

# Dead man's finger (*Alcyonium digitatum*)

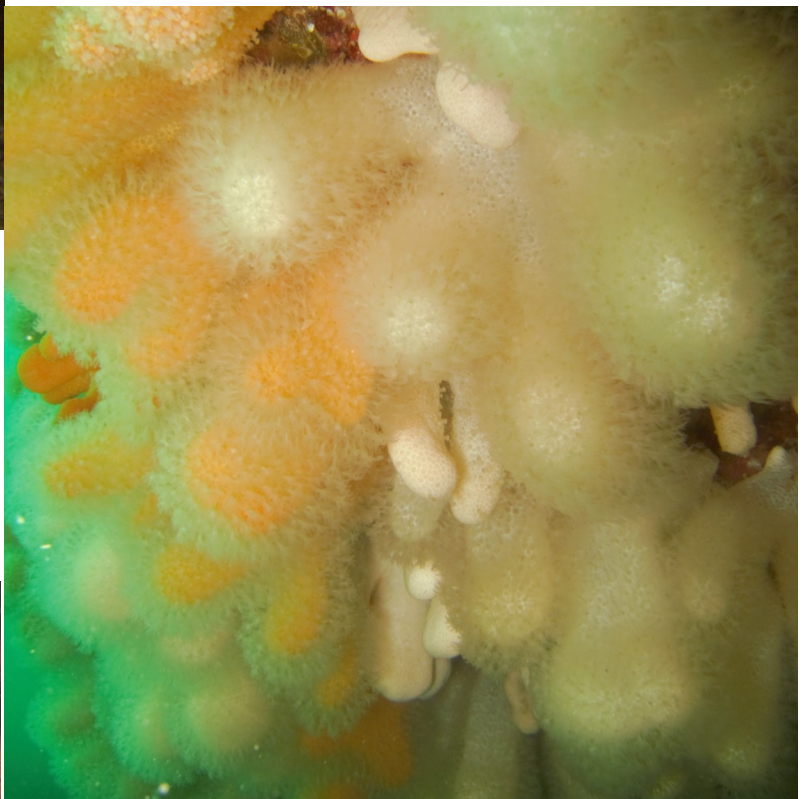
Anthozoa (Cnidaria: Alcyonacea)



Taxonomy: Cnidaria->Anthozoa->Octocorallia->Alcyonacea

IUCN Red List Categorisation: Not Assessed

Colonial soft coral consisting of translucent polys found on all Irish coasts, from Iceland to Portugal and the western Atlantic coasts. May become reddish in colour in winter due to a film of epibiotic algae (bottom left). Though it may occur as the dominant animal turf in areas, current speed, water depth and shape of the rock face are all important factors affecting the density of this species<sup>1</sup>.

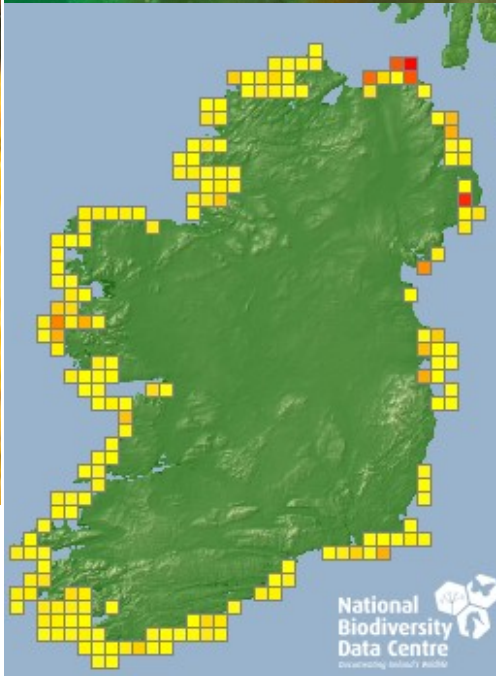


Colonies form into large masses of variable shape but typically up between 25-30cm high when mature. Colouration is either orange or white (right) though may look reddish in winter (below). May be confused with congener the red man's finger (*A. glomeratum*) and pink man's fingers (*A. hibernicum*) though both these species are generally much smaller with polyps more widely spaced and red and pink colouring respectively.



What dive sites can I see it at?

Any site that has suitable aligned walls with moderate currents. Generally more abundant at offshore sites around islands.



1. Bell, J. (2001) The Influence of flow rate, depth and surface inclination on the density and distribution of temperate anthozoa. Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom, (81;5)

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