

Marine BIOLOGY



A jellyfish, possibly *Nematostoma setouchiana*, floats in shallow, sunlit waters of the tropical western Pacific ocean. The jellyfish is one of the larger members of the plankton: myriad, mostly small, organisms that swim weakly at best and drift at the mercy of the currents. Instead of a single mouth, this type of jellyfish has lobes of tissue that seal off the mouth opening and grow out into eight frilled oral arms below the umbrella-like bell. The arms are covered with many small mouths with which the jellyfish feeds on small animals in the plankton. This group also lacks the tentacles of other jellyfishes—the white filaments hanging from the oral arms are not actually tentacles but rather appendages of the mouth arms. Both these appendages and the mouth arms themselves are covered with nematocysts, stinging structures that help the jellyfish capture its tiny prey.

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