

# Initial Risk Assessment of Alien Species in Nordic Coastal Waters

## Stowaways of the sea!

Some 3000 to 4000 marine species of plants and animals travel at any given time from one of the world's seas to another, most of them in the ballast water tanks of ships. Alien water-living organisms are known to cause considerable ecological and economic damages in the new areas and ecosystems they are introduced to. There are several What's and Why's to be answered: Why did they arrive now and not tens of years ago? Are they here to stay? Why are some port areas more open to alien species than others? Why do some of them spread dramatically and become pests? Some of them have appeared to be beneficial - are they a potential resource or a threat?

This report provides a first attempt to assess the environmental risks related to alien invasions into the Nordic seas. These invasions are a present and future concern for shipping industries and maritime authorities and a challenge for marine biologists.

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