

WATCH OUT FOR MERSING 'SEA STINGERS'



Stinging pteropods were detected by a research team from Penang's Batu Maung Fisheries Research Institute, off Mersing, Johor, on June 11. PIC COURTESY OF IPP BATU MAUNG

Johor Fisheries Dept warns beach-goers about the presence of pteropods, whose sting can cause inflammation, itching, dryness, peeling, redness and scaly skin

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MERSING

THE state Fisheries Department has issued a warning about dangerous gastropods commonly known as slugs and snails identified as pteropods (*Creseis acicula*) off the coast here.

According to the department, the pteropods, which originated from tropical and subtropical waters, were detected by a research team from Penang's Batu Maung Fisheries Research Institute on June 11.

"Climate change, increased water temperature and expulsion of ballast water from ships are be-

lieved to be the cause of spread of this species into the country's waters.

"This mollusc (soft-bodied animal without bones) has a sting that can cause inflammation, itching, dryness, peeling, redness and scaly skin," read a statement on the department's Facebook page.

It advised the public to refrain from water activities in beach areas here for the time being.

The statement said the stinging effect was related to hypersensitive reactions on the human skin. It advised those with the symptoms to seek treatment.

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