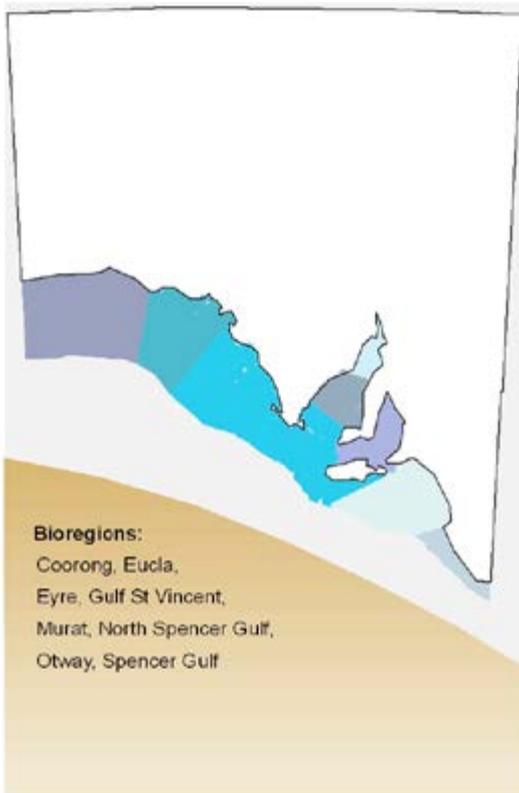
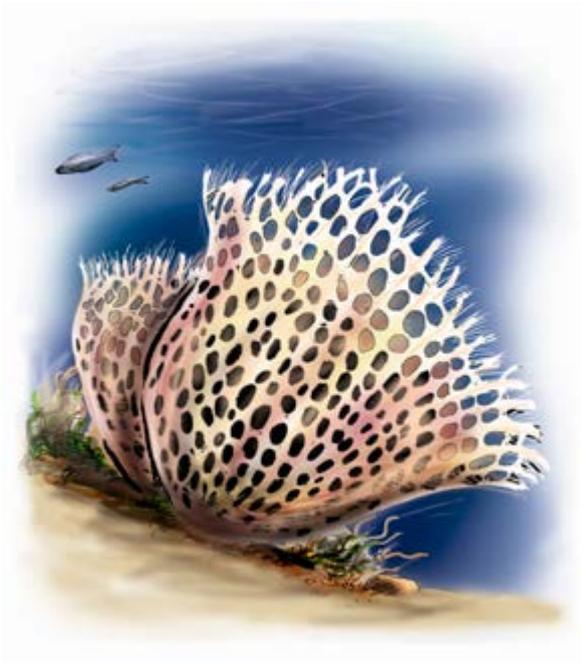


Lacy Bryozoan

Phidoloporidae



Map courtesy of Mapping Unit, Customer and Commercial Services.

Map is not intended to indicate spatial distribution of the species, only the bioregions in which the species is found.

Lacy Bryozoans are lace-like structures made of colonies of small marine animals fused together. These animals are called zooids; they are each about one mm long and box-shaped. Millions of zooids can form a single colony, and colonies have a lifespan of 1-12 years.

The zooids have special purposes: to form joints, to be brood chambers for the young, and to clean or defend the colony with bristles or pincers. Zooids have U-shaped guts, simple nervous systems and skeletons but no respiratory or circulatory systems due to their small size. They secrete limestone (calcium carbonate) that forms an outer skeleton in which they live. Their skeletons are then cemented together to form colonies connected by gaps or pores in the body walls. When cemented together they look like lacy works of art. They can grow to more than a metre in height and width.

Also known as 'lace corals', Lacy Bryozoans can often be mistaken for corals but are actually more complex. Lacy Bryozoans come in pink, orange and other colours and a variety of shapes from flat sheets to coral-like forms. South Australia has over 500 recorded species of Bryozoans.

Diet

Most zooids have feeding tentacles to collect minute food particles from the water. Their diet consists of microscopic organisms including diatoms and other unicellular algae.

Breeding

They are hermaphrodites (have both male and female reproductive parts) and can reproduce sexually and asexually.

Habitat

Lacy Bryozoans are usually found in coastal waters but can grow at depths of 8,200m. They settle on hard surfaces such as rocky reefs, shipwrecks or jetty pilings and sometimes sand.

Threats

The zooids that make up Lacy Bryozoans are preyed upon by grazing marine animals such as fish and sea urchins. Pollution and other forms of habitat degradation are a threat to this species, as well as warming as a result of climate change.



Fossilised remains of Lacy Bryozoans dating back millions of years can be commonly found in South Australia! This is because of the strong outer skeleton that the zooids create.

Conservation

You can help Lacy Bryozoans by:

- not polluting. Anything washed down a stormwater drain goes straight out to sea
- looking, but not touching – marine life is often fragile and can be easily damaged
- picking up litter – plastic and other litter can hurt marine life and destroy habitats.



Photo by David Muirhead

Lacy Bryozoan

For further information

Public enquiries

For more local information on any of the species in this resource please contact your nearest Natural Resource Centre office on:

Eastwood: (08) 8273 9100

Gawler: (08) 8523 7700

Lobethal: (08) 8389 5900

Willunga: (08) 8550 3400

Education enquiries

For teachers wanting more information about environmental education resources and opportunities please contact the relevant NRM Education sub regional team on:

Northern Adelaide: (08) 8406 8289

Barossa: (08) 8563 8436

Central Adelaide: (08) 8234 7255

Southern Adelaide: (08) 8384 0176

Southern Fleurieu: (08) 8551 0524

