

NORTHERN PACIFIC SEASTAR

Asterias amurensis

Key features

- ① Five arms
- ② Pointed, often upturned tips
- ③ Yellow to orange, often with purple markings on top; yellow underneath



- ④ Arms covered with numerous small, irregularly-arranged chisel-like spines
- ⑤ Usually up to 24 cm across, but can reach 50 cm
- ⑥ Reaches high densities



Habitat

- Low intertidal to 25 m, occasionally to 200 m
- Rocky reef, mud, sand or pebbles
- Wharves, pontoons and buoys
- Aquaculture structures
- Estuaries, harbours and coasts
- Sheltered to semi-exposed environments

Impact

- Fast-growing
- Forms vast, dense colonies
- Displaces native and fisheries species
- Voracious predator
- Highly detrimental to shellfish aquaculture and wild-harvest shellfisheries



'If found anywhere in New Zealand, immediately call

0800 80 99 66

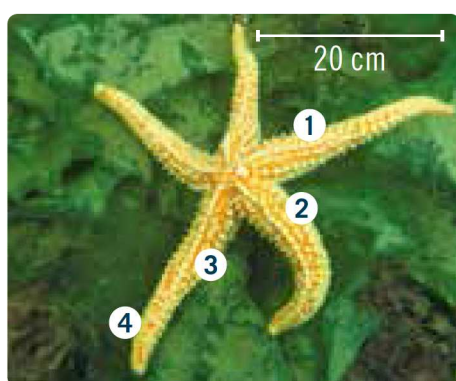
NATIVE SPECIES THAT LOOK SIMILAR



Serena Wilkens

How to differentiate *Asterias amurensis* from:

Sclerasterias mollis APRICOT SEASTAR/ CROSS FISH



Chris Woods

- 1 Well-defined rows of spines extending down the arms
- 2 Pale red to orange, with yellow bands and cream spines
- 3 Thin arms
- 4 Generally does not have prominently upturned armtips unless it's moving along the substrate

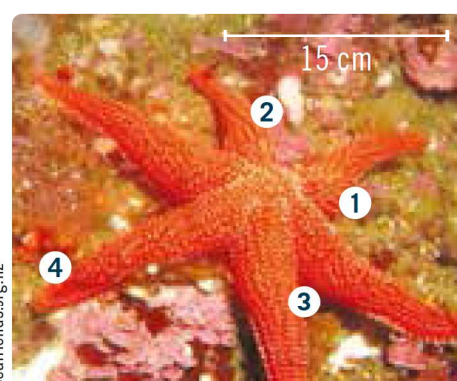
Astropecten polyacanthus COMB SEASTAR



seafriends.org.nz

- 1 *A. polyacanthus* is generally brownish red to fawn with a darker centre
- 2 Has a row of spines extending laterally around the edges of the arms
- 3 *A. polyacanthus* does not generally have prominently upturned armtips unless it's moving along the substrate

Allostichaster insignis THREE-AND-THREE SEASTAR



Paddy Ryan

- 1 *A. insignis* is orange, red or purple
- 2 *A. insignis* usually has six arms (occasionally five); *Asterias* always has five arms
- 3 *A. insignis* has groups of ~3 spines in rows extending down the arms, which *Asterias* lacks
- 4 *A. insignis* does not generally have prominently upturned armtips unless it's moving along the substrate
- 5 Smaller body (< 35 cm across)