

Please clean your boat, trailer and gear.

Colonial Tunicate

Colonial tunicates grow like a mat over the substrate on which it is growing. The size of the colony is only limited by the size of the substrate. These tunicates will grow on hard substrates in subtidal areas. It is common to find them growing on eel grass and other marine plants. As these plants break off, the potential for the tunicates to spread increases.

The violet tunicate has several different colour variations such as tan, orange and purple. They have a ridge or track like pattern through the colony.



The golden star tunicate is most commonly dark in colour with lighter star shaped pattern.

Vase Tunicate

The vase tunicate was first found in PEI in October 2004 in Montague River. 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.



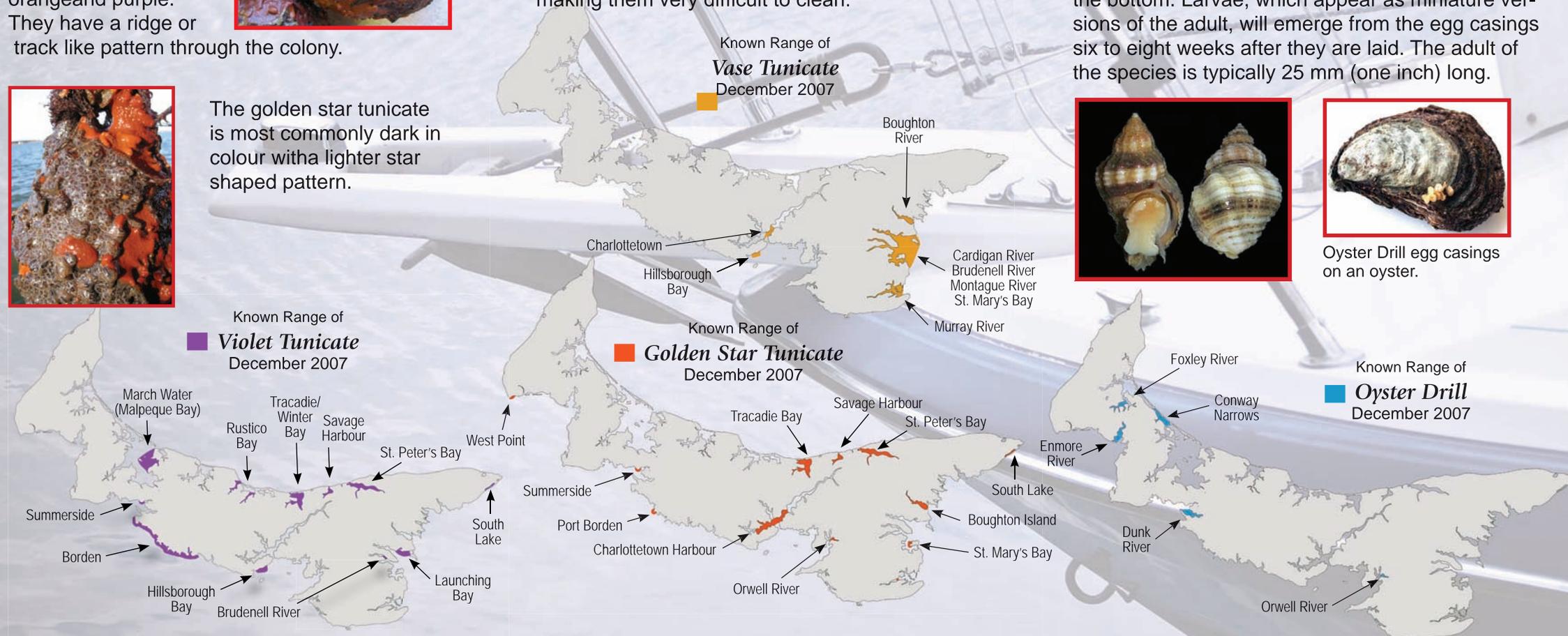
Oyster Drill

The oyster drill is emerging as a predator of oysters in PEI waters. It has been present since the early 1900's, but in recent years has become established in a growing number of oyster producing areas. The oyster drill, a species of snail, is able to make a small hole in the oyster shell through which it is able to consume the oyster.

The population will spawn from May to October, but each animal will only spawn once. The eggs are contained in egg casings, which are quite often found on hard objects such as rocks or oysters on the bottom. Larvae, which appear as miniature versions of the adult, will emerge from the egg casings six to eight weeks after they are laid. The adult of the species is typically 25 mm (one inch) long.



Oyster Drill egg casings on an oyster.



the spread of aquatic invasive species

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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 Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development (PEIDFARD) 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.

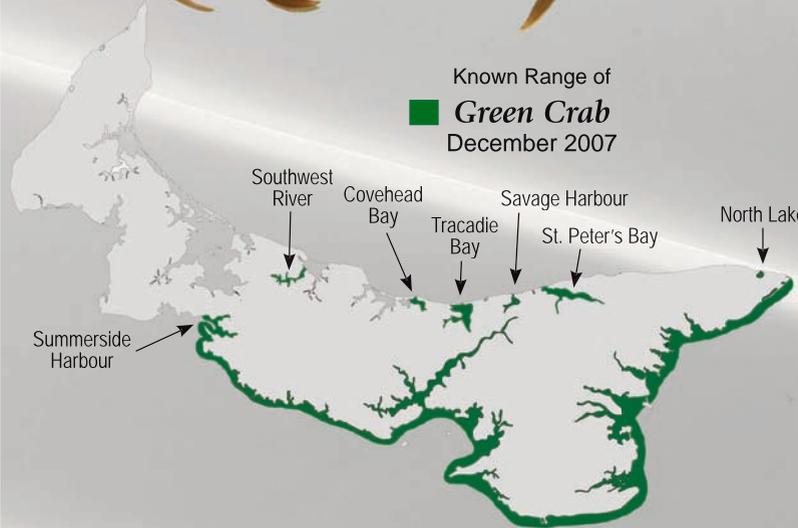
Please take ALL measures to avoid transporting these organisms to unaffected areas. Sightings of these species in areas outside of their known area of distribution should be reported to:

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

Green Crab

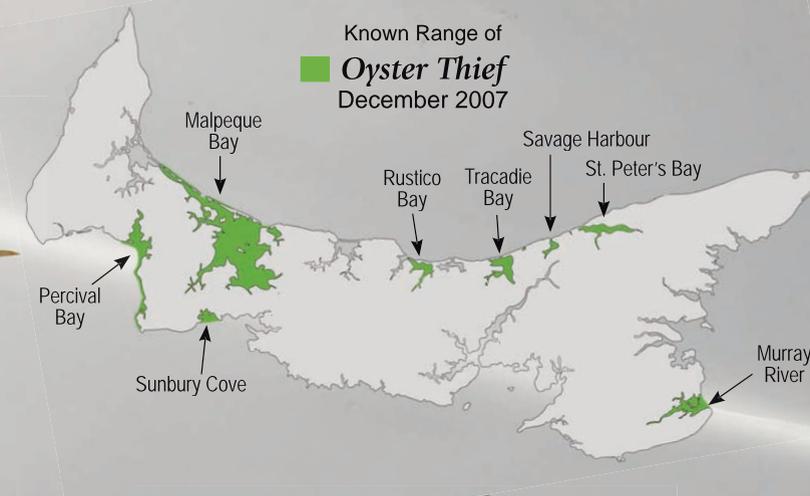
The green crab is a serious predator of small shellfish such as clams and mussels. It is a very hardy animal, able to survive extended periods out of water. It can be found in large numbers in most river systems in eastern PEI, and in fewer numbers throughout the remainder of its range.

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 seaweed 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.

