

Project 2.2.3 Early warning systems to minimise the risk of box jellyfish stings by empowering stakeholders

Risk of Irukandji stings in northeast Queensland

Irukandji are small transparent jellyfish that cause the potentially life-threatening Irukandji syndrome. Stings have been recorded across the beaches, islands and reefs of northeast Queensland under a broad range of conditions. However, statistical analyses of historical records suggest that risks are higher under certain conditions.

Historical distribution of stings

- The risk of stings is highest when and where conditions are favourable to both swimming activities and Irukandji.
- The largest number of stings was in the Cairns region.
- Sting rates peak in late December and early January.
- Further south there are more stings in late summer or autumn.

Cairns beaches

- Higher risk of stings when winds over the previous few days have been weak or from the west.
- Higher risk of stings during low and incoming tides.

Cairns islands

- Higher risk of stings when winds over the previous few days have been weak or from the west.
- Higher risk of stings around neap tide and low tide.

Cairns reefs

- Higher risk of stings when winds over the previous few days have been weak.
- Higher risk of stings around spring tide and during low and incoming tides.

Townsville beaches

- Higher risk of stings when winds over the previous few days have been weak or from the west.
- Higher risk of stings around spring tide and incoming tides.

Townsville islands and reefs

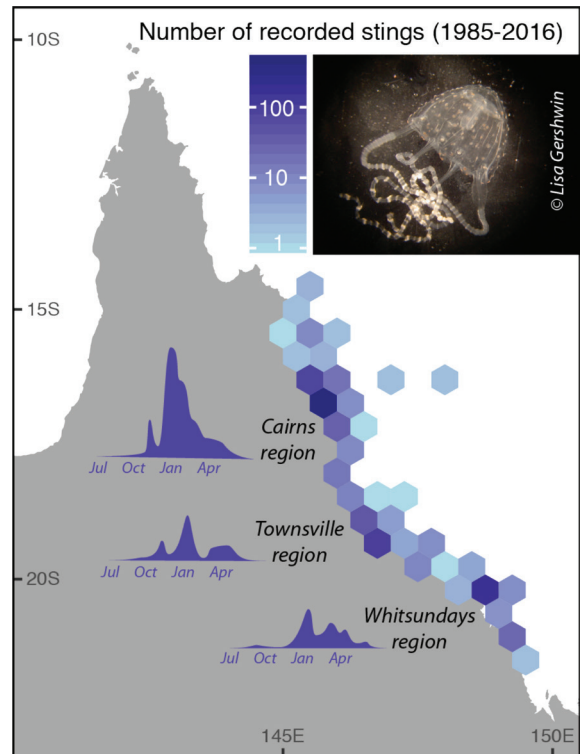
- Higher risk of stings when winds over the previous few days have been from the west or north-west.
- Higher risk of stings around neap tide and low tide.

Whitsundays beaches

- Higher risk of stings when winds over the previous few days have been from the north-west.

Whitsundays islands and reefs

- Higher risk of stings when winds over the previous few days have been from the south-west.
- Higher risk of stings during low and incoming tides.



NOTE: While the listed conditions correspond to the highest risk, stings do occur under other conditions.



Further information

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