



Report this pest



Undaria

Why is it a pest?

Undaria is a highly invasive seaweed that can form dense underwater forests, outcompeting native species for light and space.

It poses a significant threat to marine ecosystems and can be a nuisance for marine farms, increasing labour and harvesting costs due to its ability to attach to boat hulls (fouling).

The seaweed spreads by producing millions of spores and is frequently transported via fouling on vessels or on fishing gear (e.g. cray pots).

Undaria is established in Otago from Waitaki down to Otago Peninsula. It is not established between Otago Peninsula and The Catlins.



What does it look like?

- **Size:** Grows to 1–2 metres long.
- **Appearance:** Brown, green, and yellow with a crinkly texture and a distinctive midrib running through the frond.
- **Distinctive features:** Undaria attaches to surfaces via a root-like feature and has a ruffled-looking reproductive structure that produces spores found at the base of the stem.
- **Similar species:** Looks similar to native kelp *Ecklonia radiata* but has a more prominent midrib and distinctive sporophyll — a leaf (or leaf-like structure) that provides and carries spores.
- **Habitat:** Grows on hard surfaces including reefs, ropes, wharfs, vessel hulls, and moorings. It tolerates a broad range of temperatures and light levels and is widespread along the Otago coast.

Common name:

Undaria, Wakame seaweed

Scientific name:

Undaria pinnatifida

Management programme:

Unwanted organism

An unwanted organism is not managed under the ORC Pest Plan but may be controlled as part of our Biosecurity Strategy.



**Report
this pest!**

If you have seen or suspect the presence of this pest, you **must report** the sighting to us at **orc.govt.nz/reportpests**

When can I spot it best?

In Otago, undaria is visible year-round, with density and reproductive peaks from September to November and March to May.



What are the rules?

It is an offence to breed, knowingly communicate, exhibit, multiply, propagate, release, or sell, an unwanted organism (Biosecurity Act 1993).

What should I do?

ORC is currently developing a marine biosecurity programme and needs to obtain more information on species distributions before pursuing management options. If you think you have spotted undaria, please report it.

Preventing the spread of undaria is the best strategy, as removal of invasive marine pests is both difficult and expensive.

Cleaning your craft and gear for biosecurity purposes is an important way to help protect the marine environment. Just as regular maintenance keeps your equipment in good condition, biosecurity cleaning keeps the ocean healthy for everyone.

The three main types of marine biosecurity cleaning for boaties are:

For all boats

- Check and clean your gear and anchor, and remove any on-board water before moving to another waterbody.

For trailer boats

- Clean your boat thoroughly when you get home.

For moored boats

- Regularly clean off slime and maintain your antifouling.



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Help us find undaria

You must notify Otago Regional Council if you suspect the presence of this pest.

If you think you've seen it:



Note the location



Take a photo
(if possible)



Report this pest
at orc.govt.nz/reportpests

For more information, visit orc.govt.nz/undaria

