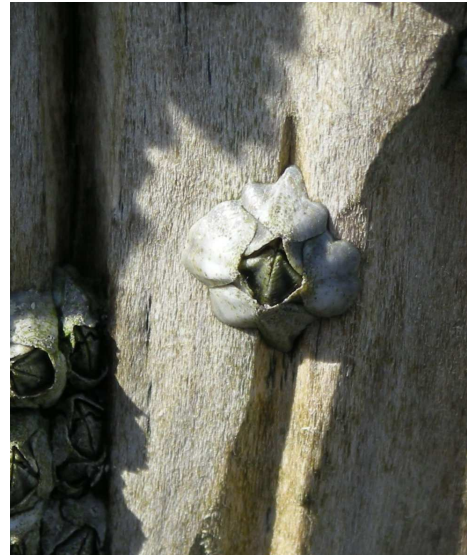# Darwins barnacle - Does this alien threaten our native barnacles in the waddensea?

Barnacles are small **sessile crustaceans** which next relatives can be found within planktonic copepods although their lifestyle differs totally. Barnacle larvae are freely drifting in the sea. At the border to adulthood, they glue its head to a hopefully suitable substratum and develop 4 or 6 calcareous plates for protection reasons. The rest of their life they **live upside down**!

Native to **New Zealand** and southern Australia, Darwins barnacle (Latin name *Elminius modestus*) was introduced to the North Sea by ships or flying boats during WW II. As the native barnacles, it settles on wooden piles and rocks, but also on snails, mussels, and oysters – in general on every **hard substrate** in the intertidal zone.
The native barnacles are the Crenate barnacle (Latin name *Balanus crenatus*) and the Rock barnacle (Latin name *Semibalanus balanoides*).

Darwins barnacle

Darwins barnacle, also called Australian barnacle, **filtrates** very small "marine waste", called **detritus** out of the water column by using its legs as catching hands (see picture). Other barnacles feed the same way but Darwins barnacle developed a very effective utilisation of its legs by high motion rates.
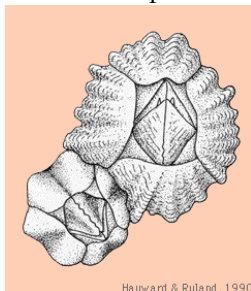
In difference to the native barnacles, Darwins barnacle has a longer reproduction season with several breedings per year. Its youngsters are fertile after a few months. Therefore it can spread out quickly. Up to now, it has not displaced any native. In opposite to this, it settled in areas were no other sessile animal could live beforehand.
What can be adviced for this alien species is the same advice as for most of the aliens: **Keep an eye on them but do not attack..**

How to distinguish the alien from the native species
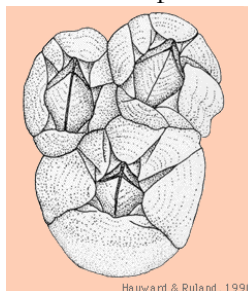
Elminius modestus
4 plates
Star like shape
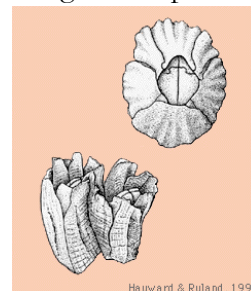
Hayward & Ryland, 1990

THE ALIEN

Balanus crenatus
6 plates
Smooth shape

Hayward & Ryland, 1990

Semibalanus balanoides
6 plates
Irregular shape

Hayward & Ryland, 1990

http://nlbif.eti.uva.nl/bis/crustacea.php?set=8&menuentry=zoeken&selected=foto