

FRIED EGG JELLYFISH



Photo by Meet the Sea

Behaviour

As a larva, the fried egg jellyfish can propel itself through the water until it finds a solid surface to settle and continue growing. Once they've developed into fully-grown jellyfish, they are able to actively swim by pulsing their bodies, but spend a lot of time just drifting with the current.

The fried egg jellyfish has many short appendages (sometimes referred to as arms) which each have a deep purple mouth opening. Although they do have stingers, fried egg jellyfish are not a threat to humans. They use very mild venom to catch their prey which is usually completely harmless to people, but can cause a mild allergic reaction for people with sensitive skin. However, fear of these jellyfish combined with the fact that their populations are growing due to warmer waters makes a lot of people nervous to swim in the sea.

Scientific Name:

Cotylorhiza tuberculata

Key Information

The fried egg jellyfish is commonly found in the Mediterranean Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Adriatic Sea, and are the most common jellyfish found in the Mediterranean.

They typically have a diameter of between 20cm and 35cm.

They only live for around 6 months, from the summer to the winter, but researchers think that this might be an adaptation to let them live in an environment where the temperatures vary significantly between seasons.

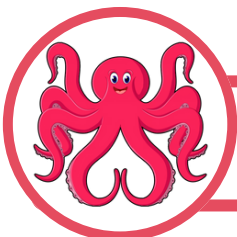
Curiosities

Sometimes, small animals such as crabs will climb on to the top of the jellyfish, away from its stingers, so that they can hitch a ride as it moves through the water.

Environmental significance

Because these jellyfish do very well in warm waters but are very sensitive to cold waters, they're often monitored by climate change scientists, who use the growth in their numbers to track marine ecosystems.

This jellyfish's diet also keeps the ecosystem balanced. They usually eat small organisms like algae, small crustaceans, fish larvae and single-celled microorganisms called 'protozoa'. By feeding on these organisms, the jellyfish help keep their populations under control and maintain balance in the ecosystem.



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