

NEW ADDITION TO THE NOBANIS PORTAL

The North European and Baltic Network on Alien Species will launch a new tool: A key for identifying marine invasive species on the portal www.nobanis.org.

Invasive alien species are considered the second biggest threat to biodiversity globally. Correct identification of alien species is a key issue for preventing the spread of these species as well as monitoring the effects on local ecosystems. Marine organisms are considered especially difficult to identify, and also, once established in a new marine region, almost impossible to get rid of. The NOBANIS identification key to marine invasive species is a Nordic project based on expert taxonomic knowledge. It is aimed at users in management of invasive species and marine biodiversity who are not trained taxonomists, but it can be useful to anyone with an interest in marine life.

The key guides the user through simple "Yes or No" questions to separate species that are then further described in illustrated fact sheets. The fact sheets are based on state-of-the-art taxonomic information, updated distribution data, and pertinent information on ecology and impacts, and there are links to further information on other web-sites. The usual student identification keys cover only one group of species, e.g., snails or crabs, but the present key covers all the animal phyla that are represented by invasive species in Nordic or adjacent waters.

The key covers the marine invertebrates and fish presently known to be introduced in Nordic waters. However, Nature is dynamic and new species continue to appear. Therefore the key has been designed to permit addition of information on new species arriving in the region. We have included some information on species that are found in neighboring waters and may be the next alien to arrive in the marine waters of the region. We hope to be able to add keys to introduced macroalgae in the future.

Keys and fact sheets have been written by Dr. Kathe R. Jensen and the web-version has been generated in collaboration with an expert network from institutions in the Nordic countries, the Danish Forest and Nature Agency and the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning, both under the Danish Ministry of the Environment. Funding has been provided by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

If you have problems using this key, or if you have a species that does not seem to fit any of the species described in fact sheets or through links, please let us know. If you have a specimen, it will be much easier for us if you can send a digital photo; please also include location, date, and your name and contact information. We will update the key and incorporate corrections and additions regularly.

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American slipper limpet



Chinese mitten crab