



# Biosecurity alert: Northern Pacific seastar

(*Asterias amurensis*)

## The pest and its impacts

The Northern Pacific seastar (*Asterias amurensis*) is an invasive seastar that's invaded Tasmania and Victoria, and has the potential to become a major pest in Western Australia. It can be transported around the world via ballast water, vessel biofouling, contaminated fishing and dive gear, and aquaculture equipment and stock.

The seastar breeds quickly, with females capable of producing 10–25 million eggs per year, meaning it can rapidly establish large populations. It's an aggressive predator of native species, including oysters, mussels and scallops, and can impact commercial fishing, aquaculture and aquatic tourism.

The seastar is capable of both sexual and asexual reproduction. The planktonic and larval forms can persist for between 6 and 16 weeks, so larvae can be transported and spread substantial distances. It also reproduces asexually by regenerating from the central disc, so if a limb breaks off with part of the central disc it can regrow entirely.



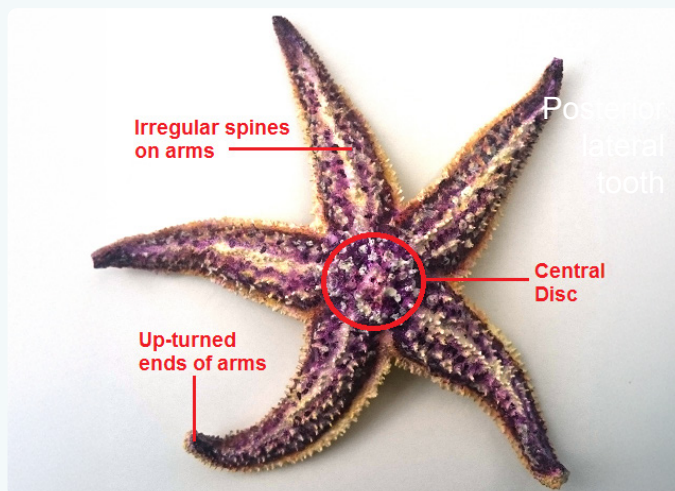


## LOOK for this pest

The Northern Pacific seastar typically has five arms, with upturned tips. The top and sides are yellow to orange, often with purple markings, whereas the undersides are uniform yellow. It's mature at around 100 mm but can grow up to 500 mm in diameter.

## Where you'll find it

- Found in cool temperate waters but can adapt to warmer waters.
- Intertidal to depths of 25 m in estuaries, bays and rock pools but has been recorded at 200 m depth.
- Found on soft sediment, artificial structures and in seagrass meadows.



## How you can help: look, act, report

- Keep your hull and fishing equipment clean and free of fouling.
- Clean your boat and equipment on land and ensure fouling aquatic life does not re-enter water when cleaning, particularly if you are coming from interstate where this pest species is found.
- Make sure your boat and equipment are dry before moving to a new location.
- Avoid disposing of the seastar by breaking them apart and returning to the marine environment.
- Check for this pest, take photos and report if you see anything unusual.



## REPORT your observations

Your reports help protect WA.  
Contact FishWatch 24/7 or submit photos via MyPestGuide®.

## FISHWATCH



**1800-815-507**  
24 HOUR REPORTING

Scan to  
report via  
MyPestGuide®



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