diameters up to 30 centimeters.
- **Characteristics:** They are often seen in large groups and are relatively harmless to humans, with stings causing mild irritation.

Moon Jellyfish (*Aurelia aurita*)

- **Appearance:** Translucent with a bell shape that has a slight bluish or pinkish hue, and four distinct horseshoe-shaped gonads visible through the bell.
- **Size:** The bell can reach up to 40 centimeters in diameter.
- **Characteristics:** Moon jellyfish are not particularly dangerous to humans, with their stings usually resulting in mild discomfort.

Lion's Mane Jellyfish (*Cyanea nozakii*)

- **Appearance:** This jellyfish has a distinctive mane of long, thin tentacles and a bell that ranges in color from yellow to reddish-brown.
- **Size:** They can have a bell diameter of up to 50 centimeters or more.
- **Characteristics:** Their sting can be painful but is usually not life-threatening.

Box Jellyfish (*Chironex fleckeri*)

- **Appearance:** Transparent and cube-shaped, with long, trailing tentacles.

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- **Size:** The bell can be up to 30 centimeters wide, with tentacles extending up to 3 meters.
- **Characteristics:** The box jellyfish is highly venomous, and its sting can be extremely painful and potentially fatal. Encounters with this jellyfish are rare in Moreton Bay, but it's important to be aware of the potential danger.

Irukandji Jellyfish (*Carukia barnesi*)

- **Appearance:** Very small and difficult to spot, with a bell about the size of a peanut and long, thin tentacles.
- **Size:** The bell is only about 2.5 centimeters in diameter.
- **Characteristics:** Despite its small size, the Irukandji jellyfish is highly venomous, and its sting can cause severe pain and potentially life-threatening symptoms known as Irukandji syndrome. These jellyfish are not commonly found in Moreton Bay but are present in nearby regions.

Upside-Down Jellyfish (*Cassiopea sp.*)

- **Appearance:** As the name suggests, these jellyfish often rest upside-down on the seabed with their bell on the bottom and tentacles facing upwards.
- **Size:** The bell can grow up to 30 centimeters across.
- **Characteristics:** They are generally harmless to humans, with their stings causing mild irritation at most.

Safety Tips

- Always be cautious when swimming in areas known to have jellyfish.
- During jellyfish season, it is advisable to wear protective clothing, such as stinger suits.
- Pay attention to local warnings and guidelines, and seek immediate medical attention if stung by a jellyfish, especially if symptoms are severe.