

## **Smithsonian Environmental Research Center**

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### **MEDIA ADVISORY**

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#### **Divers to Attempt Removal of Invasive Kelp from San Francisco Bay Marinas** *Opportunistic seaweed potential threat to boating operations, native kelp ecosystem*

SAN FRANCISCO — Divers from three local agencies will attempt to remove an Asian kelp from a San Francisco marina this week in hopes of halting an incipient invasion. The kelp, *Undaria pinnatifida*, flourishes in harbors and marinas, where it attaches to boat hulls, pier pilings, docks, ropes, and rip-rap. It also can grow in native kelp forests, and scientists are concerned with its potential impacts on native algae and the ecosystems they support. *Undaria pinnatifida* can grow to 6 feet long in two months, and a reproductive adult can release millions of spores in a season.

First appearing in California at LA-Long Beach Harbor in 2000, the kelp spread to Monterey Harbor by 2001, probably as an accidental hitch-hiker on the hulls of boats. Researchers from the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) in Tiburon discovered the first populations north of Monterey in May at San Francisco Marina and South Beach Marina. In both cases, the alga is currently isolated to a small area. Researchers urge a swift response to prevent further establishment and spread.

Divers from the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration and the California State Lands Commission are working with SERC to remove the kelp, with the full cooperation of local harbormasters. SERC has distributed informational fliers and posters at local marinas. Boaters, commercial divers and other members of the public are being asked keep an eye out for the invasive kelp and to report sightings to SERC. Concerned boaters can contact the scientists listed above.

Divers are planning to remove the kelp and further survey the South Beach Marina on Thursday July 9 at 9 a.m.