



**PRESS RELEASE EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 MONDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER**

## **Jellyfish Blooms on the Rise: New Wildlife Sighting Report Reveals Shifting Patterns**

- The [Marine Conservation Society](#) marks World Jellyfish Day with the release of its annual *Wildlife Sightings Report*, revealing latest jellyfish and turtle sightings across UK seas.

The leading marine charity's latest [Wildlife Sightings Report](#) details 1,327 sightings of jellyfish across the UK and Ireland. Covering data from 1st October 2024 to 30th September 2025, this year's report shows a 6% drop in total sightings compared to the previous year. Despite this slight dip, there were remarkable changes for some species, which may reflect the changing conditions of our seas.

- The moon jellyfish, not dangerous to humans, retained its top spot for the second consecutive year, making up nearly a quarter (24%) of all sightings, most frequently reported in July and predominantly along the English coastline.
- The huge barrel jellyfish, a relatively gentle giant, leapt from fifth place in 2024 to second in 2025 – a 230% increase in reports – and were mostly encountered in Scotland and Wales.
- In contrast, sightings of the Portuguese man o' war plummeted by over 80%, dropping from second to eighth place. These sightings made up less than 4% of total sightings this year, with the majority spotted in England. Also known as 'Bluebottles' they are beautiful but can carry a painful sting and were unusually frequent visitors in September 2024. Typically found in tropical and subtropical waters, they are actually a species of siphonophore, but like most jellyfish, they drift with ocean currents, so fewer sightings may be linked to fewer storms.

**Anna Bunney, Citizen Science Programme Manager at the Marine Conservation Society**, said, "*Volunteer reports show just how dynamic and ever-changing our coastal ecosystems truly are. The surge in barrel jellyfish sightings is particularly interesting. These giant jellyfish, which can grow as big as a dustbin lid, have been sighted across the UK this year. Whilst we need more records and data to help us understand these fluctuations, it may be linked to warmer sea temperatures and changing ocean currents. That's why our public sightings are so vital – they help build a clearer picture of what's happening in our seas and allow scientists to track changes in real time.*"

The report also highlighted notable increases in large jellyfish blooms. Nearly 21% of moon jellyfish sightings involved groups of 100 or more – the highest since 2016 – and mauve stinger jellyfish reached record abundance levels, with 50% of sightings involving groups of over 20 individuals.

The key reason for the charity launching its Wildlife Sightings Programme 22 years ago was to better understand jellyfish trends in UK and Irish waters – and the marine turtles that rely on jellyfish for food.

Jellyfish play a crucial role in the ocean, helping to move carbon through marine food webs, supporting biodiversity and acting as natural indicators of changing ocean conditions.

Their presence and behaviour can reveal important information about the health and shifts in our seas over time, as well as indicating where leatherback turtle feeding grounds are.

This year, turtle sightings remained rare but encouraging, with 12 confirmed reports – an increase of three compared to last year. Nine of these were leatherbacks, eight of which were alive, and were mostly spotted off the Southwest coast, with one live loggerhead turtle also recorded in the Outer Hebrides. Most sightings occurred during the summer months, when leatherbacks migrate to UK waters to feed on jellyfish.

*Report any jellyfish or turtle sightings via the charity's website: [www.mcsuk.org/sightings](http://www.mcsuk.org/sightings)*

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### **Images**

Please find a selection of jellyfish images and the full report [here](#).

### **About the Marine Conservation Society**

The [Marine Conservation Society](http://www.mcsuk.org) is a leading UK environmental charity dedicated to protecting our ocean – defending crucial habitats, regenerating vital ecosystems and inspiring volunteers. The organisation unites communities, governments, and industry and champions science-based solutions for cleaner, healthier seas to tackle the climate and nature emergency.