Urticina eques

White-spotted anemone, Horseman anemone, Strawberry anemone, Spotted red anemone

Phylum: Cnidaria
Class: Anthozoa
Order: Actiniaria
Family: Actiniidae

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Taxonomy: *Philip Henry Gosse first described Urticina eques* in 1858. Gosse used the name *Bolocera eques* for this species. The name was changed to *Madoniactis lofotensis* by Danielssen in 1890. Hand described this species as *Tealia lofotensis* in 1955, but the genus *Urticina* had priority over *Tealia* and *Madoniactis*. Manual (1981) synonymized the names *Tealia lofotensis* and *Bolocera eques*. The currently accepted name is *Urticina eques* (Wedi and Dunn 1983)

Description

Size: The diameter across the tentacles and oral disc can grow up to 350 mm, while the diameter across the column can reach 250 mm (Hayward and Ryland 1990)
Color: Often found to be white or yellow with abstract red lines on the column and red bands on the tentacles. It can also be found with a column that is predominantly red in color (Sanamyan and Sanamyan 2006)
General Morphology: Polyp form of Cnidaria consisting of a column and an oral disc, where the tentacles protrude past the column (Hayward and Ryland 1990).
Body: The column is often found to be equal in height and diameter or slightly taller than wide. The aboral surface is generally not much wider than the column.
Mouthparts: Fairly thick tentacles that are moderate in length and grouped in multiples of ten that may be arranged in five or sometimes six cycles. The oral disc and tentacles often have distinct red bands around them that may be encased by white bands (Hayward and Ryland 1990)
Other species-specific parts: Can be found with non-adhesive verrucae on the column (Sanamyan and Sanamyan 2006). The verrucae often are the same color as the column and are smaller than 2 mm in diameter. These verrucae form vertical rows along the column (Hayward and Ryland 1990)

Possible Misidentifications
Urticina eques resembles both *U. grebelnyi* and *U. crassicornis*, both commonly known as the painted anemone or the Christmas anemone. These species are morphologically very similar, but *U. grebelnyi* has verrucae while *U. crassicornis* is smooth. *Urticina grebelnyi* has larger verrucae than *U. eques* and differs in some internal structures (Sanamyan and Sanamyan 2006).
Urticina eques is also commonly misidentified as *Cribrinopsis albopunctata*, which has more distinct verrucae that differ in color from the rest of the column. *Urticina eques* instead has verrucae that match the column color (Sanamyan and Sanamyan 2006).

Some key identifying features of *U. eques* are tentacles arranged in tens, non-adhesive verrucae on its column, and often paler in coloration than its look-alikes

Ecological Information
Range: Found commonly along coasts of Britain, Ireland, and northwest Europe, but this species has been found in the Pacific Ocean, so there is evidence that it may be circumpolar (Picton and Morrow 2016)
Local Distribution: Rocky subtidal habitats. Has been collected near Stonewall Bank off the coast of Newport, OR at a depth of 121 m.
Habitat: Most commonly sublittoral but occasionally can found in the lower intertidal zone (Picton and Morrow 2016). Can be found attached to rocks or empty bivalve shells.
Temperature: Unknown.
Depth: Found down to about 400 m (Hayward and Ryland 1990)
Associates: Can be found attached to the inside of empty bivalve shells when on soft

substrata. Has been found attached to bivalves belonging to the genera *Pecten* and *Arctica* (Hayward and Ryland 1990). Also known to associate with *Oxylebius pictus*, the painted greenling. *Urticina eques* is known to act as a refuge for juvenile greenlings, which in turn feed on the copepods that are found upon *Urticina eques* (Elliot 1992)
Abundance: Unknown.

Life-History Information

Reproduction: Gametogenesis is typical in this species. *Urticina eques* dioecious, and a larger proportion of female sea anemones has been reported. Females release large-sized eggs reported to exceed 1200 µm. The height of reproduction and releasing of gametes occurs when the ocean temperature is around its warmest in November and December (Wedi and Dunn 1983)
Larva: Unknown.
Juvenile: Unknown.
Longevity: Unknown.
Growth Rate: Unknown.
Food: Known to feed upon *Strongylocentrotus purpuratus*, the purple sea urchin, and thought to also feed on other similar species (Poelen et al. 2014)
Predators: *Urticina eques* is known to be preyed upon by *Neobernaya spadicea*, the chestnut cowrie, *Dermasterias imbricata*, the leather star, and *Hypsypops rubicundus*, the Garibaldi damselfish. Other gastropods, sea stars, and fish are assumed to feed upon *Urticina eques* (Poelen et al. 2014)
Behavior: N/A

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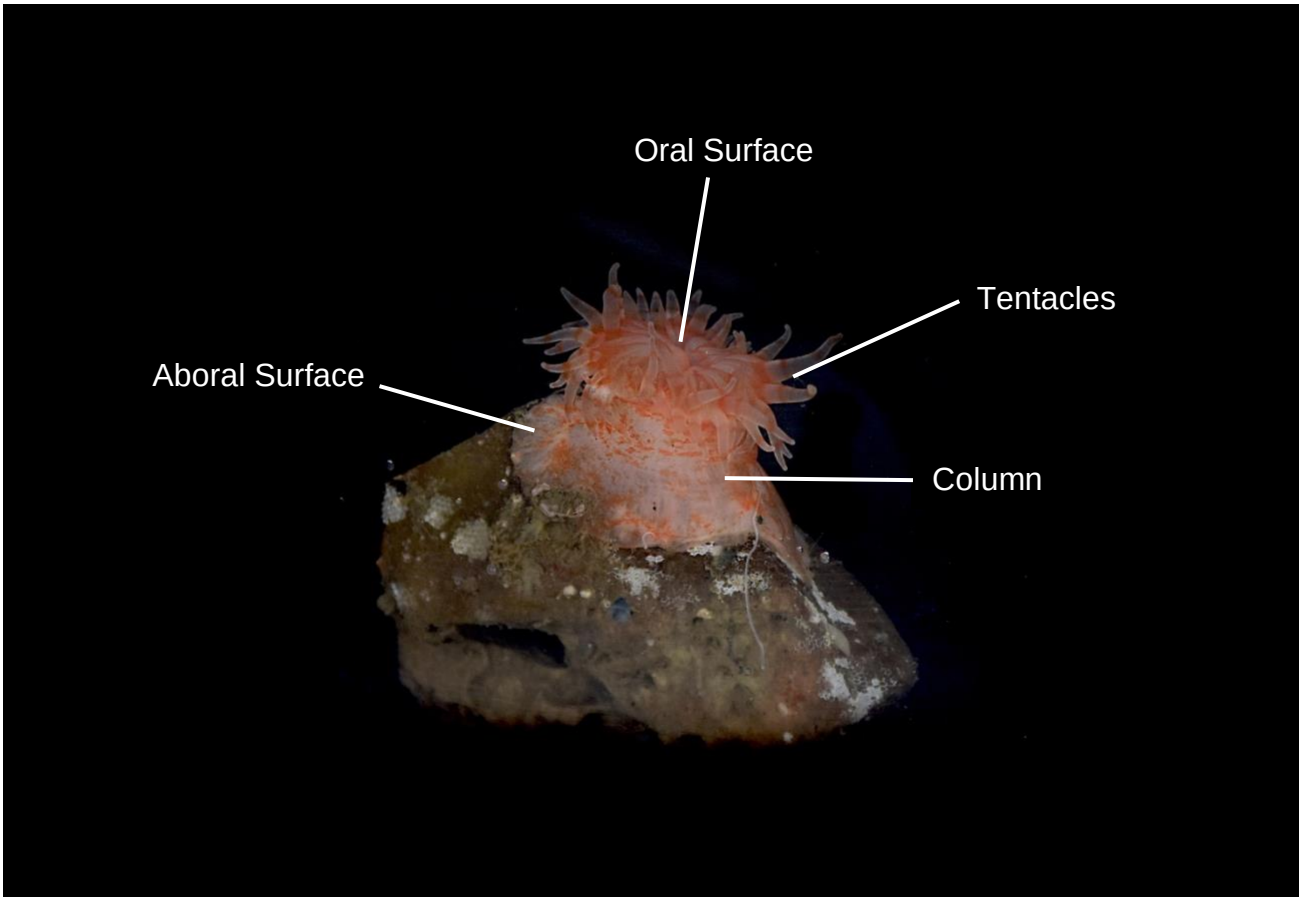

Fig 1. *Urticina eques* collected from near Stonewall Bank offshore of Newport, OR. Photo by M. Hainey.