



Northern Pacific seastar



Non-native to Australian waters, the Northern Pacific seastar, *Asterias amurensis*, is a pest that poses a serious threat to Western Australia's aquatic environment. This seastar is currently **NOT** established in WA but can be spread by recreational, commercial and fishing vessels in contaminated ballast and other water. It can also be spread via vessel biofouling, fishing and dive gear, and aquaculture equipment and stock. If you see this pest please call the **FishWatch 24 hour hotline** on **1800 815 507**.

Key features

- Mature at around 100 mm, but can grow up to 500 mm in diameter.
- Five arms with pointed, often upturned tips.
- Yellow/orange often with purple markings, yellow underneath.

Impacts

- Voracious predator that eats a wide range of native animals.
- Negatively impacts marine ecosystems and marine industries such as shellfish farming.
- Breeds quickly with females capable of producing up to 20 million eggs per year.
- Can rapidly establish large populations. In Port Phillip Bay, Victoria, a few animals caught in 1995, grew to a population that covered about 100 km² by 1999.

Where to find it?

- Found on soft sediment, artificial structures, rocky reefs and in seagrass beds.

- Found in cool temperate waters but is able to adapt to warmer waters.
- Intertidal to depths of 25 m in estuaries, bays and rock pools. Has been recorded in 200 m of water.
- Established populations in Tasmania and Victoria.

What you can do

Keep an eye out for new and unusual species in your area.

If you think you have found or seen a Northern Pacific seastar:

1. **Photograph it** – from different angles, using a scale or ruler and photos of the location where you found it.
2. **Record it** - make a note of when and where you found or saw it including GPS readings if possible.
3. **Collect it** – collect a sample in a plastic bag and refrigerate it but do not freeze.
4. **Report it** – contact the **FishWatch 24 hour hotline** on **1800 815 507**.

You can help stop this pest from spreading

Check your vessel is clean by regularly inspecting the hull and niche areas like internal seater systems. Also inspect and clean, wash and dry fishing dredges and nets, dive gear and aquaculture equipment and stock.

Levels of biofouling on your vessel should be kept to a minimum (slime layer only), particularly on unpainted areas. This will reduce fuel costs and increase performance. Also pump out all seawater before travel, or in deep water far away from land.

Environmentally-friendly methods should be used to keep the hull clean – keep it out of the water, tarp it when not in use, or clean it at a slipway, dry dock or on land. Don't clean the hull in the water, on the beach or at the boat ramp where pests and contaminants can get back into the water, without first checking with the relevant authorities.

Antifouling paint should be renewed regularly in accordance with the manufacturer's directions and should be suitable for your vessel's intended activity.

Never travel into or out of WA without first taking these steps, and keeping records of them and your voyage history in case of queries. If you are travelling within the State, it is also recommended you take these steps.

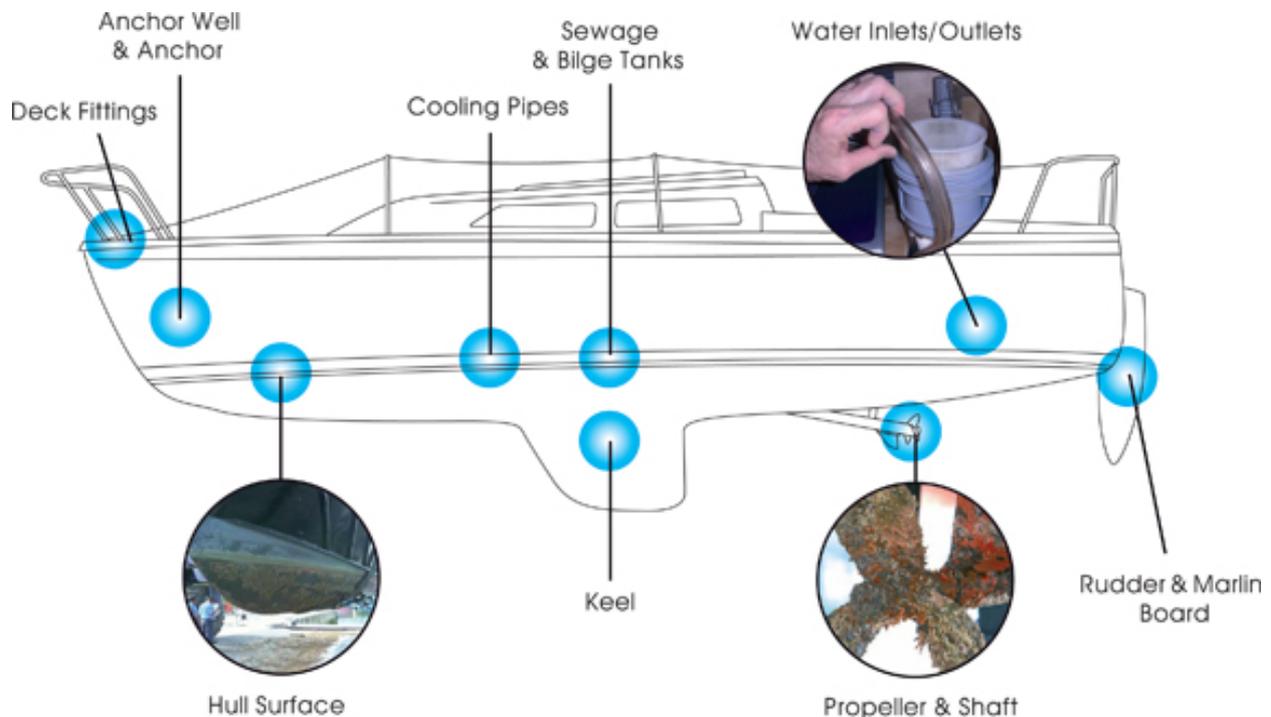


Diagram provided by the Boating Association of Victoria

Pay particular attention to the above niche areas on a recreational vessel where biofouling can accumulate.

Taking these actions is particularly important for **recreational, commercial and fishing vessels**, dive, fishing and aquaculture equipment and stock coming from interstate where this pest species is found.

Vessel skippers carrying this species could be in breach of the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* and regulations made under that Act and are urged to ensure their vessels are clean before they leave for Western Australia.