Marevivo Ocean Academy

JELLYFISH, LIVING KALEIDOSCOPES

Iridescent and colorful, jellyfish are among the oldest animals on the planet, virtually unchanged for nearly 600 million years. They are part of the plankton, meaning living organisms—both animal (zooplankton) and plant (phytoplankton)—that drift with the ocean currents.

Pelagia Noctiluca
Stinging
5-10 cm

In the height of summer, it can form dense swarms with millions of individuals and make long stretches of beach impassable. Its presence in the Mediterranean is constant, although it appears and disappears at intervals of about ten years. It can cause the destruction of entire fish farms.

Rhizostoma pulmo
Harmless
20-60 cm

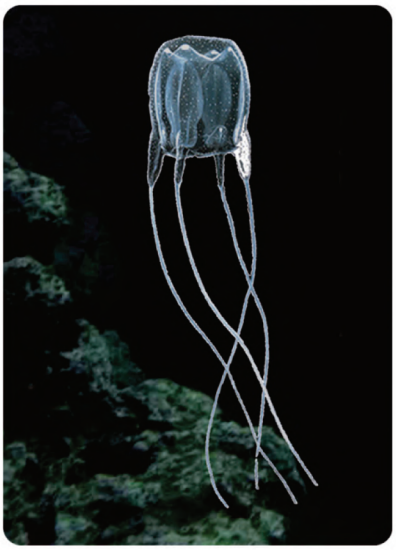
It is the largest jellyfish in the Mediterranean, reaching up to 50 cm in diameter and can weigh up to 10 kilograms. White in color with a blue rim, it has short tentacles and resembles a white cauliflower. Its bearing is majestic, with slow and powerful pulses. Crabs and pelagic fish can live among its oral arms.

Chrysaora hysoscella
Stinging
10-30 cm

Beautiful and elegant, it has four oral arms that exceed one meter in length. It has a strong sting, common but not abundant in the Mediterranean. It lives mainly in the Atlantic and extends far north to the Norwegian fjords, where it forms very dense swarns.

Charybdea marsupialis
Stinging
4-5 cm

A relative of the dangerous Australian killer jellyfish, it is the only representative of the "box jellyfish" present in the Mediterranean. Its sting is painful, but the effects subside quickly.



Aequorea forskalea
Harmless
5-10 cm

It reaches 10 cm in diameter, does not form extensive swarms but can be locally abundant. It is easily distinguished by the many radiating channels that connect the center with the margin.

Cotylorhiza tubercolata
Harmless
fino a 30 cm

It's considered the most beautiful in the Mediterranean and perhaps in the world. It can be very abundant, especially in bays. Reddish or yellow in color, it has short arms with bluish-purple spots.
It is harmless, but it is best not to touch it to avoid damaging it. Many fish use it as a shelter.

Illustrations by Alberto Gennari