



## Important information from MPI about biofouling and new border rules

The following information is very relevant to you if you or your company move vessels into New Zealand to fish the coast or to fish out of New Zealand or if you ever call in to land fish. Load supplies or for repairs

### New biofouling requirements come into force in 2018.

You need to know that New Zealand has issued new requirements - the *Craft Risk Management Standard for Biofouling on Vessels Arriving to New Zealand*. These new rules were introduced on a voluntary basis two years ago and will become mandatory with enforcement in May 2018. They aim to ensure that all vessels arrive into New Zealand with a 'clean hull'.

Full information is at <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/regs/sea-craft-ports/sea-craft>. Also see the grey box at the end of this communication.

Enforcement commences in May 2018. Until this time compliance is voluntary and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) continues to take action on vessels if they arrive with biofouling at a level that it considers to be of severe risk to New Zealand.

In recent decades, New Zealand has seen an increasing number of exotic marine pests and diseases establishing here. These are having an impact on our important sea-based aquaculture and fisheries as well as on the amenity and safety of our coastal environment. Our research has shown that vessels are the main way these pests arrive here – sometimes in ballast water and most frequently as hull biofouling. Vessels pick up and transfer species and diseases from a source country and on arrival to a new place, such as New Zealand, these become detached from the hull or spawn and, if conditions are favourable, a large enough number survive to start populations that spread all around the coast.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is working with fishing vessels as this sector has a high potential for biofouling risk when vessels arrive having spent time in another country. Also, vessels that work out of New Zealand, operators may need MPI's assistance working on an equivalent approach to meeting the CRMS requirement to arrive with a 'clean hull' particularly for those returning through the border fouled with species from the port they are returning to – and potentially of little risk.



Photo of severe risk biofouling (MPI)

## **Be aware**

MPI's border services are currently assessing vessels and identifying, for further attention, any that are likely to have a high level of marine growth. Before taking a long distance voyage fishing vessels should have the underwater surfaces, hull and niches cleaned of biofouling to avoid spreading unwanted marine species to other regions or countries. Vessels that spend time tied up in one coastal location cannot depend on well-maintained antifouling coatings to prevent settlement of organisms such as oysters and mussels on the hull and in niche areas such as rudder stocks, rudders, and rope guards and recesses including sea-chests, thrusters and hopper doors. MPI encourages operators to have antifouling renewed before transferring a vessel into New Zealand.

If the operator of such a vessel is not able to provide verifiable proof that the hull and niche areas are clean of biofouling, they are likely to be contacted by MPI before or on arrival to discuss possible dive inspection and other measures that the operator may be directed to take such as slipping the vessel to be de-fouled, — all of which will be at the operator's expense.

## **What you can do**

Here are some steps that can be taken to avoid the inconvenience and cost of intervention by MPI on arrival:

- If possible operate a hull maintenance programme of timely dry-docking or slipping during which fouling and corrosion is removed, hull is smoothed and antifouling coatings are completely replaced. The coatings used should be suitable for the likely operating mode of the vessel expected for the next period until next dry-docking. Various coatings may be needed to ensure they are effective in different niche areas. If antifouling application has been completed less than 30 days before arriving in New Zealand, no further preparation will be needed for the arrival. If completed earlier than 30 days before New Zealand arrival, the vessel needs to have a check and clean of any regrowth before setting off. Sea-chests also need to be free of marine growth.
- Many fishing vessels' hulls are not easily kept in a well maintained state and will have biofouling that needs to be removed before a voyage to New Zealand. Cleaning should be as thorough as possible and, as well as cleaning the hull and sea-chests, should include cleaning of other niche areas and equipment that has been in contact with the sea (clean and dry equipment).
- It is recommended that any internal seawater systems are checked for growth and preferably dosed before the voyage to kill any exotic marine life.
- If you have proof of the vessel having a 'clean hull' 30 days or less before expected arrival date, this can be sent to MPI to ensure a smooth process on arrival.

## **We are here to help**

Some vessel operators may need help deciding whether and how to prepare the vessel for moving it to New Zealand. Also operators of vessels with frequent movements into and out of New

Zealand may like to prepare guidelines for your fleet or industry as a whole, or simply a standard procedure for each vessel on what needs to be done for every return to New Zealand. MPI can assist with and endorse guidelines. Another option for complicated vessel movements or projects where assurance is needed that the vessel will be permitted to stay in New Zealand is to prepare a Craft Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and submit it for MPI's approval. We can advise on what a CRMP needs to cover.

### Keeping updated

If you would like to receive further updates or notices about MPI-approved providers of 'clean hull' inspections, just contact MPI at the email address below and we will add you to our communications database. If you ask to discuss any aspects we will get in touch as soon as we can.

There are currently few options for dealing with non-compliant vessels other than directing them to haul-out or to leave New Zealand as soon as possible. We can keep you updated on any in-water options that may become approved.

Also please pass this alert to others in your industry and let us know of others who may be interested in updates.

Our email is: [Standards@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:Standards@mpi.govt.nz)

### The enemy

Here are some species we are trying to keep out of New Zealand. These can multiply to huge numbers or thickly cover the seabed and predate on other species or out-compete them for food or space.

*European shore crab*



*Northern Pacific Seastars*



*Green mussels*



Note: We have also sent you our latest **general update** on progress to fully establish the biofouling border management regime by 2018.

## Background material – Biofouling (posted on the MPI website in May 2014)

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has issued the Craft Risk Management Standard (CRMS) for Biofouling on Vessels Arriving to New Zealand. **This Standard comes into force on 15 May 2018.** The Standard applies to **all** types of sea-craft that have come from or recently visited coastal waters of another country.

Biofouling is internationally accepted as a major route, along with ballast water, for the spread of marine pests to new regions. The introduction of exotic (new to New Zealand) species could have a serious impact on the productivity of aquaculture, and on the biodiversity of coastal marine life. Exotic marine species that have not previously been documented to be harmful elsewhere could have an adverse impact if introduced to New Zealand, due to the unique nature and composition of marine environments.

New Zealand does not yet have many of the most damaging marine pests that have been documented in other countries. It is timely and important that New Zealand addresses this current gap in its biosecurity.

The CRMS requires vessels to arrive with 'clean hulls'. 'Clean hull' is defined for two categories of vessel, with 'short-stay' vessels allowed more light biofouling than 'long-stay' vessels which are allowed a slime layer and goose barnacles only.

Enforcement of the requirements of the CRMS for biofouling will commence on 15 May 2018 – four years from the date of issue. During this lead-in period, vessel operators are encouraged to become compliant as soon as practicable.

There are a number of measures given in the new CRMS for vessels to use to comply with the Standard, and during the lead-in period, MPI will work with vessel operators to help them decide which measures are most suitable for them. MPI will also communicate the requirements to international commercial shipping lines and other interested parties to ensure that vessel operators planning to visit New Zealand are aware of the measures and can make any changes needed to come into compliance by 2018 or earlier.

In addition, hull inspection and cleaning services, both in New Zealand and offshore, will be encouraged to become approved by MPI during this period.

The CRMS is aligned with the 2011 International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Guidelines for Biofouling Management, and following best practice according to these Guidelines is deemed to meet the requirements of the CRMS. This means that much commercial shipping is already compliant. Other options for compliance will ensure that vessels should be able to become compliant with minimal disruption.

During the four year voluntary lead-in period (of which two years remain), action continues to be taken on cases of severe biofouling, as has been done in the past under the Biosecurity Act (1993). MPI is also more actively gathering information on biofouling. This is through a Biofouling Declaration to be supplied to MPI with the Advance Notice of Arrival (as an extension to the Ballast Water Declaration). This information will help assist MPI monitor improvement in biofouling management practices by vessel operators.

A Guidance Document accompanies the CRMS to show how the requirements will operate at the New Zealand border from 2018. This is currently a draft but will be further refined during the lead-in period.

[CRMS and accompanying guidance document](#) Ctrl+Click to view