

Orange-tipped Sea Squirt

Species Description

Scientific name: *Corella eumyota*

AKA: N/A

Native to: Australia, Southern Africa, South America

Habitat: Mainly marinas and harbours, but also capable of colonising natural habitats such as rocky coasts and estuaries; also occurs in sub-tidal ranges.

The Orange-tipped Sea Squirt is a solitary species, which grows to a length of eight centimetres and possesses a pair of orange tinged siphons; although these openings can be difficult to see with the naked eye. The tunic (outermost layer) is clear and smooth, with a clearly visible curved gut located around the exhalant siphon.

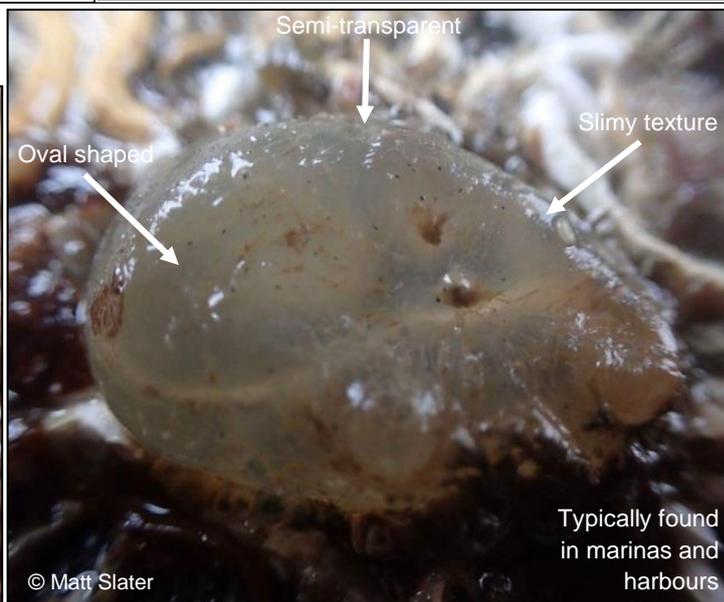
Originally introduced into the Northern Hemisphere through the shellfish industry, the Orange-tipped Sea Squirt has since rapidly spread along the European Atlantic Coast. Within GB, this species was first recorded in September 2004 inhabiting Brighton Marina, Gosport Marina and Weymouth Harbour. Further spread is likely caused by recreational water sports whereby animals will be inadvertently transported within leisure crafts and equipment when they are not subject to proper biosecurity procedures.

For more information on biosecurity practices for waterbody users, please visit <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/>.

Due to their tough tunic and unpalatability to most carnivores, Orange-tipped Sea Squirts have no natural predators in GB, thus allowing for populations to expand unchecked. This rapid colonisation often leads to huge economic and environmental damage by depleting many native (and often economically valuable) species such as mussels and oysters.



Key ID Features



Identification throughout the Year

Orange-tipped Sea Squirts can be seen in their adult form year-round and are most easily recognisable by their curved gut, as observed at their hind end, and the orange tinged siphons. Reproduction peaks during the summer when animals release swimming larvae which are unable to be seen by the naked eye due to their microscopic size. These animals are typically solitary, yet may aggregate in large clumps, whereby fouling fishing gear.



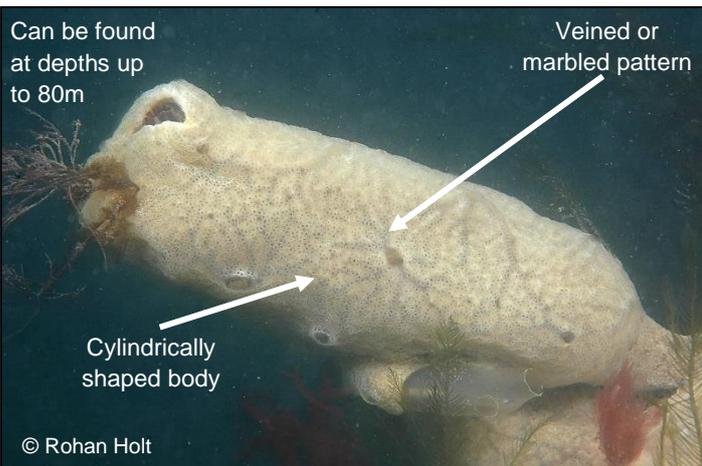
Similar Species

Carpet Sea Squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*) [Invasive Non-native]

The Carpet Sea Squirt is another example of an invasive non-native marine animal which is causing notable damage to both the environment and economy. When contrasting the Carpet Sea Squirt with the orange-tipped species, similarities are notable in both behaviour and habitat whereas appearance and distribution are starkly different and thus confusion in identification is unlikely.

Morphologically, the Carpet Sea Squirt is longer with a more cylindrical body shape, compared to the shorter, more oval shaped body of its orange-tipped counterpart. Furthermore, unlike the translucent orange-tipped species which has no distinctive pattern, Carpet Sea Squirts are opaque, varying in colour from pale orange to cream and exhibit a veined or marbled appearance.

Both Carpet and Orange-tipped Sea Squirts pose a substantial threat to GB as they can form very large colonies which extirpate native species and foul aquaculture gear and equipment. Such damage can often be extensive and is therefore a significant concern to both businesses and recreational water users.



Distribution

The Orange-tipped Sea Squirt is found throughout the coastal regions of Great Britain although it is most prevalent across the south and north east coasts.



References and Further Reading:

Bishop, J. (2011) *Orange-tipped sea squirt, Corella eumyota*. Available at: <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/factsheet/factsheet.cfm?speciesId=902> (Accessed: 24th June 2018).

Bishop, J. (2012) *Carpet Sea-squirt, Didemnum vexillum*. Available at: <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/factsheet/factsheet.cfm?speciesId=1209> (Accessed 24th June 2018).

Curtis, L. (2005) *A sea squirt (Asciidiella aspersa)*. Available at: <http://www.marlin.ac.uk/species/detail/1566> (Accessed: 24th June 2018).

NBN Atlas (2017) *Didemnum vexillum* Kott, 2002. Available at: <https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSY0020545709> (Accessed: 24th June 2018).