

Moon Jellyfish

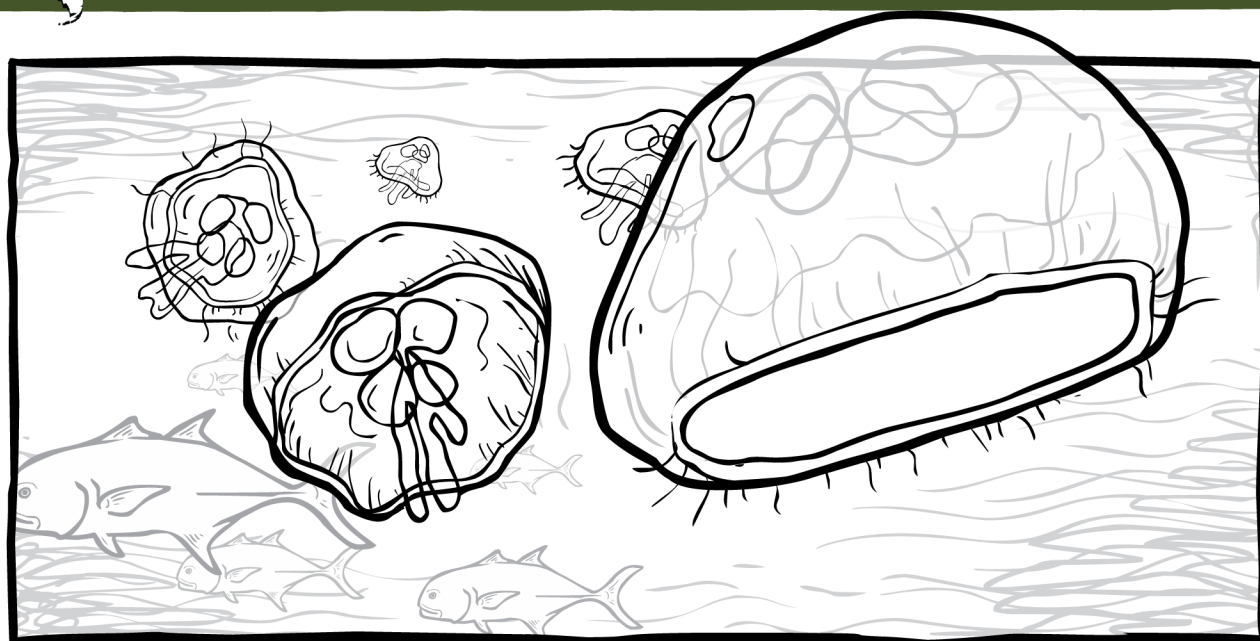
Moon Jelly (*Aurelia aurita*)

Instant ID

- A translucent body shaped like an upside-down bowl
- Top has four visible horseshoe-shaped organs in a clover pattern
- Fringed by short tentacles around the outer edge of the bell (body)
- Up to 15 3/4 inches in diameter

Native Niches

- Found in surface waters close to shores of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico
- Strays into lagoons, estuaries and other bodies of water with low amounts of salt
- Often seen washed up on shore after dying or in large blooms (groups of jellyfish) from boats



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Favorite Foods

- Uses tentacles, lined with nematocysts (stinging cells), to capture prey
- Feeds on zooplankton (free-floating microscopic and very small animals)

Critter Characteristics

- Tentacles can be used for defense as well as hunting
- Stings to humans result in minor rashes and burning sensations
- Eaten by leatherback sea turtles, giant sunfish and other jellyfish

Population Protection

- Jellyfish populations are expanding worldwide