

Clubbed tunicate

Styela clava

Notify Council

If you have seen or suspect the presence of this pest please report the sighting to Gisborne District Council immediately.

What does it look like?

Clubbed Tunicate also known as *Styela* sea squirt is an exotic marine animal which have a long, club-shaped body on a short, tough stalk. Its surface is tough, leathery, ruffled, and knobbly, ranging in colour from brownish to white,

Clubbed Tunicate has been found from the low intertidal zone to water about 40m deep, but is most common at depths of less than 25m. In addition to growing on rocks, and on native shell fish it can also grow on a wide range of artificial surfaces such as pylons, buoys, mussel lines, wharves and jetties. Found mainly in sheltered sites within New Zealand/Aotearoa.

Why is it a problem?

Spread by vessel movement and also equipment used for aquaculture. Capable of growing on other organisms, the tunicate outcompetes native and fisheries species and contributes to fouling.

Clubbed Tunicate is able to colonise a variety of hard surfaces and tolerate wide ranges of salinity and temperature. It is also a highly efficient filter feeder, straining food particles from the water. These features make it a strong competitor and it is capable of forming monospecific stands and potentially out-competing native species.

It has been found to reach high densities of 500-1500 individuals per square metre and is an efficient suspension feeder. Because of these two features it can outcompete other species for habitat and food.



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Control methods

Prevention: Regular cleaning your boat's hull and free of fouling, as well as, any marine equipment (eg. ropes, lines and pots) before using in a new area. Inspect areas on your boat and around anchors, trailers and other equipment that retain water for signs of marine life. Apply a thorough coating of antifouling paint and keep it in good condition.

Marine pest rule for Gisborne district

All vessels entering Gisborne district waters must be sufficiently cleaned and antifouled so that they have no more than a slime layer on the hull.

Rule 1.04 of Gisborne District Council's Regional Pest Management Plan

This rule is strictly enforced and we may request your antifouling documentation.

To avoid any hold ups, or being turned away it's best to provide your antifouling certification before you arrive. You can email this to our [Gisborne harbourmaster](#) or phone MPI on 0800 80 99 66.

Related links

Gisborne District Regional Pest Management Plan <https://www.gdc.govt.nz/environment/reports-and-publications/pests/regional-pest-management-plan>

Marine Biosecurity <https://marinebiosecurity.org.nz/styela-clava/>

NIWA (Guide to NZ Sea Squirts) https://niwa.co.nz/sites/niwa.co.nz/files/styles/large/public/Awesome_Ascidians_Version_3_2019-Cover-NIWA.jpg?itok=jovL9Azt

Rules

Not known to be present within the Gisborne/Tairāwhiti region, however, if this species were to become established this will be a priority for Council's Biosecurity.

For more information about this Rule, refer to our Regional Pest Management Plan page 17, under Related Links.

No person will transport or have possession of this unwanted organism into or around the East Coast/Tairāwhiti Region.

Management programme

Exclusion

Report this pest

<https://www.gdc.govt.nz/council/contact-us>