



Video Transcript  
**Why Study Tunicates?**

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- Tunicates are very diverse.
- There are around 3,000 different species known to science.
- But everywhere you go, new places, you dive or you look for tunicates, you are going to find new species.
- It is interesting that some tunicates are eaten as food in some countries: in Chile, in Korea, in Japan in the South of France.
- There is always one species that people like to eat. They take the tunic off of the animal and eat the inside parts.
- Another interesting feature of tunicates is that they help to fight cancer.
- They do not have any hard structures covering them, so they rely on chemicals for protection, and these chemicals can be very hard, they can be toxic sometimes to small cells, to bacteria and to cancer cells.
- There are scientists looking for natural products taken from ascidians to fight resistant bacteria in hospitals and other kind of micro-organisms such as bacteria or fungus.
- Some species also cause trouble. These species can be transported by vessels and they establish in different regions.
- Some of those will attach to bivalve shells and they cause economic damage to bivalve culture like oysters and mussels.
- Nobody wants to eat an oyster with lots of tunicates on their shells.
- Tunicates are also models, very interesting, for ecological research, for benthic studies and bio-invasion studies and also for embryological development studies.
- So it is very important that we have more people working on tunicate biodiversity.
- The first step to start any other type of research is to do the taxonomical research on the animals and really know which species you have, describe them and name them.

