Didemnum vexillum

Tunicate

Threat scores

1. Ecological impact
    - These siphon-feeding animals form dense mats, made of many thousands of individuals, encrusting and smothering hard sea bottom and organisms attached to it
    - "In some places the mats were quite dense, covering more than 90 percent of the seabed"
    - Growth may be more widespread than observed in the study area alone, where the mats have grown dramatically in size and distribution in one year's time
    - Species is changing the composition of benthic communities in the areas it has colonized
2. Invasive potential
    - Fragmented pieces of the colony can free float indefinitely, reattach to a hard surface, and grow asexually
    - Such fragments can also contain incubated larvae
3. Geographic extent
    - Regionally pervasive
4. Management difficulty
    - Proven difficult to eradicate in near shore waters
    - Treatments may be compromised by shipping activity/vessel traffic
    - If treatment not 100% successful, ongoing control is expensive

Geography and Habitat

1. Native: Japan
2. Introduced: New England, Pacific Coast from Washington to California
3. Habitats
    - Marine, fouling communities

Invasion Pathways

1. Hull/Surface fouling
2. Enclosed facilities - salmon cages
3. Natural spread - planktonic larvae

Non-Native Locations

1. 40- Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy
2. 56- Puget Trough/ Georgia Basin
3. 57- OR, WA, Vancouver
4. 58- Northern California

Sources

1. Molnar, Jennifer, et al. 2008. "Assessing the global threat of invasive species to marine biodiversity." *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*. 6 (9), pp. 485-492.
2. http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/global.invasive.assessment
3. http://www.foxnews.com/static/managed/img/Scitech/Sea%20Squirt%20a_doomsday_604x341.jpg