

# GEORGIA AQUARIUM ANIMAL FACT SHEET

## Pacific Sea Nettle *Chrysaora fuscescens*

### Range/Habitat

- The Pacific sea nettle is common in coastal waters of California and Oregon, and less common north to the Gulf of Alaska, west to Japan and south to the Baja Peninsula.
- This jelly occurs in largest numbers during fall and winter.

### Physical Characteristics

- The sea nettle is a jelly with a dome-shaped body measuring one to three feet (30-91 cm) in diameter.
- The dome or “bell” is golden brown in color and has four ruffled oral arms extending downward as much as 12 feet (3.6 m) from its underside.
- There are also about 24 - 40 thin, maroon tentacles extending downward from around the perimeter of the bell.

### Diet/Feeding

- The Pacific sea nettle feeds continuously on a wide variety of zooplankton, including tiny crustaceans, invertebrate larvae, comb jellies, small fish, fish eggs and larvae, as well as other jellies.

### Conservation Status

- The Pacific sea nettle is not on the IUCN Red List.

### Additional Information

- Contact with the tentacles of this sea nettle can result in a painful sting, occasionally severe enough to require hospitalization.
- In some areas, the sea nettle population may become so large that the jellies clog the nets of fishermen and block water intakes. These conditions can last for months.
- Some scientists believe human influences in coastal areas are creating conditions more favorable to jellies, leading to the increased frequency of large blooms.
- High concentrations of jellies are thought to reduce populations of larval fishes, resulting in lower commercial catches of adult fish.
- The sea nettle’s natural predators include sea turtles, birds and some fish species.
- During spawning, male and female sea nettles are separate and release sperm and eggs into the water daily. This is the sexual reproductive phase. Fertilized eggs develop into larvae that drift for a while and then settle to the bottom and attach to hard surfaces, such as oyster shells.
- The larvae develop into small polyps that remain on the bottom in a dormant state throughout the winter. Then, during the spring and summer, the polyps “bud off” tiny sea nettles about a quarter of an inch in diameter that grow rapidly into a visible jelly. This is the asexual reproductive phase.
- Jellies are made up mostly of water containing salts, with organic materials only totaling about 0.4 lbs. (0.2 kg) of its entire weight. Jellies need very little food in order to grow rapidly. The more food it catches, the quicker it increases in size.

- The name *Chrysaora* has its origins in Greek mythology. Chrysaora was the son of Poseidon and Medusa and translates into “golden falchion”, a commonly used curved sword which could cut through armor – a reference to the stinging ability of these jellies.

**Sources**

<http://jellieszone.com/chrysaora.htm>

[www.mbayaq.org/efc/living\\_species](http://www.mbayaq.org/efc/living_species)

[www.aquariumofpacific.org/onlinelearningcenter/species\\_west\\_coast\\_sea\\_nettle](http://www.aquariumofpacific.org/onlinelearningcenter/species_west_coast_sea_nettle)