

The EPA – Caring for Cairns

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff have responded quickly to combat the Caribbean tubeworm since it was notified by the Department of Defence of its appearance on two Navy essels.

The EPA has:

- worked with the National Co-ordinating Committee on Introduced Marine Pest Emergencies to consider options and appropriate ways of dealing with this new arrival;
- worked with leading Australian and international scientists to develop best practice guidelines to prevent vessel contamination;
- kept the community informed through media information;
- offered seminars to community groups to give advice and information to local boaties, sailors and commercial fishers;
- gathered data to help monitor the tubeworm's density and spread in Trinity Inlet;
- prepared a Statewide series of public workshops on the ANZECC (*Australia and New Zealand Environment Conservation Council*) *Code of Practice for Antifouling and In-water Hull Cleaning*; and
- provided an information and advice number for enquiries about the tubeworm: (07) 3896 9250.

For more information contact:

Environmental Protection Agency

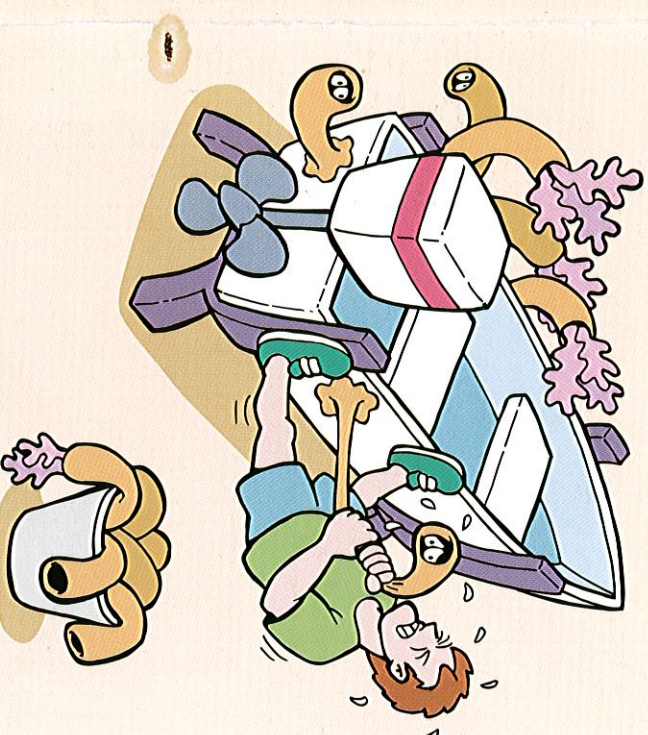
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Or visit these web sites:

- Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
<http://www.env.qld.gov.au/>
- The Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO)
<http://www.dsto.defence.gov.au/>
- CSIRO Centre for Research on Introduced Marine Pests (CRIMP)
<http://www.marine.csiro.au/CRIMP/>

Ten go-aways for stowaways

How to stop these unwanted
hitchhikers boarding your boat



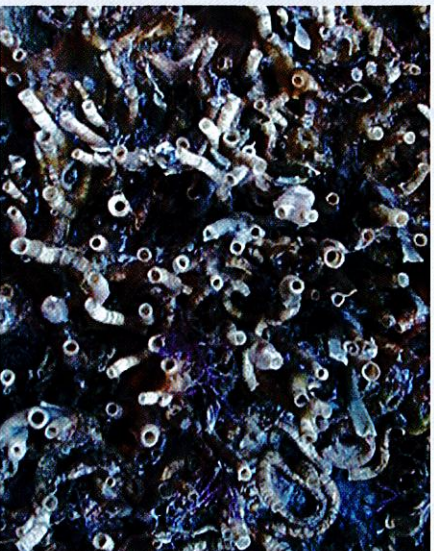
What is the Caribbean tubeworm?

The Caribbean tube worm is the common name for the *Hydroides sanctaerucis*. It is a native of the Caribbean and often inhabits muddy coastal lagoons. The species is tropical and is most likely to thrive in warm water.

Caribbean tubeworms are similar to *Hydroides elegans*, a worm which has been introduced to temperate harbours around the world, including in Australia.

Australia also has several native species of tubeworms. Until recently there were no recorded populations of the Caribbean tubeworm in Australia. Populations have now been discovered at Trinity Inlet, Cairns.

The Caribbean tubeworms build calcareous tubes on hard surfaces such as pontoons, pilings and sea walls as well as hulls. They often appear in large groups and spend the early part of their life as tiny, floating larvae.



Tubeworms scraped from vessels, Cairns

Mature worms have similar pest-like characteristics to classic “fouling” species. But despite their unsightly appearance, and pest-like nature, the Caribbean tubeworm has not been listed as a known marine pest, and appears to pose no threat to native marine life.

The cost of carrying hitchhikers

Boat owners know that hull-fouling pests thrive best on vessels that are not regularly maintained by scrubbing and antifouling.

What many do not realise is that even moderate contamination by pest species will reduce a boat’s performance and speed, and increase the costs of day-to-day running and maintenance.

Most importantly, regular maintenance also helps prevent the introduction of new pest species into Australia and prevents those already here from spreading to other harbours.

What’s it doing here?

The first exotic marine species arrived in Australia more than 100 years ago on sailing ships. Today they are still carried on the hulls of commercial shipping, fishing and recreation vessels.

The Caribbean tubeworm was first identified in Trinity Inlet on two Royal Australian Navy landing craft moored for several months on their return from service in East Timor.

Further investigations identified the tubeworm on another vessel, and on pontoons and pilings, making it difficult to pin-point how and when the species first arrived.

Ten go-aways for stowaways

- The key to preventing marine pests hitching a ride on your vessel are good vessel maintenance and effective antifouling.
- Remove established tubeworm fouling as soon as possible at a slipway or dry dock, or on land. (Don’t forget in-water hull cleaning is banned in Australia under the ANZECC Code of Practice for Antifouling and In-water Hull Cleaning unless removed material can be contained.)
- Do not clean your hull on the beach or at the boat ramp where removed organisms can get back into the waterways.
- Paint hulls with appropriate antifouling in accordance with manufacturer’s directions (antifouling products containing tributyltin cannot be used on vessels under 25m).
- Regularly clean propellers and other underwater fittings that cannot be painted.
- Flush seawater inlets with fresh water or enclose a 5 percent detergent solution for 12 hours to kill newly settled tubeworms.
- Inspect hulls monthly if vessels are moored for long periods.
- If you have a small boat that is easily removed from the water, air drying will kill most small pest species in about 24 hours.
- Ensure your boat hull is clean before leaving Trinity Inlet so that the species is not spread to other harbours and other vessels, as you would want others to do for you.
- Notify the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) if you think you have identified this species – or any other potential pest species – so their spread can be monitored. Any unusually heavy fouling not seen before should be reported.