

# *Balanus glandula*

Acorn barnacle



CONICET  
CENPAT

## MARINE-COASTAL EXOTIC SPECIES GUIDE OF ARGENTINA

### DESCRIPTION

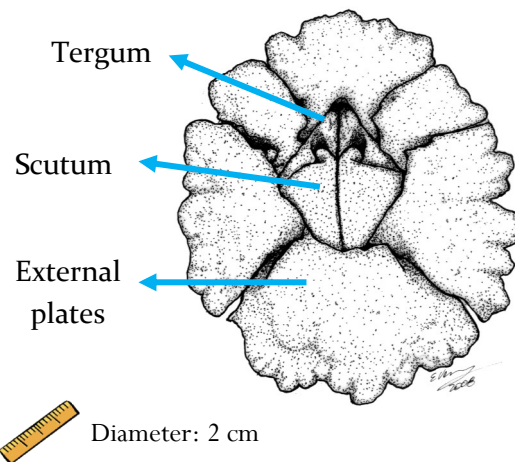
- It has six external plates. The internal plates (tergum and scutum) make contact with each other along a sinuous line.
- Grayish-white but usually covered with light brownish microalgae.
- The base is calcified and leaves a calcium deposit on the rock when removed.
- The height is usually about equal to the diameter, unless the barnacles are so crowded that they grow taller (twice in height) and more fragile than isolated individuals.



Photo: Alejandro Bortolus



Photo: Nicolas Barrini



### HABITAT

Is an intertidal marine species that can be found colonizing rocky shores, port areas, and salt marshes. Present in areas exposed and protected from wave action.

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### SIMILAR SPECIES

Photo: Alejandro Bortolus



*Amphibalanus improvisus*

- *Notochthamalus scabrosus*: Also with six external plates, but the rostrum and rostrolateral plates are not fused together like in *B. glandula*. Present in Tierra del Fuego. Also intertidal.
- *Amphibalanus improvisus*: With six external white and smooth plates. It has a conic body with a diamond-shaped orifice on top. The internal plates make contact with each other along a straight line (not sinuous). Distributed from Río de la Plata to south Patagonia. Intertidal and subtidal.

### INVASIVE STATUS

*Balanus glandula* is a native species from the west coast of North America and was introduced in Argentina at the beginning of 1970 in Mar del Plata (38° S) harbour. Its actual distribution range is from San Clemente del Tuyú (36° S) to Río Grande (53° S).

### IMPACT ON NATIVE COMMUNITIES

In southern Argentina, *Balanus glandula* is found in salt marshes, where it colonizes halophyte plant (such as *Spartina alterniflora*, *Limonium brasiliense* and *Sarcocornia perennis*) and intertidal invertebrates (such as the semi-terrestrial burrowing crab *Neohelice granulata*). In the later case, *B. glandula* can obstruct the movement of eye and mouth parts, affecting crabs' feeding, digging and walking behaviours. In addition, the epibiont whitish barnacles alter crabs' vulnerability to predation.



Photo: Alejandro Bortolus

### CONTACT US

This guide has been developed by the Grupo de Ecología en Ambientes Costeros (GEAC), from CENPAT (CONICET). If you find this species outside the reported areas, please contact us and let us know the date, locality, approximate number of individuals and, if possible, send us a picture:

 [especiesexoticasarg@gmail.com](mailto:especiesexoticasarg@gmail.com)

 Grupo de Ecología en Ambientes Costeros (GEAC)