

Octopuss by Bethany Hendrickson



Blub...blub...Meow? Jules Verne himself couldn't have dreamed up such a fanciful creature. Half feline, half cephalopod—part creature of the Abyssal Plain, and part Abyssinian. Octopuss is an adorable toy that is sure to delight anyone. Make it for a gift in the recipient's favorite colors, or in effigy of your own kitty (or your own octopus, if you have one). The secret to a well-made toy? Knitting to a dense gauge and stuffing it really well. As a bonus, this is a super-quick knit, easily finished in an evening or two—just in time for a last minute gift!

You will Need:

- * Worsted*-weight yarn—Colors A & B 27 yds each (25 m each)
- * 3.25 mm DPNs, set of 5** (2.75 mm optional for picking up stitches)
- * yarn needle, 1 foot (30 cm) waste yarn, large handful of stuffing***
- * optional: pipe cleaners to stuff tentacles

Skill: Intermediate—basic stitches, unusual shaping & finishing

Techniques: knitting in the round, increase in leg of stitch below, single & double decreases, backstitch, no-wrap short-rows, selvedge-purl-bind off (joins 2 pieces of fabric perpendicularly)

Gauge: 6 stitches & 8 rows per 1" (2.5 cm) square

Finished Size: 4" diameter x 3" tall (10 cm diameter x 7.5 cm tall)

* Some countries call this "10-ply" weight.

** One could use any method to knit in the round (magic loop, two circulars, DPNs), but the ears and tentacles are worked on a very small number of stitches, making longer needles or circulars rather cumbersome, so 5 or 6 inch (12-15 cm) length DPNs are the recommended utensil.

*** Stuffing: polyester, bamboo, cotton, yarn, fabric, or fiber scraps, even cottonballs, will all work as long as there enough. Stuffing is only used on the head as the tentacles are stuffed with their own yarn ends.

Octopuss does not actually squirt ink; ink-n-run photo for humorous purposes only!

Abbreviations:

k1f&sl = knit one front and slip; knit into a stitch and leave it on the left needle. Insert right needle into the back of the stitch, then slip the stitch off the left needle. One stitch increased to two stitches. (This is a modification of the more common “knit one front and back” increase—it eliminates the bumps caused by knitting in the back of a stitch, which would be quite noticeable on an item this small.)

k2tog = knit two together; Insert right needle into first 2 stitches on left needle as if to knit, then knit them both together and remove from left needle—This is a “right-leaning single decrease.”

L-inc = left increase; insert left needle from front to back into left leg of stitch below the stitch just worked into, then insert right needle into this loop and knit it. One stitch increased to two stitches.

p2tog = Purl two together; insert right needle into first 2 stitches on left needle as if to purl, then purl them both together and remove from left needle—this is a right-leaning single decrease when viewed from the other side of the work.

stockinette = knit on right side, purl on wrong side.

selv-P-BO = Selvedge-purl-bind off; pick up outermost color A loop from corresponding stitch on other side of Tentacle with right needle, p1 active color B stitch, pass color A loop over, *pick up outermost color A loop from corresponding stitch on other side of Tentacle with right needle, p1 active color B stitch, pass selvedge stitch over, pass color B stitch on right needle over; repeat from * to last stitch. (Skip every 4th color A selvedge stitch.) Break yarn & pull through last stitch.

sl2-k1-p2sso = Slip 2, knit 1, pass two slipped stitches over; insert the right needle into two stitches on the left needle knitwise, and slip them both off the left needle at the same time. Knit one stitch from left needle, then insert the left needle into the two slipped stitches and pass them over the stitch just knitted—This is a “central double decrease.”

ssk = slip, slip, knit; slip one stitch from the left needle knitwise, then another. Insert the left needle into the front of these 2 stitches and knit them together through their back loops—This is a “left-leaning single decrease.”

wrap & turn = move yarn to front and slip next stitch purlwise, then move yarn to back and turn the work; slip this stitch purlwise again; one wrapped stitch worked.

yo = Yarn over; bring the yarn forward and up over the needle counter-clockwise. One [independent] increase made.

Construction:

Octopuss begins with color A at the top of the head, is increased to a certain width, worked plain for some rows, then decreased drastically to form the bell head shape. The head is then very well stuffed. The stitches from the head are then put onto waste yarn and the top of each tentacle is worked from four live stitches eight times. With color B, each tentacle is worked as follows: stitches are picked up & knitted from the right (as in "opposite of left" **and** as in knit side facing) side of the tentacle and worked around the underside with short-row shaping, decreases, and increases to give the tentacles a slight upward curve. The tentacle is then connected into a tube with a clever bind off. The yarn ends are then run through each tentacle to stuff and finish them at the same time. The belly (also worked with color B) is picked up from the base of the tentacles (closing them off) and decreased to make a flat bottom. Finally the ears and worked and the face is stitched on.

Head:

With color A, cast on 4 stitches.

Round 1: Join and knit one round, being careful not to twist

Round 2: (K1f&sl) 4 times {8 stitches}

Round 3: Knit

Round 4: *K1f&sl; repeat from * to end {16 stitches}

Rounds 5-7: Knit

Round 8: *K1f&sl; repeat from * to end {32 stitches}

Rounds 9-19: Knit

Round 20: *K2tog; repeat from * to end {16 stitches}

Round 21: Knit

Round 22: *k1, L-inc; repeat from * to end. {32 stitches}

Rounds 23 & 24: Knit

Check off rounds as they are completed:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

Stuff the head:

Put all stitches on waste yarn. Stuff head with your favorite stuffing (for a project this small, one could even use cotton balls, but if you do be sure to unroll them and break them up a bit before stuffing to keep the head from looking too lumpy), and make sure you pack it very very tightly.

Tentacle:

Put first 4 sts from waste yarn onto a DPN and with knit side facing, work as follows with color A:

Row 1: yo, k4. {5 stitches}

Row 2: yo, p4, purl yo twisted to close. {6 stitches}

Row 3: K5, knit yo twisted to close.

Rows 4-9: Stockinette Stitch beginning with a purl row.

Row 10: P1, p2tog, p3. (5 sts)

Row 11: k1, ssk, k2. (4 sts)

Rows 12-15: Stockinette Stitch beginning with a purl row.

Row 16: P1, p2tog, p1. (3 sts)

Rows 17-20: Stockinette Stitch beginning with a knit row.

Row 21: Sl2-k1-p2sso. Break yarn & pull through last stitch.

Check off rounds as they are completed:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

Make 8 tentacles.

Underside of Tentacle:

With color B, knit side of tentacle facing up (tapered end pointing left; head to the right), pick up and knit 3 stitches per 4 rows until you have 15 stitches. Notes: If you are unsure where to begin picking up stitches, count back 20 edge stitches starting from the point of the tentacle.

Row 1: Purl across.

Row 2: k10, wrap & turn, purl to end. (This is a short-row.)

Row 3: k5, wrap & turn, purl to end. (This is a short-row.)

Row 4: Knit to end, to work a wrapped stitch, insert *left* needle into the wrap and its accompanying stitch, then insert *right* needle into both (as if to knit) and k2tog.

Row 5: Selv-p-BO to end. Break yarn & pull through last stitch.

Stuffing the Tentacles:

When finished with all eight tentacles, stuff all yarn ends into them and snip off any excess. (It may help to thread the ends onto a needle individually, then push the needle all the way through to the end of the tentacle.) If you opt to use pipe cleaners, now is the time to put them into the tentacles, as working the belly will seal off their openings; make sure they are a bit shorter than the tentacle so they don't stick out the end when it's finished.

Belly:

Note: Please make sure you've worked "Stuffing the Tentacles" before proceeding with the belly because what follows will close the openings to the tentacles. With color B, pick up and knit 5 sts at the base of tentacles 1, 3, 5, & 7, and 4 stitches under tentacles 2, 4, 6, & 8. {36 sts} You will be using these to finish and close off the underside so be mindful of where you are picking up from and whether or not the picked up stitch needs to be knitted twisted to tighten it on the following row.

Round 1: *ssk, k4; repeat from * {30 stitches}

Round 2: knit

Round 3: *K2tog, k1; repeat from * {20 stitches}

Round 4: knit

Round 5: *k2tog; repeat from * {10 stitches}

Round 6: *k2tog; repeat from * {5 sts}

Break yarn. Thread yarn tail onto needle and pass through the remaining 5 stitches twice, pull tightly to close. Weave in end.

Ears:

With one needle, and beginning off to one side of the top of the head (see photo on page 4 for placement), pick up and knit 5 stitches. Turn head around; with another needle pick up and knit 5 more directly behind them.

Round 1: knit

Round 2: (ssk, k1, k2tog) twice {6 stitches}

Round 3: knit

Round 4: (sl2-k1-p2sso) twice. {2 stitches}

Break yarn & pull through last 2 stitches, giving an extra tug to snug them up. Weave in end.

Make another ear on the opposite side of the head. (Both sides of the ear look the same, so it won't matter if the other ear is begun from the back of the head.)

Face:

Thread yarn onto needle and insert needle through fabric at back of head then skim needle between stuffing and fabric around to the front of the head about an inch below the crown and off to one side. Stitch on one eye, then skim the needle between fabric and stuffing to stitch on second eye about an inch (2.5 cm) away. Backstitch face per picture starting with right (or left) side of mouth up to nose; stitch nose by backstitching twice horizontally, once vertically, two more times horizontally, then stitch triangular base of nose; backstitch down to other side of mouth. Insert needle between fabric and stuffing and skim around to the back...pull taut and snip end.



Finishing:

Weave in any remaining ends. Wet Octopuss gently and arrange tentacles (options: all curl and point straight up, all lay flat, or all curl around the body horizontally). If not using pipe cleaners to keep the shape of the tentacles, it would be possible to set them with a blast or two from a steam iron. Let dry.

Pattern Support Flickr Image Set: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/akikikka/sets/72157625044927835/>

Knit 1 front & slip increase on youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8B5n9ffU5kl>

Born in Seattle in 1980 and raised in Olympia, Bethany is wise in the ways of all things western Wash.—a connoisseur of flannel shirts, tartar sauce, coffee, and water, water, everywhere. She currently resides in Olympia and spends a lot of time in Portland, Oregon. Bethany is in the process of writing a book about fiber, and dislikes referring to herself in the 3rd person, but also doesn't like using the word "I" too much. Her favorite animals are alpacas and cats. Bethany identifies strongly with bees because they seem pretty aimless but never stop moving. You can find more of her patterns and general life-content at <http://bethanyhendrickson.com>



As an independent designer, feedback and critique help me to provide the best patterns possible. Please let me know if you enjoyed knitting this pattern, or have any questions / comments about it:

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