

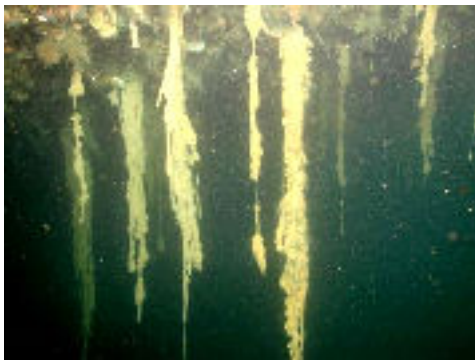
The Didemnum Vexillum Threat

In 2002 **Steel Mariner**, an 80m x 25m barge permanently moored in the Marlborough Sounds, New Zealand, was found to be heavily infested with the invasive weed *Didemnum Vexillum*. This weed is lush and thick and covers all in its path, and if left unchecked it spreads prolifically.

The Ministry of Fisheries approached **New Zealand Diving and Salvage Ltd** for a solution.

Following discussions with the scientific research organisation, the Cawthron Institute, **New Zealand Diving and Salvage Ltd** designed and built a unique suction cutter.

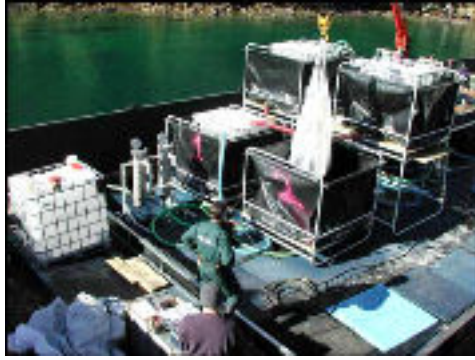
Using the cutter and suction pumps, divers systematically cut the weed from all surfaces of *Steel Mariner*, whereupon it was pumped to the surface into a series of fine meshed bales. The slurry of weed and water was then progressively sieved to ensure that no *Didemnum Vexillum* spores were returned to the sea as the water drained off.



Didemnum Vexillum growing on the bottom of *Steel Mariner*.



The slurry of cut weed and seawater being sieved.



Weed being baled for disposal.

473 kilograms of weed was removed from the barge and 147 kilograms from the surrounding seabed. It was baled and disposed of at a landfill, under Ministry of Fisheries supervision.

See also [Undaria weed](#) eradication, Chatham Islands. NZ.



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