

Pierrat J., A. Tucker, K.C.K. Ma, J.-F. Hamel & A. Mercier 2025. Association between a marine halacarid mite (Halacaroidea: Arthropoda) and the early juveniles of the northern sea cucumber *Cucumaria frondosa* in Nunavut. *SPC Beche-de-mer Inf. Bulletin* 45 : 56-58 [open access] (<https://fame.spc.int/node/1970>)

There is limited knowledge available about young sea cucumbers (<1 mm in length and <1 year in age) and their interactions with other species in their environment. A nursery habitat for the orange-footed sea cucumber (*Cucumaria frondosa*) was recently found in Qikiqtait allowing for the collection of young individuals. On one of the young individuals collected at Kataaluk in October 2024, a mite was observed walking and piercing the body wall with its sharp mouthparts. This suggests a potential parasitic relationship between the mite and young individuals of *C. frondosa*, with the mite feeding on the tissues of the sea cucumber. The mite was 150 µm in length and transparent, with a red digestive tract that matches the colour of the sea cucumber. This made the mite difficult to see, which could help it avoid detection by predators. This is the first ever description of an interaction between a mite and young sea cucumbers. Understanding the interactions and characteristics of sea cucumbers throughout their life history, including early stages, is important in order to establish sustainable fisheries.

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