

Name: _____

Another Peter Pan

by Claudette J. Young



Floating around our oceans is a small menace that can return itself to its infancy. *Turritopsis nutricula* (Turri-top-sis nu-trick-u-la) is a hydrozoan jellyfish and the only known jellyfish that can deliberately go back to its polyp stage repeatedly. This ability also makes it a potential menace worldwide.

Turritopsis nutricula begins life as a polyp (a tiny seed colony on a piece of coral that reaches maturity and has deadly tentacles).

These creatures are the only known immortal animal on the planet. During adulthood an unknown event triggers a regeneration response in the jellyfish. Unlike other animals, like salamanders that regenerate a specific part of their bodies, *Turritopsis nutricula* returns itself to its polyp stage of development, reattaches to a piece of coral, etc. and starts life again. Generations of their offspring remain to grow, too. Unless killed by a predator, they keep living their lives over and over. Experts believe this repeat performance can happen indefinitely.

Researchers know that the mechanism for the rejuvenation process is genetic, but the

it stumps the industry. These are as



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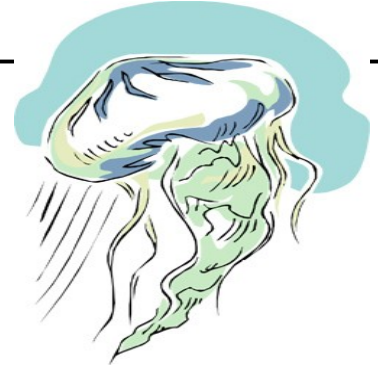
These jellies have few predators, which have dwindling numbers. The neuro-toxin carried in their tentacles works on most fish. These ordinary Caribbean jellyfish now live in ocean waters from the Arctic to the Southern Ocean and also tolerate fresh water.

Experts and fisherman fear that the world's oceans might become this jelly's Never Never Land. A population explosion could reduce the ocean's fish population to dangerously low numbers. Only time and research will provide the end to this tale.

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1. What is unusual about the turrítopsis nutricula jellyfish?
 - a. They are able to make lots of polyps.
 - b. They are able to kill coral by attaching themselves to it.
 - c. When they grow old, they are able to turn themselves back into baby polyps.
 - d. They are impossible to kill.

2. Which sentence accurately describes the population of the turrítopsis nutricula.
 - a. It is shrinking quickly.
 - b. It is confined to the waters of the Caribbean.
 - c. It is shrinking in saltwater habitats, but expanding in freshwater habitats.
 - d. It is expanding in saltwater habitats, but shrinking in freshwater habitats.

3. Which sentence is true?

- a. The turrítopsis nutricula is a type of fish.
- b. The turrítopsis nutricula is a type of jellyfish.
- c. The turrítopsis nutricula is a type of mollusk.
- d. The turrítopsis nutricula is endangered because it is being poisoned by fish.



4. Why are fishermen concerned about the turrítopsis nutricula jellyfish?

5. Why did the author title this article, "Another Peter Pan"?

Name: _____

Another Peter Pan

Vocabulary



The words below are scrambled vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Look back in the article to be sure you spelled each word correctly.

1.

p	u	t
m	s	s

Clue: confuses

2.

n	n	i	c
a	y	f	

Clue: beginning stage of life; baby stage

3.

t	c
o	

Clue: a



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4.

n		
m	c	a

Clue: something that is troublesome or a threat

5.

i	e	d	f	n
e	t	i	n	i

Clue: repeatedly or continuously, for an unknown amount of time

6.

g	w	n	n	i
d	d	l	i	i

Clue: decreasing, shrinking, or dropping

7.

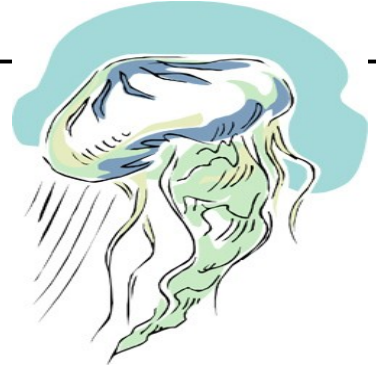
a	m	t	i
y	r	u	t

Clue: stage of life when a living thing is no longer growing; adult stage

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1. What is unusual about the turrítopsis nutricula jellyfish?
- They are able to make lots of polyps.
 - They are able to kill coral by attaching themselves to it.
 - When they grow old, they are able to turn themselves back into baby polyps.**
 - They are impossible to kill.

2. Which sentence accurately describes the population of the turrítopsis nutricula. **d**
- It is shrinking quickly.

-
-
-
- d.**



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3. Which sentence accurately describes the turrítopsis nutricula?
- The turrítopsis nutricula becomes poisonous after it grows tentacles.**
 - The turrítopsis nutricula is poisonous as a polyp and kills fish that eat it.
 - The turrítopsis nutricula have a neuro-toxin that works on all fish.
 - The turrítopsis nutricula is endangered because it is being poisoned by fish.

4. Why are fishermen concerned about the turrítopsis nutricula jellyfish?

Its poison is killing many fish in the ocean.

5. Why did the author title this article, "Another Peter Pan"?

Peter Pan is a fairy tale character who lives in Never, Never Land and never has to grow up. This jellyfish is similar because it can return to its infancy stage and "grow up" repeatedly throughout its life.

ANSWER KEY

Another Peter Pan

Vocabulary

The words below are scrambled vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Look back in the article to be sure you spelled each word correctly.

1.

p	u	t
m	s	s

stumps

Clue: confuses

2.

n	n	i	c
a	y	f	

infancy

Clue: beginning stage of life; baby stage

3.

t	a
o	

Clue: a

4.

n	
m	c

menace

Clue: something that is troublesome or a threat

5.

i	e	d	f	n
e	t	i	n	i

indefinite

Clue: repeatedly or continuously, for an unknown amount of time

6.

g	w	n	n	i
d	d	l	i	i

dwindling

Clue: decreasing, shrinking, or dropping

7.

a	m	t	i
y	r	u	t

maturity

Clue: stage of life when a living thing is no longer growing; adult stage



PREVIEW

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A cartoon illustration of a superhero with brown hair, wearing a red suit with a blue cape and a blue chest emblem. He is flying through the air, holding a green gift box with a red ribbon.