

Biosecurity



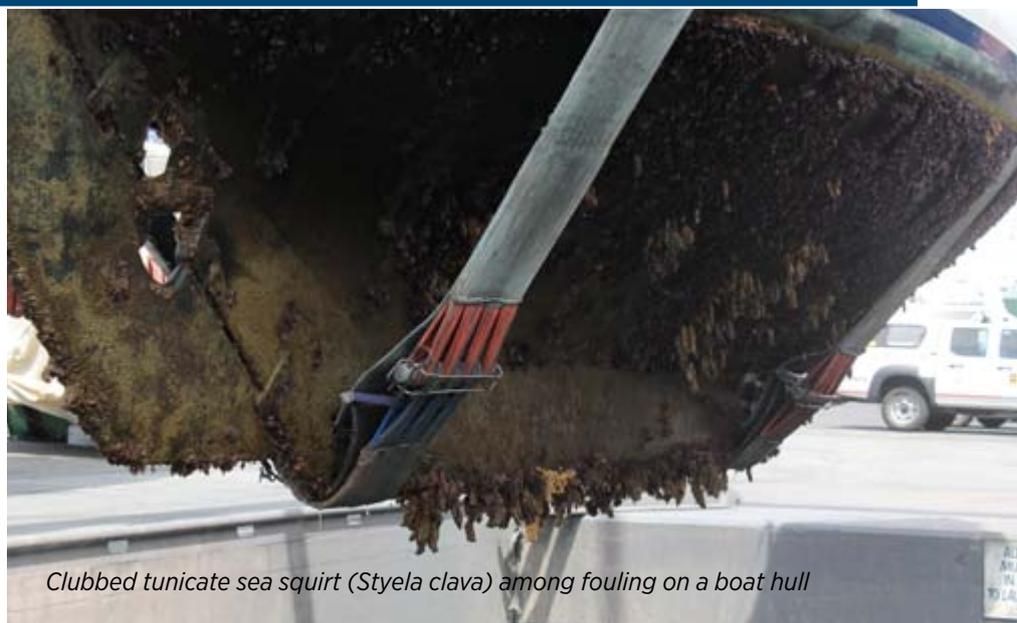
There are many pests in and around the Tauranga Harbour

In the harbour

Vessels from all over the world enter Tauranga Harbour every week bringing in imports such as oil and fertiliser, and taking out exports such as kiwifruit and logs. Many recreational sailors and launch owners also like to visit Tauranga Harbour from their home moorings in other parts of the country.

Unfortunately these and other vessels can bring in marine pests – either hitching a ride as “fouling” on boat hulls, or in ballast water discharged into our coastal waters. We need visiting and local boat owners alike to keep their boat bottoms clean and anti-fouling paint fresh, to stop the spread of unwanted marine pests into and out of Tauranga Harbour.

There have been two recent marine pest identifications in Tauranga Harbour – the Mediterranean fanworm (*Sabella spallanzanii*) and the clubbed tunicate sea squirt (*Styela clava*). Containment work is ongoing to prevent these marine pests from becoming established here.



Clubbed tunicate sea squirt (Styela clava) among fouling on a boat hull

Mediterranean fanworm has a brownish/grey tube up to 40 cm long. At the top of this tube is a single white fan, banded with pale orange or brown.

Clubbed tunicate sea squirt is brown in colour and often appears fuzzy underwater. It has a long, club-shaped body and a stalk that it uses to attach itself to hard surfaces such as rocks, boat hulls or marine structures.

Both the unwanted fanworm and sea squirt can grow in dense, thick ‘mats’ that compete with native plants and animals for nutrients and space. They

can interfere with boat equipment and aquaculture, increasing maintenance costs. They also threaten recreational activities like diving, by changing the underwater character.

Undaria (*Undaria pinnatifida*) or Asian kelp, and the Didemnum sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*) have already become established here, as they have in many other major New Zealand ports. Without care, they could be spread from Tauranga Harbour into other un-infested Bay of Plenty waters.

There is a high risk to Tauranga Harbour of marine pest incursion. Many pests are already established in other parts of New Zealand.

Photo left: Mediterranean fanworm

Photo right: Clubbed tunicate sea squirt



Photo: MPI



Photo: Northland Regional Council

Around the harbour

Many pest plants and animals live in the area surrounding the Tauranga Harbour.

Pest animals include:

- Possums, rats, mustelids (ferrets, stoats and weasels), cats, mice and Argentine ants. These pests eat native plants and birdlife or eat the food that native animals live on.
- Black swans that graze sea grass beds (however these birds are protected under the Wildlife Act and managed as game birds by Fish and Game NZ).

Pest plant species in and around Tauranga Harbour include: Spartina, salt-water paspalum, morning glory, ice plant, gorse, pampas, woolly nightshade and wild ginger. These weeds can smother and replace native plants or increase coastal sedimentation around the harbour by trapping sediment with their roots.

Keep a look out for the species on this fact sheet and anything else in the Tauranga Harbour area that seems out of the ordinary.

Other threats/future threats

There is a high risk to Tauranga Harbour of incursion of marine pests that have already become established in other parts of New Zealand.

The Asian paddle crab (*Charybdis japonica*) and Australian tunicate sea squirt (*Eudistoma elongatum*) are known to be present in Northland and Auckland, as are the Mediterranean fanworm and clubbed tunicate sea squirt.

What are we doing?

We have pest animal and plant control and surveillance programmes in place.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council works with the Department of Conservation and private land owners to ensure that pests around the harbour, such as spartina are controlled.

The Bay of Plenty Polytechnic and University of Waikato have been working with Bay of Plenty Regional Council to complete ongoing surveillance, monitoring and survey work. The focus of this work is on detecting new marine pest incursions, and assessing the environmental effects of pests such as the Asian date mussel that have already become established in Tauranga Harbour.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council also works with Ministry for Primary Industries on marine biosecurity issues including encouraging marine users to help prevent the spread of marine pests and report suspicious organisms.

What can you do?

Keep a look out for the species on this fact sheet and anything else in the Tauranga Harbour area that seems out of the ordinary. Report any suspicious finds to:

Ministry for Primary Industries
freephone 0800 80 99 66.

Boat owners – regularly clean and anti-foul your vessel's hull to minimise the chance of transporting pests, including those featured in this fact sheet, around the coast and particularly to high value marine areas such as Tuhua – Mayor Island Marine Reserve.

Clean boats are unlikely to spread marine pests.



POHUTUKAWA AND POSSUMS

Pohutukawa trees once grew around much of Tauranga harbour. Small areas of pohutukawa remain, but are under threat from possum damage.

For more information

Visit www.boprc.govt.nz/taurangaharbour

Or contact Bay of Plenty Regional Council – Phone 0800 884 880, Email info@boprc.govt.nz

Marine pest information is also available at www.boprc.govt.nz/marinepests or at the Ministry for Primary Industries website www.biosecurity.govt.nz