

Comb jellies!



By Warren R. Francis, 2021
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A mysterious, bioluminescent animal
in an ocean near you!

These animals look like jellyfish, but don't worry, they cannot sting you. Instead, they have another special power, the ability to make light!

Also called a "sea walnut", this species inhabits waters around Denmark. However, it is actually an invasive species, sometimes called the American comb jelly. It's Latin name is "*Mnemiopsis leidyi*" and it looks very similar to a native species called "*Bolinopsis infundibulum*", which also makes light.

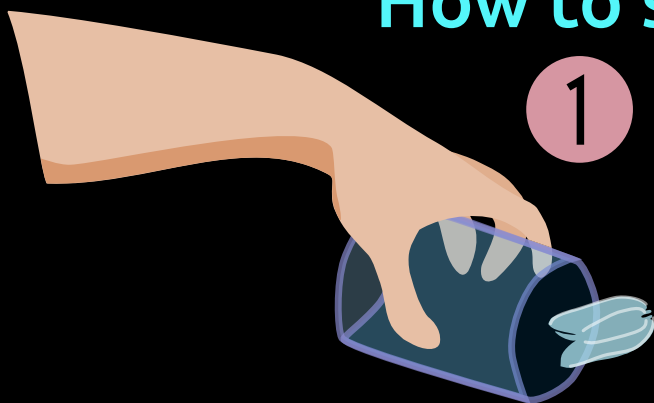


How to see the light at home:

1

Try to go out at a time when the waves are calm.

Catch them from the beach or from a dock using a bucket, or even a marmalade jar.



2

Put them in a cool, dark place.

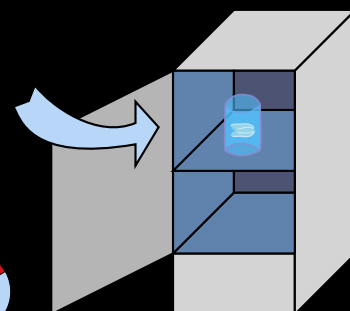
When you get home, put them into the fridge. (They will be OK in the cold.) Make sure you turn off or unscrew the light of the fridge, so they stay in the dark if you open your fridge.



3

Wait a few hours so they adjust to the darkness.

They need some time to adjust to the dark before they can produce light (like they would at night). Red light is OK, but most lamps are not. You can also cover the jars with a dark cloth. Leave them in the jar inside the fridge in the dark until nighttime.



1-2hrs

4

Take them out and give them a poke.

Once they are adapted to the dark, turn the lights off in the kitchen and take them out of the fridge. Make sure you wait a few minutes yourself, for your own eyes to adjust to the darkness.

If you need it, use a red light to see what you are doing. For example, a bicycle tail-light works fine.

Then, using a stick, a spoon, or even your fingertips, give it a few gentle bumps, and watch closely!

