

Bribie Island Oyster Gardening - Creature Feature 2 – June 2017

Upside Down Jellyfish

“The jelly fish in the photos (below), lives in the waters in our canal. It has been around on and off for about 12 months that we know of. For the past almost 3 weeks it has been lying, tentacles up, just by our walkway, and doesn't seem to have moved at all. Heaven only knows what it gets up to in the wee small hours of the morning. We have checked its live/dead status, and it is definitely alive. If you get a chance, could you please identify it for us, and perhaps fill us in on its behaviour. We would be very grateful.”

Yours sincerely, Anne and Phil Hargreaves.



Figure 1 (above). This jellyfish is called the “Upside Down Jellyfish” (*Cassiopea maremetens*). They are characterised by their distinctive markings and unusual sedentary, bottom dwelling behavior. Their lifestyle typically involves the jellyfish lying in sheltered, shallow water with oral arms facing upwards. This posture is thought to provide sunlight to algal endosymbionts (zooxanthellae) within the tissues, although the jellyfish are also plankton feeders. They can cause quite painful stings and are being investigated for their potential to accumulate heavy metals (for bioremediation). There are around 5 species of *Cassiopea* reported from Australia, mostly from tropical waters.



Highcrown Seahorse

This is an interesting find. Any ideas what this little fellow is called? Sincerely, Bob Brandis.

Figure 2 (left). That little fellow is most probably a juvenile Highcrown Seahorse (*Hippocampus procerus*). There are around 340 species of seahorses and pipefishes in Australia. All *Hippocampus* species and many other seahorses are on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/>) due to multiple threats. Oyster gardens and oyster reefs are potential habitat for these species, suggesting that restoration of oyster reefs will help halt biodiversity loss in our coastal estuaries.

Foliate oyster



Figure 3. These attractive, clam-like oysters that have recruited to some of the oyster gardens in Pacific Harbour are foliate oysters (*Dendostrea folium*). They grow to around 10 cm in shell width and occur throughout the Indo-West Pacific from East Africa, north to Japan and as far south as SE Queensland.

Stone crab



Figure 4. These pretty crabs are called stone crabs or slow moving shore crabs (*Myomenippe fornasinii*). Often mistaken for juvenile mud crabs (*Scylla serrata*), they are more colourful and relatively slow moving. They grow to around 10 cm across and are oyster predators, reducing average survival in your gardens. Remove them when you find them! Thanks to Peter Davie from QM for help with the ID.

For more information on oyster gardening on Bribie Island, and our broader shellfish reef restoration efforts, please see <http://restorepumicestonepassage.org/oyster-gardening/>