



Marine Invasives Taxonomic Service



The Marine Invasives Taxonomic Service (MITS) provides taxonomic identification and collection management of marine organisms relevant to marine biosecurity management in New Zealand.

What MITS does

MITS is responsible for identifying and managing collections of all marine samples collected under the Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) marine biosecurity operations. These services cover identification of specimens from vessel biofouling, the Marine High Risk Site Surveillance, Port Biological Baseline Surveys, border intercepts and passive surveillance (including samples reported by the public).

Read about some of these surveillance operations:

- [Port Biological Baseline Surveys](#)
- [Marine High Risk Site Surveillance](#)

MITS is funded by MPI and its services are provided by the the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA).



An international network of specialist taxonomic expertise

Distinguishing species that are native to New Zealand waters from those that are not requires specialist taxonomic expertise. More than 17,000 species have been recorded from our marine environments with many still to be described. Many do not occur anywhere else in the world.

MITS draws on a network of taxonomic scientists from New Zealand and overseas who are skilled at identifying New Zealand species and at distinguishing them from non-indigenous species.

A museum of specimens

MITS has standardised procedures that cover all stages necessary for accurate specimen identification, from receipt of samples through to final curation. It has a dedicated biosecurity database and a museum collection. The MITS collection is a central repository for all samples collected and identified through the Ministry for Primary Industries' marine biosecurity programmes. More than 68,000 samples have been processed through MITS, with about 1200 different species identified. About 20% of these are not native to New Zealand.

