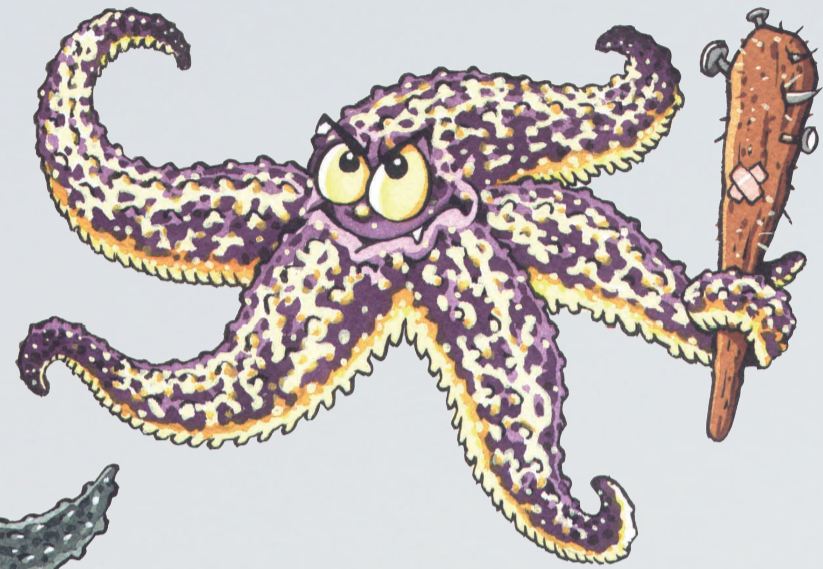


# Know your seastars



## Why is the Northern Pacific seastar a pest?

- It is not native to Port Phillip Bay.
- It is a threat to native seastars as it competes for the same food sources.
- It breeds quickly from a young age.
- It has few if any predators in our waters.
- Shellfish do not recognise it as a threat making them easy prey.

## How can you help?

'Prevention rather than cure' is the best approach.

You can help stop any further spread of aquatic pests from one location to another and protect our fisheries by being able to identify them and by keeping your boat and equipment clean.

Many thousands of native 5 and 11 armed seastars have been left to die on piers and at boat ramps by well meaning people who have mistaken them for the introduced seastar.

Remember — Our native seastars are a protected species under the Victorian Fisheries Act 1995.

## More information

For more information about aquatic pests or other fisheries issues, contact the DPI Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

## Fishcare

Promoting responsible fishing practices and care for aquatic environments

[www.fishcare.org.au](http://www.fishcare.org.au)

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Photographs: Northern Pacific seastar - courtesy of CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research  
Eleven armed and zig zag seastar - courtesy of Terence Bogue  
Illustrations: Paul Lennon

## Identifying the (native) stars

### Zig zag seastar

- Smooth upper surface covered by blunt spines.
- Rounded tubercles which often form a zigzag pattern down the centre of each arm.
- 5 arms but with rounded blunt tips at the ends.
- Colour brownish-yellow with mauve tinges.

### Eleven armed seastar

Is the largest species of seastar found in southern Australia.

- Easily identified as it has 11 arms with rounded tips.
- Colour brown or blue-grey.
- Large well spaced spines.

## Identifying the (introduced) villain

The Northern Pacific seastar is a five armed seastar with several identifying features:

- 5 arms with pointed upturned tips.
- Mainly yellow in colour with purple detail.
- Arms are covered in many small spines with jagged ends that are arranged irregularly.

## Star or villain?

The Northern Pacific seastar arrived in Port Phillip in the 1980's in the ballast water of ships. It is a declared noxious marine pest in Victoria and as such must not be returned to the water. The Northern Pacific seastar is a voracious predator which attacks shellfish and poses a threat to the marine environment.



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

