



Botrylloides giganteum (Sea squirt)

This organism has been found in parts of Whangarei and Auckland harbours. It has not at this time been found elsewhere in New Zealand.

WHAT IS *BOTRYLLOIDES GIGANTEUM*?

Botrylloides giganteum is a potentially invasive ascidian (commonly called a sea squirt) that grows in sub tropical and temperate waters, including in Brazil, West Africa, California and Italy. Sea squirts are a type of marine animal.

THE THREAT

B. giganteum colonies could potentially threaten shellfish farming by smothering or weighing down underwater structures and equipment. It moves location and spreads by attaching itself to vessel hulls and niche areas and also through the movement of fouled aquaculture equipment from one place to another.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

The surface of a *B. giganteum* colony is gelatinous in appearance but is stiff, unlike similar species in New Zealand which are soft. Rows of pores can be seen across much of the surface. It may also have a lumpy appearance.

WHERE IS IT LIKELY TO BE FOUND?

It appears to prefer man-made structures and human-altered environments in harbours, marinas and break walls.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Owners of vessels moored in Auckland and Whangarei harbours, especially the Marsden Cove marina, need to ensure their vessel hulls and niche areas (i.e. underwater fittings such as water intakes and outlets, propeller shaft, sonar tubes, transducers) are clean and free of fouling growth and the hull well coated in antifouling paint. This is particularly important where there are plans to sail out of the area. If vessels are to be hauled out and cleaned, ensure that all fouling material removed from the hull is not allowed to re-enter the water and is disposed of appropriately to landfill.

Avoid spreading marine pests by:

- » Checking your vessel's hull, niche areas and marine equipment for fouling before moving to a new location and cleaning if necessary;
- » Keeping your vessel's hull and niche areas free of fouling;
- » Making sure your vessel hull has a good, thorough and functional antifoul coating; and
- » Air-drying or treating any marine equipment, e.g. ropes and mooring lines prior to using them in the marine environment.



Image courtesy of J. Muñoz, Western Australian Fisheries.



Image courtesy of C. Middleton, NIWA.

If you believe you have found this species outside of Auckland and Whangarei, please call MPI on 0800 80 99 66

To find out more about vessel hygiene visit: www.biosecurity.govt.nz/cleanmarine