

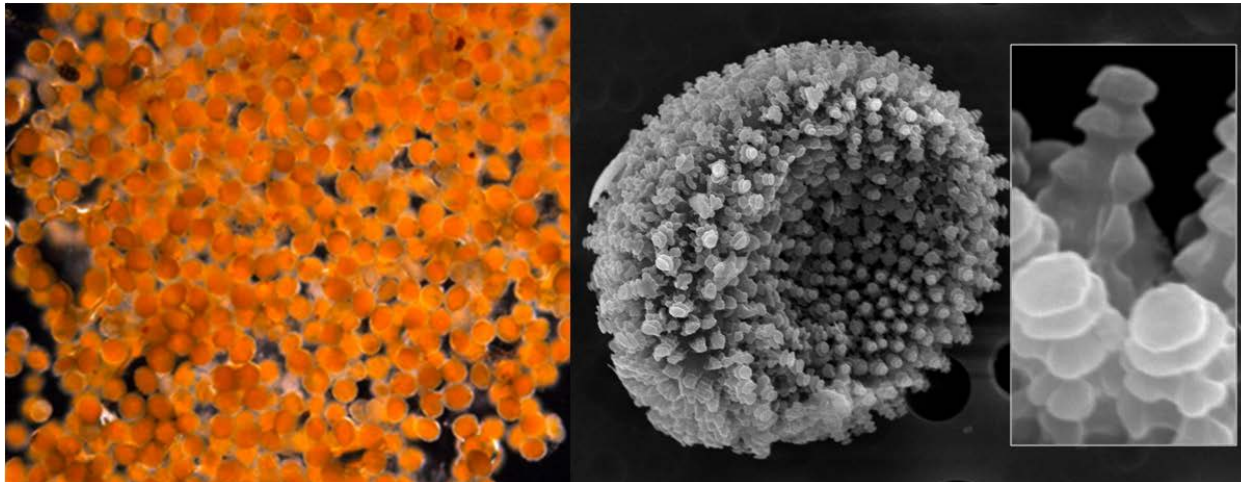


NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE, ALASKA REGION

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UPDATE: NOAA determines “orange goo” in Alaska’s Kivalina village is fungal spores



Left: spores of the orange substance as seen last week. Right: a single “uredo”-spore examined up-close by a scanning electron microscope and detail of its unusual spines from NOAA’s Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research Laboratory in Charleston, S.C.

Juneau, AK — NOAA today reports that the “orange goo” that washed ashore earlier this month in the remote Eskimo village of Kivalina along Alaska’s northwest coast is fungal spores, not microscopic eggs as preliminary analysis indicated.

Scientists at the NOAA Alaska Fisheries Science Center’s Auke Bay Laboratories announced last week that the substance was biological in nature, rather than oil or pollution as originally thought by concerned residents of Kivalina. Per standard scientific procedure, samples were sent to [NOAA’s Analytical Response Team](#) for a more thorough and detailed analysis and verification process.

At NOAA’s National Ocean Service Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research, based in Charleston, S.C., a team of scientists highly-specialized and equipped to analyze microbiologic phenomena such as this determined that the substance is consistent with spores from a fungi that cause *rust*, a disease that infects only plants causing a rust-like appearance on leaves and stems. Rust fungi reproduce to infect other plants by releasing spores which disperse often times great distances by wind and water. However, whether this spore belongs to one of the 7,800 known species of rust fungi has not yet been determined.

“At this point, the best identification we can give to as the origin of these spores is a rust fungus,” said Steve Morton, Ph.D., with the NOAA Charleston lab. “The spores are unlike others

we and our network of specialists have examined; however, many rust fungi of the Arctic tundra have yet to be identified.”

More information will be posted on the Alaska Fisheries Science Center website as it becomes available: www.afsc.noaa.gov/

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