



Sea Squirt

Didemnum vexillum

Characteristics

- * Cream, white, tan, or yellow
- * Dense colonies of microscopic, individual animals (zooids)
- * Colonies grow up to 12-18 in (30-46 cm) long
- * In slow-moving waters, may form long, ropey, or beard-like colonies that commonly hang from hard substrates such as docks, lines, and ship hulls
- * In faster-moving waters, may form low, undulating mats that encrust and drape rocky seabeds (pebbles, cobbles, boulders, and rock outcrops)

Habitat

- * Hard surfaces such as docks, pilings, moorings, ship hulls, rocks, and seafloor
- * Primarily below the low-tide line to continental shelf depths of 210 ft (65m)

Known Distribution

- * Northeastern U.S. (New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine)
- * Covers much of Georges Bank and Gulf of Maine

Impacts

- * Alters marine habitats and threatens to interfere with fishing, aquaculture, and other coastal and offshore activities
- * Grows over organisms such as tunicates, sponges, seaweeds, hydroids, anemones, bryozoans, scallops, mussels, and oysters
- * Covers siphons of shellfish living in the seabed
- * Blocks bottom-feeding fish from reaching their prey



Sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*)

Credit: A. Pappal



Sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*)

Credit: L. Stefaniak, UConn



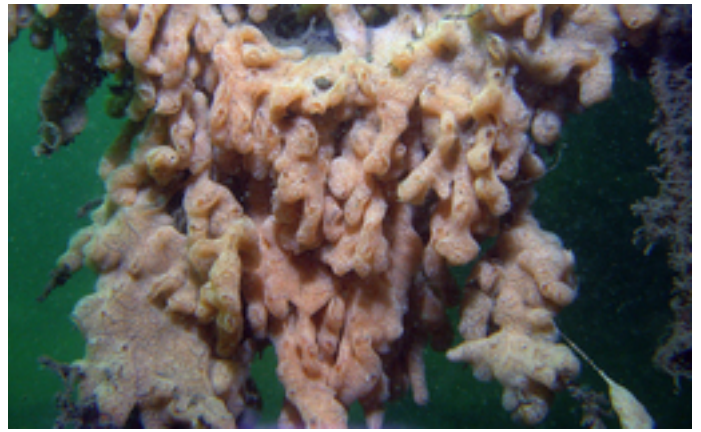
Sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*)

Credit: L. Stefaniak, UConn



Sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*)

Credit: Bostwick



Sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*)
Credit: Becca Toppin (UNH)



Sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*)

Credit: A. Pappal



Sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*) covering rocks, mussels, and barnacles in Harpswell, Maine

Credit: Bostwick



Sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*)

Credit: A. Pappal

