

## HYDROZOA (Jellyfish) CARE

**PURPOSE:** To describe methods of care for hydrozoans.

**POLICY:** To provide optimum care for all animals.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Collector and user of the animals. If these are not the same person, the user takes over responsibility of the animals as soon as the animals have arrived on station.

**PROCEDURE:** Although there are dozens of species of jellyfish found in our area only one has been successfully kept for any period of time at BMSC.

**Species:** Penicillate jellyfish                      *Polyorchis penicillatus*

**Identification:** Refer to Eugene N. Kozloff's book, "Seashore Life of the Northern Pacific Coast" and Gotshall's "Guide to Marine Invertebrates: Alaska to Baja California" for in depth descriptions.

*Polyorchis penicillatus:* These jellies are distinctly bell-shaped, with a transparent medusa, a single core of tentacles and red eyespots on the lower margin of the bell. They can reach 10cm in length.

*Aurelia labiata:* These jellies have distinct pinkish-yellow horseshoe shaped gonads visible at the top of the bell. The oral arms (manubrium) is complex and frilly. The tentacles surrounding the bell margin are quite short (shorter than the manubrium). These animals can reach 40 cm across.

**Sites:** *Polyorchis penicillatus* mature as they swim through eelgrass beds. Often seen from floats but usually stays close to the bottom. *Aurelia* are found in the water column in the channels.

**Methods:** Jellies can be collected either by hand (dip net) or scuba/skin diving.

Hand: small buckets with handles for carrying

Scuba: plastic bags to hold water and animals

grab/collection bag to hold plastic bags cooler to hold during transport

**Holding:** These should be held in tall aquaria with a lot of vertical room for the jellies to move up and down in. Water inflow must be trickling at a very low rate. This is to prevent jellies from damaging their bell by being crushed against the lid at the top of the aquaria or from being buffeted against the aquaria walls. Once the animal's bell is damaged the jellyfish will not survive. Do not use an air stone as the bubbling agitation of the water will also damage the bell.

**Feeding:** Jellies feed on small plankton as well as small crustaceans. In aquaria the jellyfish must be fed daily in order for them to thrive. They will eat plankton, cultured artemia and will also feed on fish flakes that have sunk to the bottom of the tank.

**Tank Cleaning:** Once every two weeks the jellyfish should be carefully removed from the tank and placed into a holding bucket. The tanks should be drained and the sides and bottom should be scrubbed and rinsed with warm freshwater. The tanks should then be rinsed with cold seawater and allowed to refill, and the jellyfish replaced.

### **DAILY ACTIVITIES:**

1. Ensure water is flowing in at a trickling rate.
2. Ensure the standpipe is in place and not blocked.
3. Check for and remove any dead animals.
4. Check for and remove any uneaten prey organisms.

5. Check for and remove any foreign organisms.