

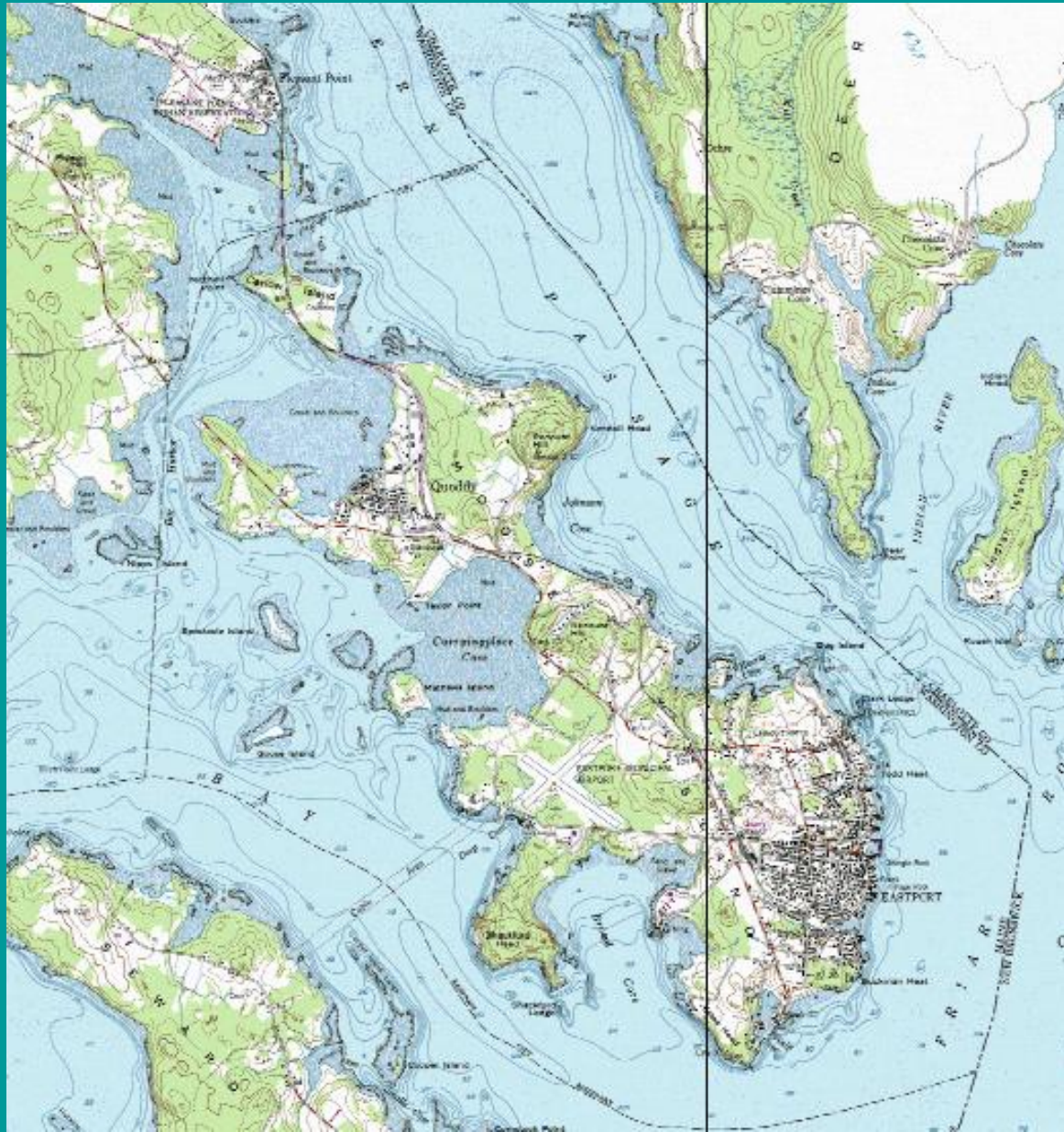
Didemnum sp. A non-native, invasive tunicate, or sea squirt

Photo from Georges Bank, courtesy of US Geological Survey





Location of *Didemnum* sp. identified in Cobscook Bay On August 6, 2005 by Larry Harris, UNH



Invasive Species in Cobscook Bay A Report from Chris Bartlett, Maine Sea Grant

Chris Bartlett described the Rapid Assessment project which took place in Cobscook Bay in August 2005. A group of scientists looked at piers and pilings in the area to identify any non-native species. During this project, Larry Harris, a researcher who has been working on urchin issues in the area for years, wanted to check out a report of a potential invasive species, *Didemnum*. Bruce McInnis had reported a sighting of a 'pancake batter' type substance that he found while dragging in the Toll Bridge area of Cobscook Bay. *Didemnum* is an invasive tunicate. When Larry Harris dove in the Toll Bridge area, he did find *Didemnum* in patches. Fishermen were asked to please report any sightings of this species.

A final report has not yet been released for the Rapid Assessment project.

Some Forum participants wondered what the implication of finding *Didemnum* is for Cobscook Bay and if this species could be expected to crowd other species out. At this time we don't really know what *Didemnum* will do in Cobscook Bay. In Georges Bank this species has spread from covering 4 square miles of bottom to covering 40 square miles. In the Damariscotta River, *Didemnum* has been present for many years and maintains its patchy distribution.