

Public warning: Reminder to be aware of jellyfish in Exmouth Gulf.



Issued: Tuesday 22 March 2016.

The Shire of Exmouth would like to remind people of the dangers of jellyfish in the Exmouth Region.

There have been a number of reports of an uncommon, but potentially harmful jellyfish presumed to be capable of causing Irukandji Syndrome washed up on Town Beach this week. These are believed to be *Keesingia gigas* and specimens have been sent to the WA Museum.

The Shire of Exmouth recommends beach goers and users of the marine environment avoid touching jellyfish of any species, be aware of the signs and symptoms of irukandji syndrome, and understand first aid procedures and strategies for reducing the risk of being stung.



Description

Keesingia gigas are typically much larger than other species of Irukandji with an elongated, clear, cube-shaped bell 10 -15 cm in diameter and 20 – 40 cm long with one short tentacle on each of the four corners.

Symptoms and signs of Irukandji Syndrome

The initial sting from an Irukandji jellyfish may be minor and go unnoticed as nothing more than a minor irritant. Signs and symptoms may not be immediate and generally appear between five to 45 minutes after the initial sting. These may include (although not limited to) severe generalised muscle pain, headache, nausea, vomiting, anxiety, restlessness, breathing difficulties, sweating and elevated blood pressure. **Note:** very little is known of effects of *Keesingia gigas*, but it has been reported to cause Irukandji Syndrome or intense local and lymph pain.

First Aid

According to the Australian Resuscitation Council, if Irukandji syndrome is suspected, then an urgent request for medical assistance must be made.

- Follow the principles of DRSABCD
- Liberally douse or spray the area with vinegar for 30 seconds (**do not** rinse the area with fresh water)
- Transport to hospital

If symptoms and signs do not develop, it is recommended that the patient should remain out of the water and monitored in a safe location for at least 45 minutes.

Reducing the risk

Jellyfish have been washing up on beaches and are clearly visible. They can look like a piece of plastic or plastic bag. Be aware of actions of small children and pets while walking on the beaches. Swimmers can reduce the risk of being stung by covering bare skin using stinger suits or rash shirts made of nylon and lycra, or wet suits. However, any bare skin especially hands, feet and faces may still be at risk if they are not covered.

Reporting jellyfish

In coming days, Shire Rangers will keep an eye out for these jellyfish at beaches near town, and will remove any when found. If you suspect you have seen a *Keesingia gigas* jellyfish, please do not touch it under any circumstances. Please report any sighting to the Shire Rangers on 0427 491 399. The Shire is working with the Department of Parks and Wildlife, WA Museum and CSIRO to learn more about this jellyfish species.