

# *Boccardia proboscidea*

Shell worm



## MARINE-COASTAL EXOTIC SPECIES GUIDE FOR ARGENTINA

### DESCRIPTION

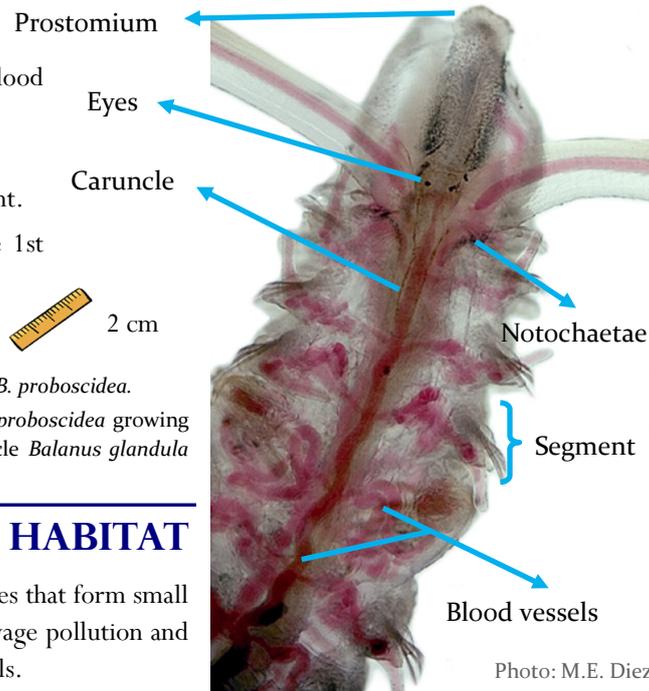
- Small marine worm, yellowish colored with 2 or 3 pairs of eyes. Blood vessels are visible, in living individuals, as red lines.
- Rounded prostomium (anterior region).
- The caruncle (chemosensory organ) extends to the end of third segment.
- Notochaetae (small hair-like chitinous structures) are present in the 1st segment.



Photo: Nicolás Battini

Right: anterior part of *B. proboscidea*.

Left: Aggregates of *B. proboscidea* growing over the exotic barnacle *Balanus glandula* in port pilings.



### HABITAT

Intertidal and subtidal. It lives within small tubes that form small aggregates in coastal areas. It is tolerant to sewage pollution and capable of drilling soft rocks and mollusks' shells.

Photo: M.E. Diez

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## *Boccardia proboscidea* - Shell worm

### SIMILAR SPECIES

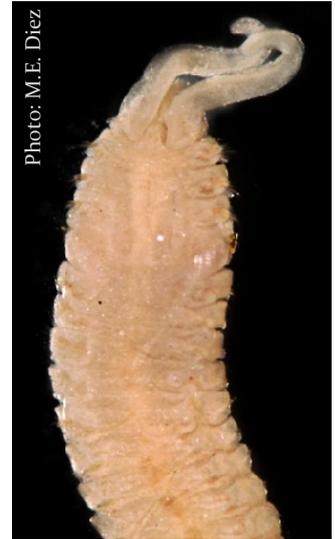
- *Boccardia claparedei*: Native. Unlike *B. proboscidea*, the caruncle extends only to the first segment. The first body segment lacks notochaetae.

### INVASIVE STATUS

*Boccardia proboscidea* is native to the North Pacific. This species belongs to a group of marine worms that is difficult to distinguish from each other. Its presence in Argentina was first detected in 2008 in Mar del Plata (38° S). Now, it is also present in Puerto Madryn (42° S), where it can easily be found colonizing the pilings of Piedra Buena port.

### IMPACT ON NATIVE COMMUNITIES

In areas impacted by sewage discharges, like Mar del Plata city, *Boccardia proboscidea* builds small aggregates that outcompete the native little mussel *Brachidontes rodriguezii* hampering its growth. It also affects other mussel and oyster species by drilling their valves.



*Boccardia claparedei*

### 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)