



Report this pest



Mediterranean fanworm

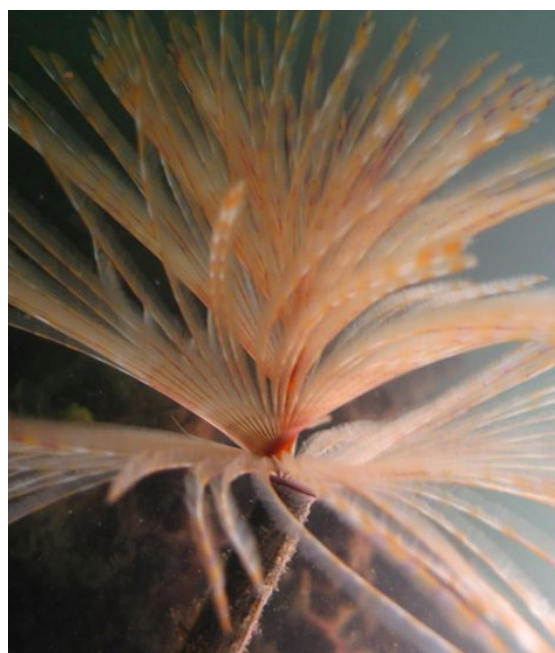
Why is it a pest?

Mediterranean fanworms can form dense beds of up to 1000 individuals per square metre.

They can outcompete native species, including filter-feeding organisms, for food and space. They can also threaten commercially and culturally important kaimoana species, such as kuku/kūtai (mussels), tio (oysters) and tipa/tupa (scallops).

Fanworms spread by attaching to vessels (fouling) or equipment used for underwater farming. This also increases harvesting and fuel costs, clogs fishing gear and dredges, and impacts fishing operations.

The Mediterranean fanworm is native to the Mediterranean Sea and parts of the North-Eastern Atlantic coast.



What does it look like?

- **Size:** This tube-dwelling worm usually reaches 10–50 centimetres but can grow up to 80 centimetres on occasion.
- **Appearance:** Tubes are leathery and flexible with a muddy appearance. A prominent spiral crown of feeding tentacles extend out of the tube.
- **Distinctive features:** A single large spiral of feeding tentacles, often banded in bright colours, such as orange, purple or white.
- **Similar species:** It can often be mistaken for similar-looking native species; however, native sabellid and serpulid tubeworms are smaller (<20 centimetres) and have two fans. For more information, visit marinebiosecurity.niwa.co.nz
- **Habitat:** It attaches to a wide variety of hard surfaces, including rocks, wood, steel, concrete, shellfish and artificial materials, but can also be buried up to 10 centimetres deep in soft substances.

Common name:

Mediterranean fanworm,
sabella

Scientific name:

Sabella spallanzanii

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?

From February to April mediterranean fanworms are easier to spot due to their extended feeding plumes.

Warmer temperatures often encourage growth and reproduction, increasing their presence.

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 Mediterranean fanworm, please let us know.**

Preventing the spread of Mediterranean fanworm 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.



Report this pest



Help us find Mediterranean fanworm

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/mediterraneanfanworm