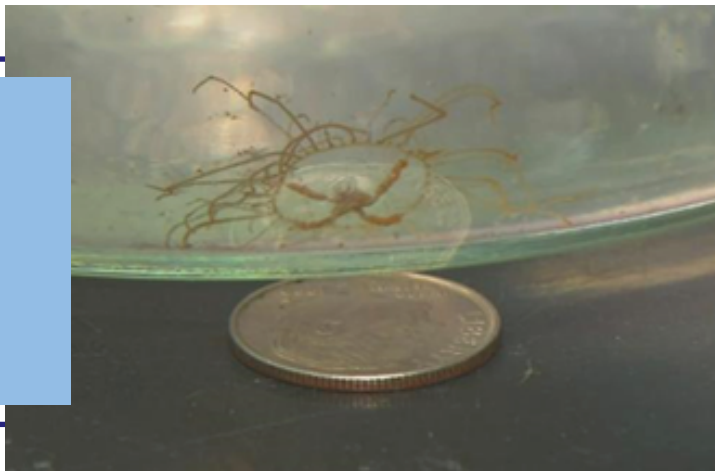
CLINGING Jellyfish



WHAT IS IT?

The Clinging Jellyfish (*Gonionemus vertens*) is a small hydrozoan jellyfish about the size of a dime that can be found in bay and estuarine waters.

WHERE ARE THEY FOUND?

Clinging jellyfish are native to the Pacific Ocean. They were introduced to the eastern Atlantic Coast as early as 1894 in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, but can be found from Maine to North Carolina. Clinging jellyfish thrive in temperate regions, and can be found in sheltered shallow bay and estuarine waters where tides are not strong enough to dislodge them. They prefer to cling to vegetation and other substrates (e.g. shells) during the day. They typically feed at night in the water column on small marine animals (zooplankton), but have been observed during the day. They are not typically found in coastal ocean waters.

HOW BIG DO THEY GET?

This is a small jellyfish that only grows to about 25 mm (1 inch) in diameter, but it can expand to about three inches in diameter. They have 60-90 tentacles that contain the nematocysts or stinging cells.

WHY ARE THEY IN NEW JERSEY WATERS THIS YEAR?

Although they have not been previously reported in New Jersey waters, their presence here may be a recent introduction, or they may have gone unnoticed in the past. They do not produce large populations as do some other jellyfish, but can be found in local areas in small to moderate numbers.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT THIS SUMMER?

This jellyfish is considered to be an erratic species, meaning that it is not often densely populated. They are often active during periods of unseasonably warm weather and increased water temperatures. Additionally, clinging jellyfish are not likely to be abundant in areas heavily used by swimmers, but could affect casual waders and people gathering shellfish near eelgrass beds. They are very sensitive to any disturbance, which causes them to detach and quickly swim to the surface; potentially making contact with the offender. Anyone wading through these areas, especially near aquatic vegetation should take precautions, such as wearing waders to protect themselves.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF STUNG?

The sting of the clinging jellyfish can produce severe pain and other localized symptoms. According to recent literature, if stung by this jellyfish:

- **Apply white vinegar to the affected area to immobilize any remaining stinging cells.**
- **Rinse the area with saltwater and remove any remaining tentacle materials using gloves, a plastic card or a thick towel.**
- **Cold packs or ice can then be applied to alleviate pain. A hot compress may also be effective.**
- **If symptoms persist or pain increases instead of subsiding, seek prompt medical attention.**

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Mysterious Jellyfish Makes a Comeback: Rise in toxic stings has scientists on the alert. **www.whoi.edu/page.do?pid=7167&tid=3622&cid=185270#sthash.LEzi7wPa.dpuf**

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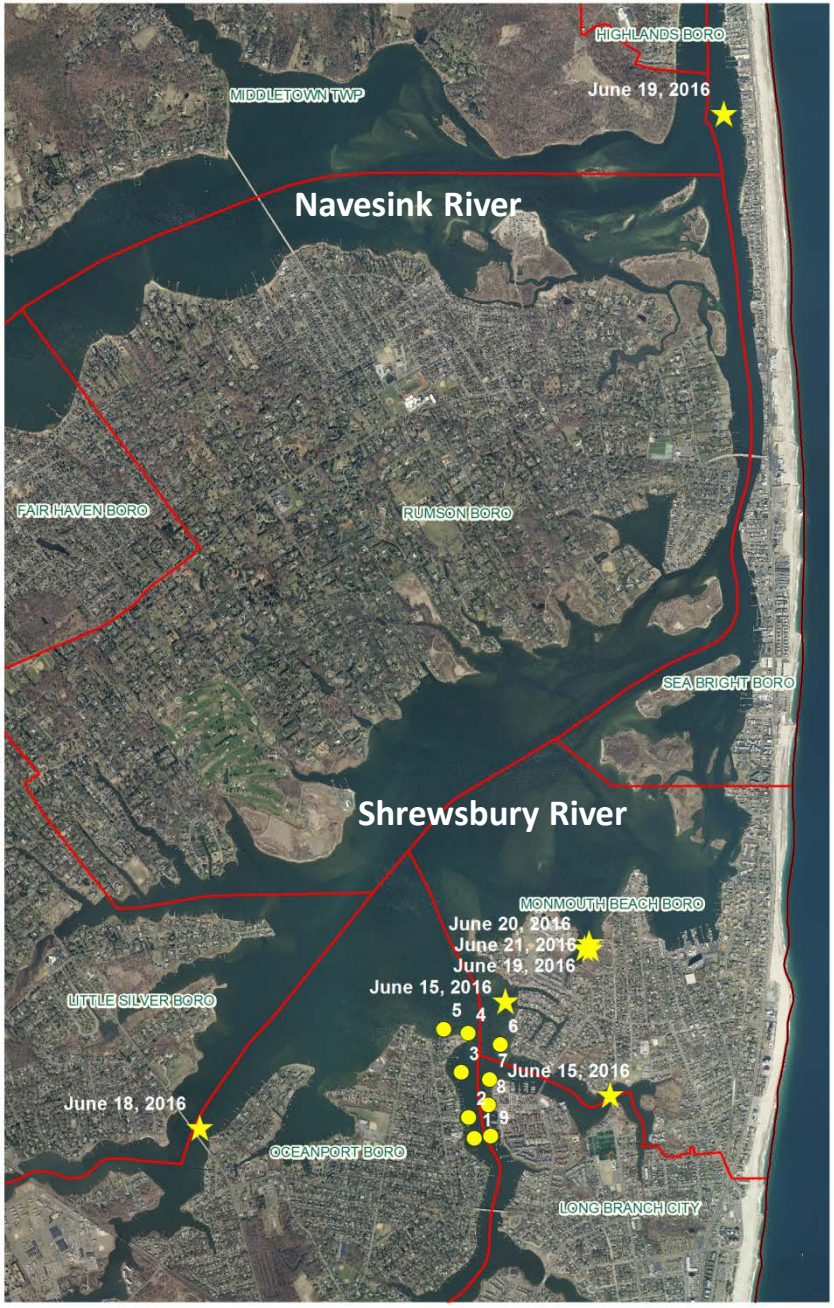
Observations of Clinging Jellyfish in New Jersey

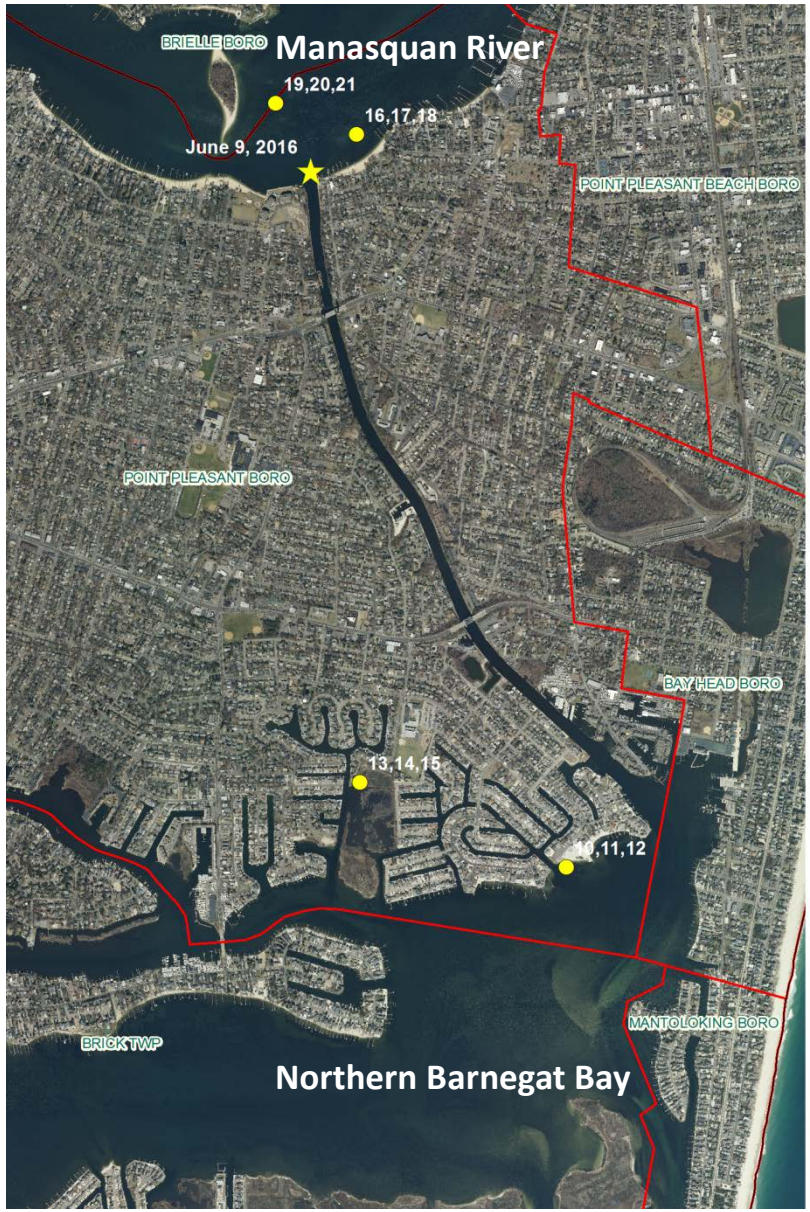
Confirmed Clinging Jellyfish Sightings as of 6/23/2016

Clinging Jellyfish Observations in New Jersey (2016).		
Date	Location	Comments
6/9/2016	Manasquan River, near PP canal entrance	One individual collected; species confirmed as G. vertens by DNA analysis (Montclair State U).
6/15/2016	Shrewsbury River, Monmouth Beach	Observation #1: Man - hospitalized after making contact with G. vertens, potentially only one medusa.
6/15/2016	Shrewsbury River, Monmouth Beach	Observation #2: Property owner on lagoon observed several individuals; (Montclair State U) collected about 7 specimens from in and around this location later that day.
6/18/2016	Shrewsbury River, Oceanport	7 individuals collected from the Shrewsbury River.
6/18/2016	Shrewsbury River, Monmouth Beach, Columbus Dr.	About 45 individuals observed/collected off of family dock.
6/19/2016	Shrewsbury River, Sea Bright, Ocean Avenue	One individual G. vertens was reported to be seen swimming 20 yards from shore in 3 feet of water, this location is at the confluence of the Navesink and Shrewsbury Rivers.
6/20/2016	Shrewsbury River, Patricia Ct., Monmouth Beach	50 Individuals collected in shallow water by resident
6/21/2016	Shrewsbury River, Patricia Ct., Monmouth Beach	30 Individuals collected in shallow water by -Montclair State U.

DEP –Locations Sampled as of 6/23/2016

Location	Tow #
Shrewsbury River	1
Shrewsbury River	2
Shrewsbury River	3
Shrewsbury River	4
Shrewsbury River	5
Shrewsbury River	6
Shrewsbury River	7
Shrewsbury River	8
Shrewsbury River	9
Upper Barnegat/ Manasquan	10,11,12
Upper Barnegat/ Manasquan	13,14,15
Upper Barnegat/ Manasquan	16,17,18
Upper Barnegat/ Manasquan	19,20,21





Confirmed Sightings

DEP – Locations Sampled