Cordylophora caspia

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Common name(s) in English	–
… and in other languages	Danish: Brakvands-køllepolyp. Estonian: Järvetõlvik. German: Keulenpolyp. Affenhaar. Lithuanian: Kordylofora. Swedish: Klubbpolyp.
Scientific name	*Cordylophora caspia*
Organism group	Cnidarians. Hydroids.
Size and appearance	These animals are brownish grey/yellowish white, filamentous in structure, and form colonies. Individual polyps are about 1 mm long, but colonies can grow to a height of 50–100 mm. The colonies are moss- or shrub-like, with one part that attaches to and creeps over the substratum, e.g. a boat hull, and a branched, erect part. At the ends of the branches are the small, hydra-like polyps, which filter particles from the water column.
May be confused with	Off the west coast of Sweden: other hydroids.
Geographical origin	Ponto-Caspian region, in and around the Black and Caspian Seas.
First observed in Swedish waters	Probably in the 1810s.
Occurrence in Swedish seas and coastal areas	The species is very common, from the southern Baltic to the northern Bothnian Bay.
Occurrence in other sea areas	*Cordylophora caspia* is common in the Baltic Sea, occurring in the Curonian, Oder/Odra and Vistula Lagoons, the Gulf of Riga, the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia, as well as in the Belt Sea and the Kattegat. It is also found in the waters around Britain and Ireland (discovered as early as the 1860s). By the beginning of the 20th century the species had been observed in coastal waters and estuaries in several countries of northern Europe. It is also present in the Kiel Canal and in several major European rivers. In addition, the species has spread to the United States (California, Florida, the Great Lakes, coastal waters off New York and Washington, and certain rivers), to South-East Asia and to Australia.

Probable means of introduction	Shipping, as fouling on hulls. In the United States, however, the species has been introduced partly by aquarium release in Lake Erie and partly, on the east coast, via ballast water.
Habitat(s) in which species occurs	*Cordylophora caspia* mainly occurs in brackish water, and is sometimes regarded as a genuine brackish-water species. It is found in estuaries and other shallow areas (maximum depth around 3 m) with freshened water, but can tolerate salinities of up to about 20 psu. The species settles on rocks, submerged vegetation, and hard surfaces such as jetties and boat hulls. It primarily grows in shade, e.g. on the underside of boats. *C. caspia* is warmth-demanding, which means that it grows in warm conditions and dies back when temperatures start to fall in the autumn/winter.
Ecological effects	*Cordylophora caspia* can compete for space with the common or blue mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) and other organisms that attach to hard substrata. It is also believed to be a potential competitor with the zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*). In that it fouls boat hulls, the species can result in increased use of anti-fouling agents.
Other effects	*Cordylophora caspia* can foul important surfaces and also block pipes and other openings. There are many examples of it having clogged power station water intakes (see for example "'Affenhaar' in Wärmetauschern und Kondensatoren" below).

FIND OUT MORE

- North European and Baltic Network on Invasive Alien Species: *Cordylophora caspia*
  http://www.nobanis.org/speciesInfo.asp?taxaID=195
- Baltic Sea Alien Species Database: *Cordylophora caspia*
  http://www.ku.lt/nemo/directory_details.php?sp_name=Cordylophora+caspia
- European Nature Information System Database (EUNIS): *Cordylophora caspia*
  http://eunis.eea.europa.eu/species-factsheet.jsp?idSpecies=37428&idSpeciesLink=37428
- Marine Life Information Network for Britain & Ireland: *Cordylophora caspia*
  http://www.marlin.ac.uk/species/Cordylophoracaspia.htm
- 8,7 MB: Bundesanstalt für Gewässerkunde: Neozoa (Makrozoobenthos) an der deutschen Nordseeküste: Eine Übersicht
  http://www.stefannehring.de/downloads/083_Nehring+Leuchs-1999_BfG-Bericht-1200_neozoa-nordsee.pdf
- 3,4 MB: Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum: Non-indigenous marine and estuarine species in The Netherlands: *Cordylophora caspia*
  http://www.marbee.fmns.rug.nl/pdf/marbee/2005-Wolf-ZoolMed.pdf
- Marine and estaurine macroinvertebrates, macroalgae and fish introduced to the Netherlands: *Cordylophora caspia*
  http://home.hetnet.nl/~faassema/Cordylophoracaspia.html
- Wikipedia: Keulenpolyp
  http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keulenpolyp
- 303 kB: Chemie Technik (29) 2000/6: Keine Chance für Affenhaar
  http://dbindustrie.work.svhfi.de/AI/resources/102704e6c4b.pdf
- Centre national de la recherche scientifique: Laboratory evaluation of the toxicity of chlorine to the fouling hydroid *Cordylophora caspia*
  http://cat.inist.fr/?aModele=afficheN&cpsidt=13643989
- 342 kB National Introduced Marine Pest Information System: *Cordylophora caspia*
  http://www.marine.csiro.au/crimp/images/NIMPIS_PDF/10273.PDF
- US Geological Survey Nonindigenous Aquatic Species: *Cordylophora caspia*
  http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/FactSheet.asp?SpeciesID=1060
- Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant College Program: Alterations of Lake Michigan Benthic Communities by the Invasive Colonial Hydroid, *Cordylophora caspia*: Effects on Fish Prey
  http://www.iisgcp.org/research/projects/health/rhe4106.htm

PHOTO CREDIT

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