

Jellyfish as Inspiration for Propulsion



What is a bluebottle? Readers living in the temperate north will almost certainly think of a large, hairy fly buzzing around just out of reach. But for Australians, a bluebottle brings to mind a diminutive blue jellyfish, swarming menacingly off the beaches of the east coast and the cause of many hastily abandoned swims. Australian bluebottles are remarkable creatures and served as inspiration for a new generation of unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) coming to market from Ocius Technology.

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So what is it about bluebottles that makes them so special? For a start they are comprised of several individual interdependent organisms (polyps) working in perfect symbiosis. They sport different tentacles for different tasks such as fishing, stinging, eating and reproducing. They can also sail, harnessing the power of the wind by contracting the crest of a gas-filled 'float' on the ocean surface. In other words, bluebottles have evolved a degree of autonomy as to where they go. Unlike lesser jellyfish, they refuse to be at the mercy of ocean currents.

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