



Australian Government



REPORT  
MARINE PESTS

# Marine pests in ports

## Report marine pests

Protect our marine environment. Look out for marine pests on:

- vessels
- submerged structures
- wharves and equipment.

Marine pests are plants and animals which aren't native to Australia. They include crabs, mussels, sea stars, worms and algae. Marine pests can damage port and international shipping structures, impact on our marine environment and potentially affect human health.

Ships from overseas or smaller vessels passing through may pose a high risk of introducing and spreading marine pests. This can occur if a pest has attached to a vessel or where a vessel's unmanaged ballast water is discharged.

If marine pests go unreported and establish in our marine environment, it becomes almost impossible to get rid of them. Eradication programs costs millions of dollars and take many years to achieve. Prevention is therefore the key to limiting the risk of successful introductions, and early detection and reporting is essential to limit the spread of marine pests.

Marine pests must be reported to the department of agriculture or primary industries in the state or territory in which they are found. It is critical that authorities are notified as soon as possible to have the best chance of containing the pest.

## How to protect your port

Working at a port means you could be the first to spot marine pests—putting you in the first line of defence. We need your help to identify and report marine pests:

There are simple steps you can take to help protect your port.

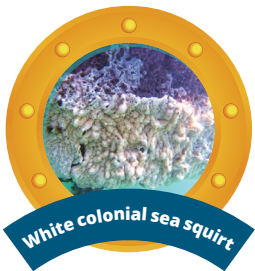
- Keep it clean.
- Learn how to identify marine pests.
- Keep watch for marine pests.
- Report any unusual marine animals or plants.

## Learn to identify marine pests

While we need to be vigilant for new pests arriving, we also need to be alert to pests that have spread to unaffected locations. Some pests may be under a government eradication or management program. Examples of marine pests in Australian waters include:

- White colonial sea squirt
- Asian green mussel
- Asian paddle crab
- Asian kelp, wakame.

For more information, an identification guide and photos of exotic and established marine pests is available at [marinepests.gov.au/pests/identify](https://marinepests.gov.au/pests/identify).



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## Keep watch

Not only can marine pests be found attached to vessels but divers or underwater Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs) may find them on the sea floor (e.g. seastars and crabs) or attached to submerged structures such as wharves, floating docks, ropes and buoys (e.g. exotic mussels and fanworms). Places like anchor wells, ropes that are often in the water or other wet areas can also harbour pests.

## Keep it clean

Keeping vessels free of biofouling plays a critical part in stopping the spread of marine pests into, and around Australian waters.

- Ensure your vessel has an appropriate in-service anti-fouling coating.
- Clean your vessel between locations — in a drydock or slipway, or in the water (if permitted by the relevant authority).
- Check niche areas and flush internal seawater systems.
- Inspect and clean all equipment and gear that may get wet.

There are [anti-fouling and in-water cleaning guidelines](#) available at [marinepests.gov.au](http://marinepests.gov.au). International and commercial vessel owners seeking Australian biosecurity clearance must submit pre-arrival documents through the [Maritime Arrivals Reporting System \(MARS\)](#):

Approval is required to in-water clean biofouling in Australian territorial seas. In-water cleaning includes hull grooming, propeller polishing and cleaning of niche areas. Please visit [Anti-fouling and in-water cleaning guidelines](#) or contact [marinepests@awe.gov.au](mailto:marinepests@awe.gov.au) for information.

International vessels arriving into Australia are required to report biosecurity risks and manage ballast water on arrival. There are new requirements for the management of biofouling and in-water cleaning on international vessels. The latest information on managing ballast water, biofouling and the in-water cleaning standards are available at:

- [awe.gov.au/ballast](http://awe.gov.au/ballast)
- [awe.gov.au/biofouling](http://awe.gov.au/biofouling)

## If you see something unusual, report it

Keeping marine pests out of Australian waters means we have clean and safe oceans to enjoy for recreation, and a sustainable seafood industry.



**Record your location**  
Screenshot your map/GPS



**Take a photo**  
Use a coin for reference



**Go to [marinepests.gov.au](http://marinepests.gov.au)**  
To report

**Go to [marinepests.gov.au](http://marinepests.gov.au) to learn more.**