

HAVE YOU SEEN A SEA SQUIRT?

The invasive sea squirt, the clubbed tunicate (*Styela clava*), has been confirmed in a number of locations around New Zealand.

What is the clubbed tunicate and what does it look like?

- Individuals are usually club shaped with a tough leathery skin that varies from brownish-white, yellow-brown or reddish-brown.
- The body is cylindrical, tapering to a stalk, with a holdfast that anchors it to surfaces.
- Adults grow up to 16 cm long.
- Under water two short siphons are visible on top of the organism, but these are difficult to see out of water.
- While solitary organisms, individuals can settle close to one another, covering wharves, docks, boat hulls, mooring lines, buoys and aquaculture structures.



Clubbed tunicate *Styela clava*

Photo supplied by Cawthron Institute



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Where is the clubbed tunicate likely to be found?

- The clubbed tunicate prefers protected areas such as bays and harbours, away from wave action.
- It establishes from the waterline down to approximately 25 metres.
- It prefers to settle on hard surfaces, particularly man-made structures. Anything in the water that is not covered in silt or coated with anti-fouling paint is at risk.
- The organism can tolerate a wide range of water temperatures and salinity.



THE THREAT

The clubbed tunicate poses a potential threat to New Zealand's aquaculture industry with its ability to blanket oyster and mussel lines, suffocating growing shellfish and competing for space and food.



For more information on the clubbed tunicate and boat hygiene, visit the website:

www.biosecurity.govt.nz/seasquirt

How you can help

● Keep watch

Biosecurity New Zealand wants to know more about where the clubbed tunicate is.

If you think you have seen this sea squirt, note the location of the suspect organism/s.

Call the Biosecurity New Zealand hotline: 0800 80 99 66 to report your find.

If possible, collect a specimen. Pull the sea squirt off with your fingers, place in a plastic bag and put in the freezer.

● Be aware

Pyura pachydermatina is a native species that occurs throughout New Zealand waters and could be confused with *Styela clava* because it also has a stalk.

However *Pyura pachydermatina* grows up to a metre, has a much longer stalk and is often white/purple-red in colour.



Pyura pachydermatina

Photo supplied by Cawthron Institute

● Prevent the spread of the clubbed tunicate and other marine pests

Your boat could be carrying harmful marine pests on its hull and other external areas, or in seawater or marine sediments retained in the vessel.

To help stop the spread of the clubbed tunicate, keep your boat hull clean of bio-fouling such as seaweed, barnacles and shellfish.

Frequently clean hulls and equipment, paying special attention to the following areas:

- the hull, keels and stabilisers;
- intakes and outlets;
- propellers and shafts;
- rudders, rudder shafts and casings, rudder recesses;
- anchors, anchor chains and anchor wells.

Ensure your vessel is regularly coated with an anti-fouling paint that is replaced at the interval recommended by the paint manufacturer. The usual period for reapplication for moored pleasure craft is one year.



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