



# dangerous creatures

## stonefish

### Distribution

Stonefish inhabit the shallow tropical marine waters of the Pacific and Indian oceans primarily above the Tropic of Capricorn. However in Australia, stonefish have been recorded as far south as northern NSW. Stonefish use camouflage to hide amongst coral reefs, near rocks or lie dormant in the mud and sand.

### Size and appearance

Stonefish are extremely well camouflaged receiving their name due to their close resemblance with an encrusted stone or rock. They are mottled green-brown in colour growing up to 50cm in length. Stonefish have 13 dorsal spines through which they deliver highly toxic venom.

### Symptoms and signs

The severity of symptoms depends on the number of spines penetrated and the depth of penetration. Symptoms include excruciating pain, swelling, tissue death, muscle weakness, temporary paralysis and shock. Whilst there have been no recorded fatalities in Australia, it is important to seek early medical attention to ensure effective treatment and management of the wound and relieve the often extreme pain of the sting.

### First aid

1. Call 000.
2. Provide emergency care if required.
3. Immerse the affected area in hot water – as hot as the rescuer can stand with their elbow.
4. Rest and reassure the patient.
5. Oxygen therapy may be required.
6. Seek medical aid – antivenom available.

### How to avoid them

- Shuffle your feet when walking through shallow waters and rocky outcrops.
- Wear thick-soled shoes.

### Did you know?

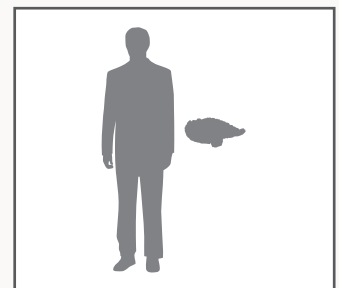
- The stonefish is the world's deadliest fish.
- Stonefish are consumed as expensive sashimi cuisine in Japan.
- Stonefish can survive out of water for up to 20 hours.



*Synanceia horrida*



*Distribution in Australian waters*



*Size relative to human*



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