

Violet Tunicate

The violet tunicate was first found in PEI during the summer of 2002 in Savage Harbour. It is a colonial tunicate that grows like a mat over the substrate on which it is growing. The size of the colonies are only limited by the space provided to them by the substrate. It has several different colour variations that vary from tan to bright orange. It has an obvious ridge or track-like pattern through the colony.

The violet tunicate attaches to and fouls shellfish gear, hulls of boats, floating structures and marine plants including eel grass. Small pieces of a colony can easily be transported on pieces of plant material within a body of water, or to new bodies of water by natural means, or inadvertently by water users.

On a buoy



On a mussel



Vase Tunicate

The vase tunicate was first found in PEI in October 2004 in Montague River growing on mussel aquaculture gear. It has a soft cylindrical body with a smooth transparent surface, and can reach lengths up to 15 centimeters (six inches). There is often a red area inside the tunicate which makes them easy to identify.

The vase tunicate attaches to and fouls shellfish gear, hulls of boats and other floating structures, making them very difficult to clean. This tunicate has caused severe problems to mussel growers in Nova Scotia and is a great concern to the aquaculture industry on Prince Edward Island.



Golden Star Tunicate

The golden star tunicate was first found in PEI in 2001 in St. Peter's Bay. It is a colonial tunicate that grows like a mat over the surface of the substrate on which it is growing. The size of the colonies are only limited by the space provided to them by the substrate. It is dark in colour with a lighter star shaped pattern.

The golden star tunicate can attach to and foul shellfish gear, hulls of boats and other floating structures, making them very difficult to clean. The colonies are generally easy to pull off the substrate which increases their potential to spread.

On aquaculture gear



the spread of aquatic invasive species

Please clean your boat, trailer and gear.



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Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture

Introduction

Six new aquatic species have been accidentally introduced into Prince Edward Island waters since 1997. They are the green crab, a green seaweed, also known as the oyster thief, the clubbed tunicate, the violet tunicate, the vase tunicate and the golden star tunicate. All six species have the potential to become pests in the marine environment and to the fishing and aquaculture industries.

The Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture (PEIAFA) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) advise that all Island fishers, aquaculturists and recreational boaters should be aware of these organisms and the problems they may create. The distribution of each species is presently limited to certain areas on PEI. Although it is likely these species will eventually spread to other areas by natural means, areas could be affected sooner by organisms being accidentally transported when fishers, aquaculturists and boaters are moving stock, equipment or boats from one area to another.

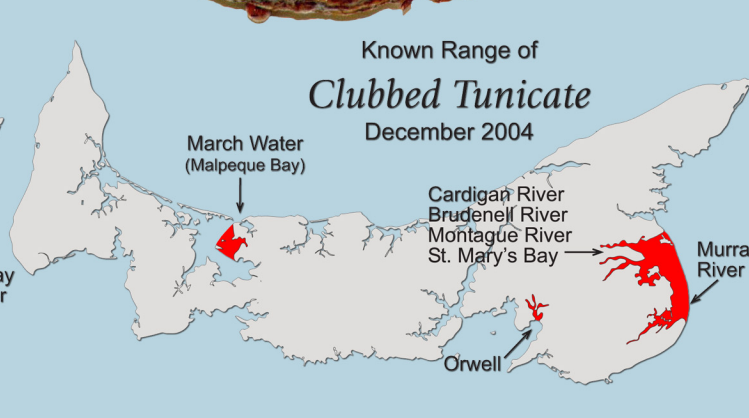
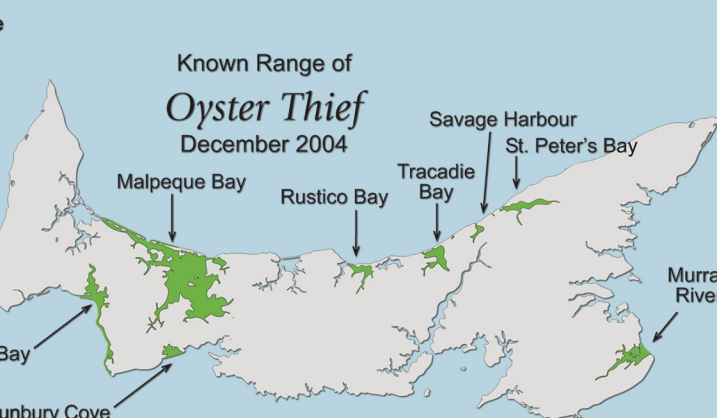
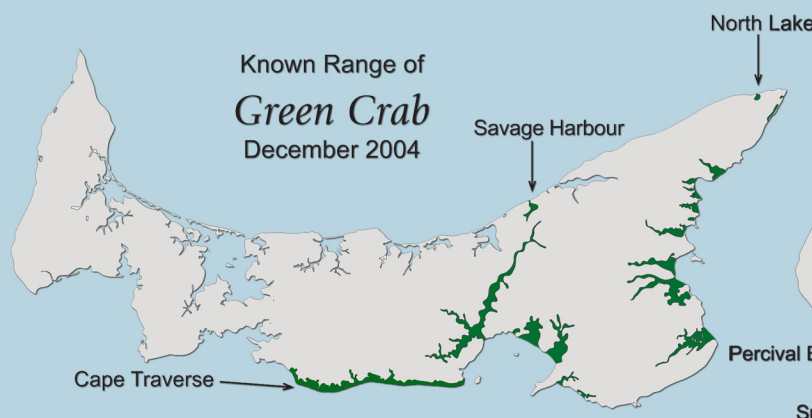
Please take ALL measures to avoid transporting these organisms to unaffected areas. Sightings of these species in areas outside of their known area of distribution should be reported to:

Prince Edward Island Department of
Agriculture, Fisheries
and Aquaculture
Tel: 902 368 6330

Green Crab

The green crab is a serious predator of small shellfish such as clams and mussels. It is a very hardy animal, able to survive extended periods out of water. It can be found in most river systems on the eastern end of PEI but has not been found in other areas of the Island.

The green crab can be differentiated from the native rock crab by its dark mottled green colour. It is smaller than the rock crab and has distinctive points on the front edge of its shell. It is much more aggressive than the rock crab.



Oyster Thief

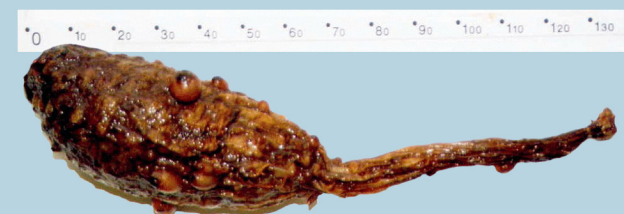
The oyster thief is a fast-growing green seaplant that can reach lengths of 60 centimeters (two feet). It has gained its name because when it attaches to oysters, the buoyancy of the plant causes the oysters to float away. Heavy growth of the oyster thief can also obscure oyster beds and increase the cost of harvesting. Plant fragments are able to produce new plants; so when disposing of this plant, ensure it is well away from the water.



Clubbed Tunicate

The clubbed tunicate was first found in PEI in the Brudenell River. It is a cylindrical body that can reach lengths up to 15 centimeters (six inches) long. It attaches by means of a thin stock which protrudes from one end. It has a warty surface with mottled colour. The smaller clubbed tunicates appear as miniature versions of the large ones with a smoother surface. It is typically found in dense clumps growing on substrate below the low water level such as docks, buoys, hulls of boats, etc.

The clubbed tunicate can live for several days out of water. The spawning period for the clubbed tunicate in PEI waters is from the middle of June to the middle of October. The adults can spawn and the offspring can potentially infest substrate within a period of a few days.



Please clean your boat, trailer and gear.