

Tunicate (solitary) - *Molgula retortiformis*

DESCRIPTION This grape-like tunicate is one of the largest Arctic ascidians. It is oval with a thick, firm tunic that is clear, but often covered in debris. When cleaned, the tunic appears rough or wrinkled. The two siphons are unequal with the atrial siphon being the longest, usually equal in length to the diameter of the body. The oral siphon is 1/4 as long as the atrial and has 4 lobes.

RANGE	Alaska and Washington, circumpolar species
SIZE	Body length to 10 cm
STATUS	Native
COLOR	Clear tunic, with an s shaped intestine visible through the body wall, oriented horizontally. Overall, the body appears light olive or grayish green.
HABITAT	Attaches to firm substrates, rocks and man-made structures.
TIDAL HEIGHT	Low intertidal and sub tidal to offshore to 80 m
SALINITY	15.2 to 33.3 ppt. (Homer & Seldovia Harbor range)
TEMPERATURE	neg 2.3 to 14.9 °C (Homer and Seldovia Harbor range)
SIMILAR SPECIES	Unlike <i>Ascidia</i> which is attached on its side, it is attached at its base. It differs from other <i>Molgula</i> species mainly in the much larger size, and in having the flattened, horizontally oriented gut. Though it has 6 lobes on the oral siphon and 4 lobes on the atrial as in all Molgulids, one siphon is very long (Photo upper right). This species doesn't brood and has direct development.



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©SERC, Note 4 lobes on atrial siphon



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