A sea spider, *Ammothea hilgendorfi*

**Overview**

Short description of *Ammothea hilgendorfi*, A sea spider

A gangly species, translucent yellowish brown to cream in colour, with brown or purplish banding on its long slender legs. It has a prominent proboscis and very small abdomen. This species has nine segmented palps (appendages) and ten segmented ovigers (legs used for carrying eggs).

**Description of *Ammothea hilgendorfi*, A sea spider status in GB**

The Japanese sea spider has been found at Southampton Water and Brownsea Island, Dorset.

**Habitat summary: *Ammothea hilgendorfi*, A sea spider**

The Japanese sea spider inhabits intertidal and shallow subtidal waters and may be found among subtidal algae.

**Overview table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment:</th>
<th>Marine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Species status:</td>
<td>Non-Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native range:</td>
<td>Asia-Tropical, Eastern Asia, North-Central Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional type:</td>
<td>Predator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status in England:</td>
<td>Non-Native</td>
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<tr>
<td>Status in Scotland:</td>
<td>Non-Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status in Wales:</td>
<td>Non-Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of first record:</td>
<td>Southampton water</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of first record:</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Invasion history: *Ammothea hilgendorfi*, A sea spider**

**Origin**

Native to tropical and temperate waters of the North Pacific. It is known from China to northwestern Mexico and from the Hawaiian and Society Islands (an island group within French Polynesia).

**First Record**

The Japanese sea spider was first observed in GB in 1978 in Southampton Water.

**Pathway and Method**

It is thought to have been introduced from Japanese waters, associated with fouling communities on ships' hulls.

**Species Status**

Outside of its native range this species was found in the northern Adriatic Sea in 1982, and in the English Channel. No other records were found.
Ecology & Habitat: Ammothea hilgendorfi, A sea spider

Dispersal Mechanisms
The Japanese sea spider has no planktonic larval phase, meaning that natural dispersal is limited. Dispersal is principally associated with shipping as the sea spider settles on developed fouling communities.

Reproduction
In all species of sea spiders, males exclusively carry the eggs until they hatch. During mating, the female transfers her eggs to the male who holds them with a specialized pair of legs called ovigers before fertilizing them externally. The male then glues the eggs into clusters and carries them on his ovigers until hatching occurs. Both males and females have multiple mates, and males may carry embryos from at least three mates simultaneously.

Known Predators/Herbivores
None known.

Resistant Stages
None known.

Habitat Occupied in GB
Observed amongst sublittoral algae in Southampton Water, also recorded from rock pools on the shore in Dorset.

Distribution: Ammothea hilgendorfi, A sea spider
Native range from temperate and tropical waters of the North Pacific, from China and Japan to northwestern Mexico and from the Hawaiian and Society Islands. In GB records exist from Southampton Water and Brownsea Island, Dorset.

Impacts: Ammothea hilgendorfi, A sea spider

Environmental Impact
The Japanese sea spider preys on hydroids and anemones, but no observed or anticipated impacts have been reported.

Health and Social Impact
None known or anticipated.

Economic Impact
None known or anticipated.

References & Links: Ammothea hilgendorfi, A sea spider

Identification

Biology, ecology, spread, vectors


Management and impact

General