

Australian jellyfish range grows larger

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U.S. marine scientists have discovered the range of the Australian spotted jellyfish (*Phyllorhiza punctata*) now extends from Texas to North Carolina.

The invasive Australian jellyfish, first reported in the Gulf of Mexico in 2000, is now reported in waters stretching from southwestern Louisiana to Morehead City, N.C., said Monty Graham, senior marine scientist at Alabama's Dauphin Island Sea Laboratory.

Ranging in size from a softball to a basketball and weighing as much as 25 pounds, the jellyfish present little to no danger in terms of their sting, said Graham. But he said they can pose a threat to commercial fishing and shrimping since they foul trawling nets and consume eggs and larvae of important fishery species.

"We absolutely depend on the public's reporting the appearance of these creatures," Graham said. "We don't have the resources to survey the waters continuously."

Beachgoers and boaters are urged to report sightings of the jellyfish to the sea lab at dockwatch.disl.org.

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