Growing on jellyfish: The PERSEO Project

Scyphozoan jellyfish outbreaks have been increasingly raising alarms in both popular and scientific media worldwide in the last twenty years. Jellyfish are clearly shifting habitats and causing economic stress to coastal populations. Fishers report clogged nets and even capsized boats; coastal resorts, stung swimmers and beach closures, and coastal industries, clogged cooling systems. Consequently, municipalities and businesses are appealing to scientists for advice on the proper response to these occurrences, however, little is known about Jellyfish biology and scientists are often at a loss as to how to help. The PERSEO project, that aims to investigate these outbreaks, has two overriding goals. The first is to research jellyfish physiology, biochemistry, life cycles and ecology and through an improved understanding of these marine creatures, offer solutions to the problems caused by their increasingly prevalent blooms. The second is to convert jellyfish outbreaks into a boon for society by learning to harvest them for commercial export, for medical purposes, and as sources of pharmaceutical biotechnology products.

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