

# marine stingers

## Carybdea

### Distribution

Australia-wide. Most common in South Australia, Western Australia and southern NSW.

### Common name

Jimble

### Size and appearance

Transparent bell 1.5-3cm in diameter. Four tentacles, one in each corner, 5-15cm long.

### First aid

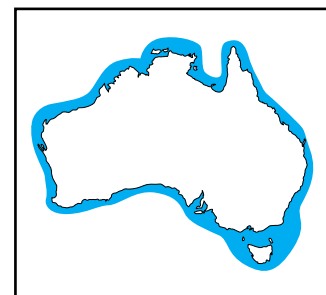
1. Remove casualty from water if safe to do so
2. DRSABCD
3. Remove any adhering tentacles
4. Wash area with sea water (not freshwater)
5. Place casualty's stung area in hot water (no hotter than the rescuer can comfortably tolerate) for 20 minutes
6. If local pain is unrelieved by heat or if hot water is not available, apply a cold pack or ice in a bag
7. If pain persists or is generalised, or if the sting area is large or involves sensitive areas (e.g. the eyes), dial triple zero (000) and seek assistance from lifesavers/lifeguards if available

### Did you know?

- *Carybdea* often swarm in dense congregations in the waters off Sydney, Adelaide and Perth and may form large schools at the surface or swim over a sandy bottom
- High risk months are spring and summer



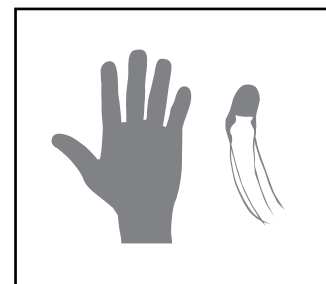
*Carybdea xaymacana*



Distribution in Australian waters



*Carybdea* sting



Size relative to human

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# marine stingers

## Catostylus

### Distribution

The Australian species is found in Queensland, Victoria and NSW and into South East Asia.

### Common names

Blubber

### Size and appearance

Mushroom-shaped bell 5-30cm in diameter. They are a creamy white brown colour (blue if found further north). No tentacles but eight 'fronds' or 'frills' hang underneath. The sting causes minor skin irritation.

### First aid

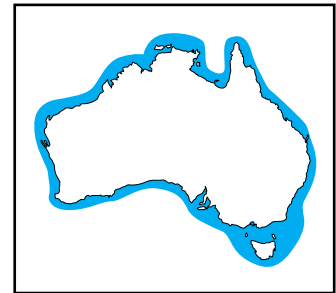
1. Remove casualty from water if safe to do so
2. DRSABCD
3. Wash area with sea water (not freshwater)
4. Keep casualty at rest and reassure
5. Do not allow rubbing of the sting area
6. Place casualty's stung area in hot water (no hotter than the rescuer can comfortably tolerate) for 20 minutes
7. If local pain is unrelieved by heat or if hot water is not available, apply a cold pack or ice in a bag
8. Send for medical aid if symptoms persist or covers a sensitive area (e.g the eyes) and seek assistance from lifesavers/lifeguards

### Did you know?

- Blubbers are in a group of jellyfish called rhizostomes; other rhizostomes have been demonstrated to use a sun compass navigation to migrate
- Australia is home to many different species of blubbers — most are larger, colourful and give only minor stings
- Blubbers are often home to a lot of strange marine life including crabs, brittle stars, barnacles and fish and crustaceans



*Catostylus mosaicus*



*Distribution in Australian waters*



*Catostylus sting*



*Size relative to human*

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# marine stingers

## Chironex fleckeri

### Distribution

Shallow, tropical Australian waters north of Agnes Water, Queensland, all Northern Territory waters and Western Australia south to Exmouth. Stings from Chironex have been recorded predominantly in coastal areas.

### Other common names

Box jellyfish

### Size and appearance

A large but almost transparent jellyfish with a box-shaped bell up to 38cm in diameter. Up to 17 ribbon-like tentacles arise from each of the four corners. These may contract to about 10cm or may extend up to 3m.

### Symptoms and signs

Its sting causes immediate severe burning pain and whip-like marks, often with tentacles remaining on the stung area. Severe stings may cause the casualty to stop breathing and suffer cardiac arrest.

### First aid

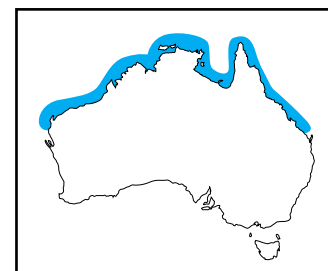
1. Remove casualty from water if safe to do so
  2. DRSABCD
  3. If casualty has more than one localised single sting or looks/feels unwell, dial triple zero (000) and seek assistance from a lifesaver/lifeguard if available
  4. Assess casualty and commence CPR immediately if required
  5. If possible, treat the sting by pouring vinegar for at least 30 seconds and then pick off the tentacles
  6. If vinegar is not available, pick off tentacles (this is not harmful to the rescuer) and rinse well with sea water. Apply a cold pack or ice in a bag for analgesia
- Anti venom is available for *Chironex fleckeri* and other multi-tentacled box jellyfish stings at hospitals and ambulance stations in tropical coastal areas
  - Casualties who initially appear stable but experience severe symptoms in the following 30 minutes may be suffering Irukandji syndrome and need urgent medical care

### Did you know?

- *Chironex fleckeri* is widely regarded as the world's most venomous animal
- There have been recorded fatalities due to box jellyfish stings in Australian waters. A box jellyfish can kill an adult human in 2-3 minutes with only 2-3m of tentacles
- *Chironex fleckeri* become deadly when the bell reaches 8-10cm in size, however all sizes can still inflict significant painful stings



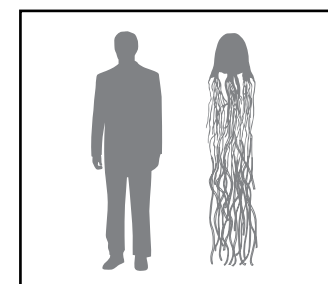
*Chironex fleckeri*



Distribution in Australian waters



Severe Chironex sting



Size relative to human

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# marine stingers

## Cyanea

### Distribution

Worldwide

### Common names

Hair jelly, Snottie, Lion's mane

### Size and appearance

Large, flat bell up to half a metre in diameter with a large 'mop' of fine hair-like tentacles 5-100cm long. The bell top is often white or brown with yellow, brown or reddish colouring underneath.

### First aid

1. Remove casualty from water if safe to do so
2. DRSABCD
3. Remove any adhering tentacles
4. Wash area with seawater (not freshwater)
5. Place casualty's stung area in hot water (no hotter than the rescuer can comfortably tolerate) for 20 minutes
6. If local pain is unrelieved by heat or if no hot water available, apply a cold pack or ice in a dry plastic bag
7. If pain persists and sting area is large or involves sensitive areas (e.g. the eyes) dial triple zero (000) and seek assistance from the lifesavers/lifeguards if available
8. Administer CPR if required

As the *Cyanea* is found in tropical areas, if they cannot be easily identified there is a risk that the sting is from a potentially lethal jellyfish and the priority is to preserve life by treating the casualty with vinegar.

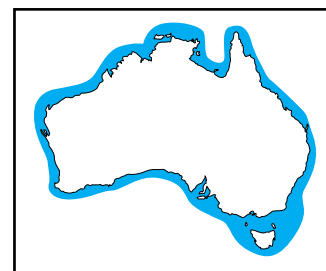
Outside the tropics, where a large number of non-life threatening stings occur, the primary objective is pain relief with heat or cold.

### Did you know?

- *Cyanea* was used as the murder weapon in the Sherlock Holmes book 'Adventures of the Lion's Mane'
- There are many different species, including at least six in Australian waters
- *Cyanea* can occur on the beach in hundreds of numbers at a time
- They are called 'snottie' as they leave a huge amount of slime on stinger nets



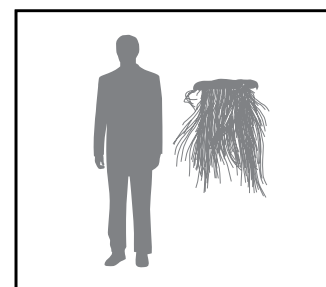
*Cyanea*



Distribution in Australian waters



*Cyanea* sting



Size relative to human

For more information, visit [lifesaving.com.au](http://lifesaving.com.au)

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# marine stingers

## Irukandji

### Distribution

Tropical Australian waters north of southern Fraser Island (Queensland), Northern Territory waters and Western Australia south to Exmouth.

Different species may occur in coastal areas and on the reefs and islands; at times they may occur in large numbers close to shore.

*Irukandji* stings are occasionally reported in subtropical and temperate regions of the world, including Moreton Bay and Fraser Island.

*Irukandji* jellyfish are a subset of the carybdeid jellyfish.

### Size and appearance

Small transparent box jellyfish, 1-2cm in diameter, usually not seen. Some may be up to 10cm long.

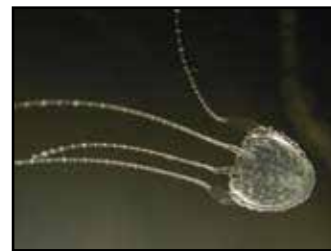
### Symptoms and signs

*Irukandji* jellyfish cause an initial minor skin sting followed 5-40 minutes later by severe generalised muscular pain, headache, vomiting and sweating. The sting from some species can cause very high blood pressure or have effects on the heart which may be life threatening. These symptoms are sometimes referred to as Irukandji Syndrome.

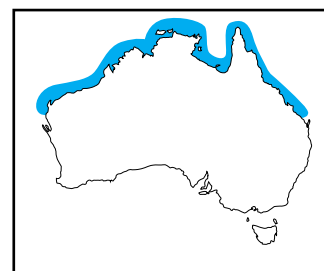
### First aid

Because the symptoms of Irukandji Syndrome may take time to appear after the sting, all tropical jellyfish stings should be doused with vinegar and the casualty to remain out of the water, in a safe location with someone to monitor them for 45 minutes, as the casualty may appear stable initially.

1. Remove casualty from water if safe to do so
2. DRSABCD
3. Call for help - dial triple zero (000) for an ambulance
4. Promptly administer CPR if required
5. Treat the sting - douse the area liberally with vinegar for at least 30 seconds
6. Monitor the casualty and seek lifesaver/lifeguard assistance if available



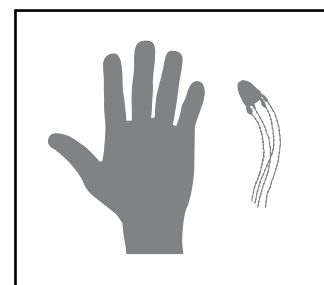
*Irukandji*



Distribution in Australian waters



*Irukandji* sting showing localised sweating



Size relative to human

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# marine stingers

## Morbakka

### Distribution

Tropical Australian waters; all Queensland and northern New South Wales coasts, often an open water jellyfish. Sub-species are more common at Mackay, Moreton Bay and northern NSW.

### Common names

Fire Jelly, Moreton Bay Stinger

### Size and appearance

Large transparent box-shaped bell with one tentacle in each corner. The bell can be 6-18cm wide with 4 thick, ribbon-shaped tentacles that may be up to 1m long.

### Recognition

Since it is usually difficult to recognise which species of jellyfish has caused a sting, pain management is based on the risk of serious stings in known geographical distribution of dangerous species. Jellyfish able to cause life threatening stings primarily occur along the tropical coastline of Australia, from Bundaberg (Queensland), northwards across the northern coastline and down to Geraldton, Western Australia. *Morbakka* may give mild Irukandji Syndrome but stings usually result in pain only.

### First aid

#### Tropical Australia - North of Agnes Water

1. Remove casualty from water if safe to do so
2. DRSABCD
3. If casualty has more than one localised single sting or looks/feels unwell, call triple zero (000) and seek assistance from a lifesaver/lifeguard if available
4. Assess casualty and commence CPR if necessary
5. Liberally douse stung area with vinegar for 30 seconds to neutralise invisible stinging cells
6. If vinegar is unavailable, rinse the sting well with seawater
7. Apply cold pack or ice in dry plastic bag for pain relief. Do not apply freshwater directly onto the sting as it may discharge nematocysts
8. Casualty may appear stable but experience Irukandji Syndrome - it is usually only the pain that is significant. Monitor for 45 minutes

#### Non-tropical - South of Agnes Water

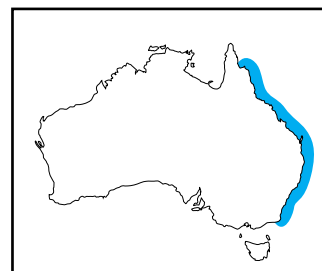
1. Do not allow rubbing of sting area
2. Rinse well with sea water
3. Place stung area in hot water (no hotter than the rescuer can comfortably tolerate) for 20 minutes
4. If local pain is unrelieved by heat or if hot water is not available, apply cold pack or ice in a dry plastic bag
5. If pain persists, is generalised or if the sting area is large or involves sensitive areas (e.g the eyes), dial triple zero (000) and seek assistance from lifesavers/lifeguards if available

### Did you know?

The name *Morbakka* is derived from 'Moreton Bay Carybdeid' because it was originally discovered in Moreton Bay.



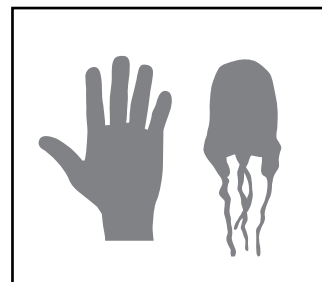
Morbakka



Distribution in Australian waters



Morbakka sting



Size relative to human

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# marine stingers

## Pelagia

### Distribution

Common in Australian waters. Occasionally large swarms invade the Sydney region.

### Common names

Little Mauve Stinger

### Size and appearance

A small mushroom-shaped body from 2-6cm in diameter. Unlike most jellyfish, the bell is covered with numerous warty lumps containing nematocysts (stinging capsules). The bell is usually pink or mauve with 8 pale brown tentacles 10-30cm in length.

### First aid

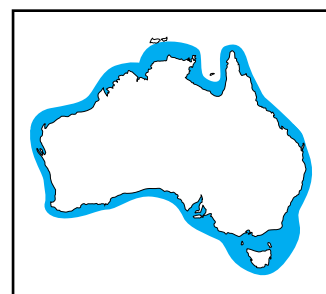
1. Remove any adhering tentacles
2. Wash area with seawater (not freshwater)
3. Place casualty stung area in hot water (no hotter than the rescuer can comfortably tolerate) for 20 minutes.
4. If pain is unrelieved by heat, or if hot water is not available apply a cold pack or ice in a dry plastic bag.
5. Send for medical assistance if symptoms persist.

### Did you know?

- It is currently unclear whether the Australian Pelagia is the same species as the Mediterranean species.
- The Pelagia can glow if stimulated at night.



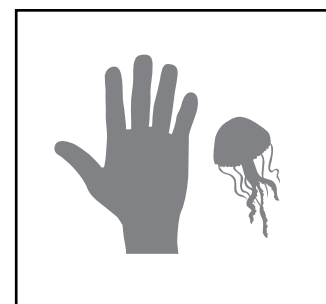
*Pelagia noctiluca*



*Distribution in Australian waters*



*Pelagia sting*



*Size relative to human*

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# marine stingers

## Physalia

### Distribution

Australia-wide and in most warm oceans worldwide.

### Common names

Bluebottle, Portugese man-o-war, Pacific man-o-war

### Size and appearance

Air-filled sac up to 8cm in length, usually with a single, long, blue main fishing tentacle hanging underneath. This may contract to a few centimetres or extend to cover over 10 metres in length. Some may have numerous main fishing tentacles and can cause painful stinging.

### First aid

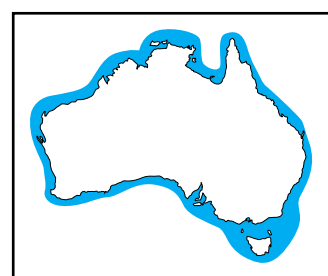
1. Do not allow rubbing of the sting area
2. Adherent blue tentacles may be seen after a sting and are distinctive for Physalia. Remove any adhering tentacles
3. Rinse the area well with sea water (not freshwater)
4. Place the sting area in hot water - no hotter than the rescuer can comfortably tolerate for 20 minutes
5. If the pain is unrelieved by heat, or if hot water is not available, apply cold packs or ice in a dry plastic bag
6. Send for medical aid if symptoms persist

### Did you know?

Bluebottles are not actually jellyfish, but a colony of four kinds of highly modified individuals (polyps). The polyps are dependent on one another for survival and each performs a different function.



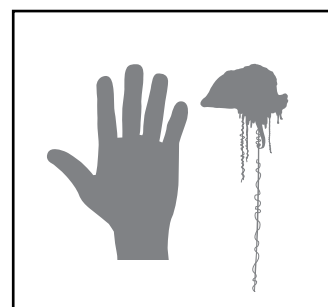
*Physalia utriculus*



*Distribution in Australian waters*



*Physalia sting*



*Size relative to human*

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