

**European clam**  
***Varicorbula gibba***

(Olivi, 1792)

**Phylum:** Mollusca  
**Class:** Bivalvia  
**Subclass:** Heterodonta  
**Order:** Myoida  
**Suborder:** Myina  
**Superfamily:** Myoidea  
**Family:** Corbulidae



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**Description**

*Corbula gibba* is a small bivalve mollusc with a maximum size of around 15-20mm. It has two unequal valves: the smaller left valve fitting into the larger right valve. The right valve has well developed, flat, concentric ridges which are widely spaced, whereas the left valve has finer, closely set, raised ridges. Umbones on both valves are high and curved, and there is a single, well defined cardinal tooth in each valve. The colour of the shells is usually cream/white with brown patches or bands.

**Reproduction & Growth**

Male and female clams are separate, broadcast spawners. In the northern hemisphere, reproduction and settlement takes place in summer and autumn, although larvae have been found during winter. The species grows from 4-7mm per year depending on the location. The life span of *Corbula* is about 1-2 years, which is considerably lower than that of the species earlier in the century. The reason for this is unknown, but it is suggested to be environmentally influenced.

**Habitat**

*C.gibba* is a shallow burrower that inhabits thick muddy sand. It has the ability to attach to gravel and stones by a single byssal thread. It is highly tolerant of low oxygen levels and survives well in polluted environments.

**Feeding** Suspension Feeder

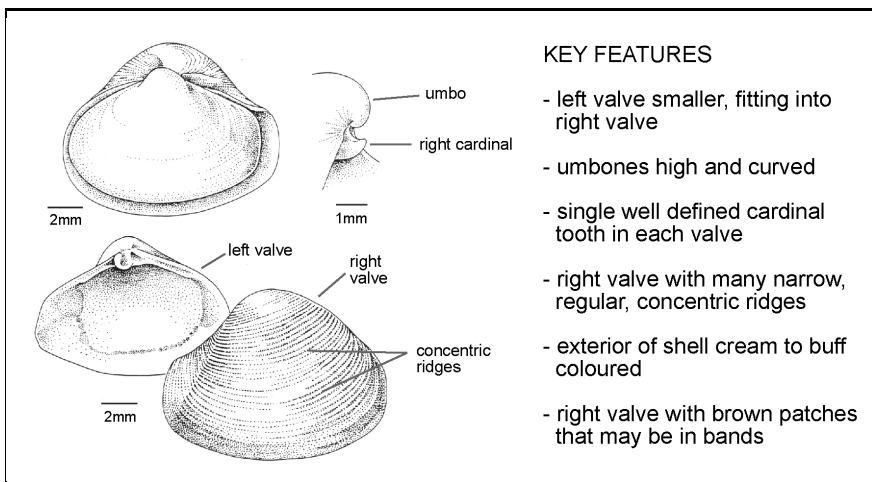
*C. gibba* is a ciliary suspension feeder that feeds on particulate organic matter, bacteria and bottom living diatoms.

**Predators**

*C. gibba* is consumed by gastropods, crustaceans, fish and echinoderms.

**Impacts**

*C. gibba* is regarded as a pest due to its growth rate and high tolerance for many environmental conditions. It achieves very high population densities and therefore has the potential to compete with native species, including commercial species such as scallops, for food and space, possibly affecting their recruitment.

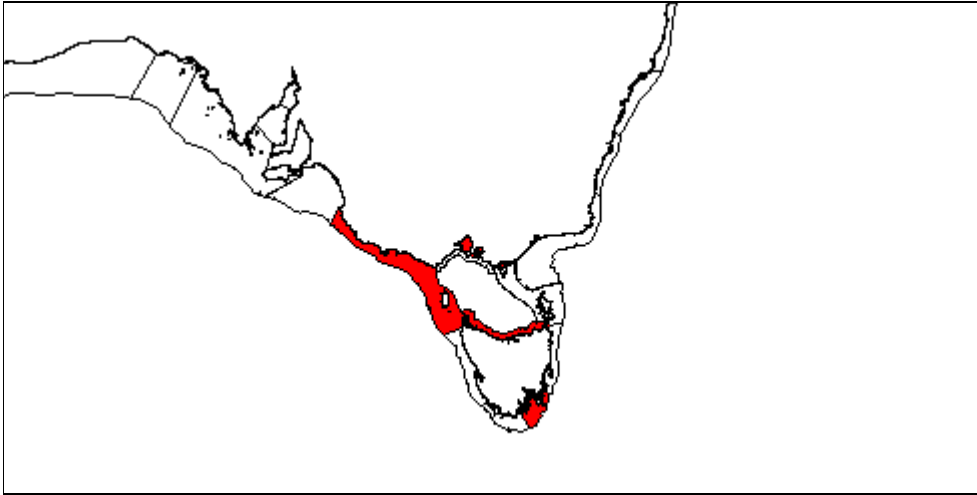


Copyright: Diagram from Boyd, 1999

**Similar species**

Other *Corbula* spp.

### Australian IMCRA BioRegion Infection Status



#### Control Options

For control information see the web site: <http://crimp.marine.csiro.au/nimpis>

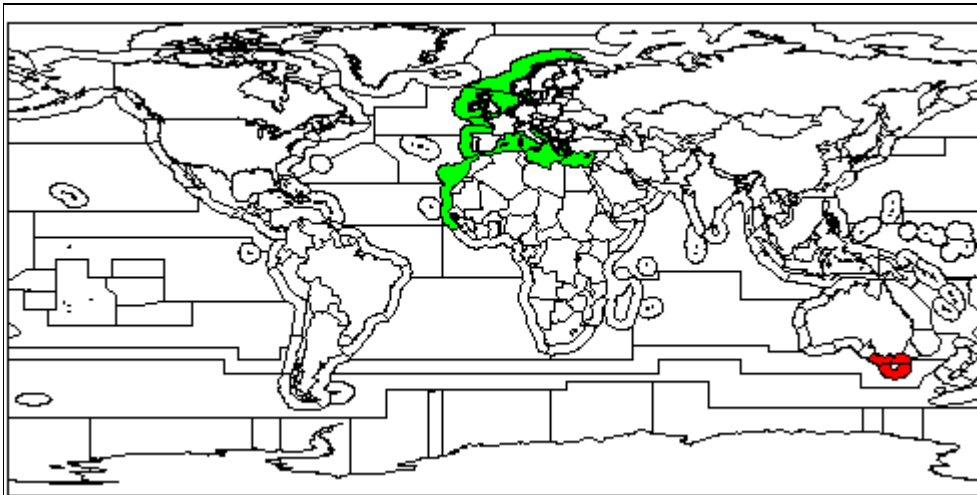
#### Likely Vectors - Class/Vector

Shipping

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### Worldwide BioRegion Infection Status



#### Key References

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