

Source Text**The Blue-Ringed Octopus**

Like others of its order, the blue-ringed octopus has eight arms, two eyes, and a beak-like mouth that can cut through a wetsuit. It feeds on shrimp, crabs, and small fish. It is comparable in size to a golf ball, and each arm measures about two inches from tip to body. The blue-ringed octopus can be found on the sandy ocean bottoms and in the coral reefs of Australia, New Guinea, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Japan. It is hard to spot as it uses camouflage for self-defense. To say “stay away,” it changes color from brown to bright yellow with blue rings. Its beautiful, unusual coloring makes it a “must-find” creature for many underwater photographers.

While all octopuses are venomous, only the blue-ringed octopus is deadly to humans. At first, a bite might seem painless. But the powerful neurotoxic venom quickly causes numbness of the lips and tongue. This is followed by difficulty in breathing caused by paralysis and then a shutdown of the senses. Death can occur in minutes, and there is no known antidote. One small blue-ringed octopus carries enough venom to kill twenty-six adult humans in minutes.

