

# *Ectopleura crocea*

Tubular red hydroid



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## MARINE-COASTAL EXOTIC SPECIES GUIDE FOR ARGENTINA

### DESCRIPTION

- Colonial tubular hydroid, with stem diameter uniform throughout its length, unbranched and covered by a transparent perisarc (exoskeleton) up to the base of the zooid.
- Zooids with long hypostome (bulge where mouth is located), one oral whorl of tentacles around the mouth and another one aboral at the base of the zooids.
- Female gonophores (reproductive structures) are oval and contain the developing larvae that once released, attach to the base of the colony.
- Transparent, with a reddish color in the zooid base and hypostome.

General aspect of the colony.



Photo: Nicolás Battini



Length: 12 cm

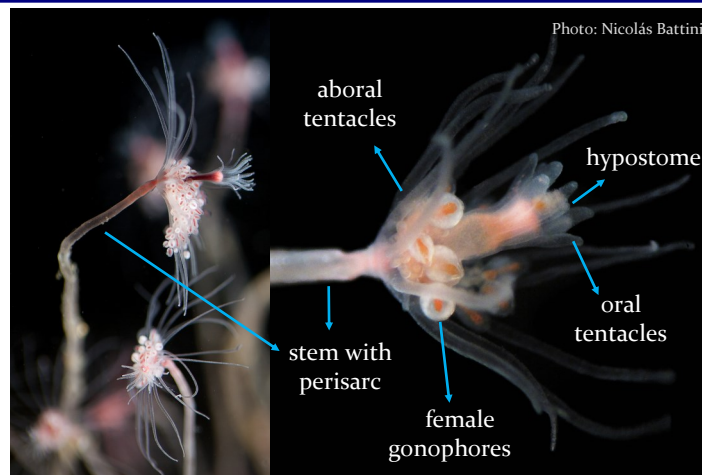


Photo: Nicolás Battini

Detail of a zooid.

### HABITAT

It lives in shallow waters up to 20 m deep, growing over algae, sea squirts, and sponges. It is abundant on ship hulls, platforms, buoys and others floating structures. It tolerates polluted and protected waters, such as those found in ports and estuaries.

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## *Ectopleura crocea*— Tubular red hydroid

Photo: Rodríguez et al., 2012

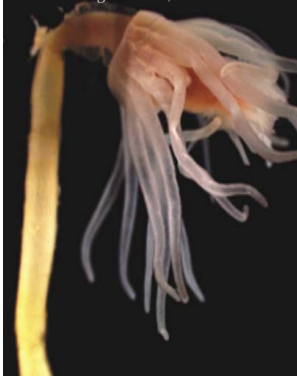


Photo: Nicolás Battini



### SIMILAR SPECIES

- *Hybocodon chilensis*: Native. Perisarc thicker than in *E. crocea* and with a pale brown color. Larvae develop into free-living jellyfish.
- *Eudendrium ramosum*: Native. Unlike *E. crocea*, it has only one whorl of tentacles around the mouth and the colony is highly branched.

### INVASIVE STATUS

*Ectopleura crocea* is native to the North Atlantic and it was first detected in Argentina in 1966, in Mar del Plata (38° S). Its ability to grow attached to ship hulls may have favored its spread along the coast.

*Hybocodon chilensis*

*Eudendrium ramosum*

## IMPACT ON NATIVE COMMUNITIES

Its impact on native communities of Argentina remains unknown. However, the colonies might change the dynamic of coastal systems, providing shelter to a wide variety of organisms, such as copepods, amphipods and polychaetes. Also, it feeds on larvae and adults of small crustaceans, which are caught with the tentacles.

### CONTACT US

This guide has been developed by the Grupo de Ecología en Ambientes Costeros (GEAC), from CENPAT (CONICET). If you find this species outside the reported areas, please contact us and let us know the date, locality, approximate number of individuals and, if possible, send us a picture:

 [especiesexoticasarg@gmail.com](mailto:especiesexoticasarg@gmail.com)



Grupo de Ecología en Ambientes Costeros (GEAC)

Rodríguez CS et al., 2012. *Zootaxa* 3523, 39-48.

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