

Memorandum

3 December 2018

To:	Environment and Community Committee and Independent Māori Statutory Board members
Subject:	Development of a discussion document for an inter-regional marine pest pathway management plan
From:	Phil Brown – Biosecurity Manager

Purpose

1. To provide an update on the development of an inter-regional marine pest pathway management plan to manage marine pests.

Summary

- *Auckland Council has joined the Top of the North Marine Biosecurity Partnership (a group composed of councils from the upper North Island, Department of Conservation and Ministry for Primary Industries)*
- *This group is developing a discussion document for an inter-regional marine pest pathway management plan for public consultation. This is an initial step towards creating a plan that may regulate activities that can introduce or spread marine pest species.*
- *Staff intend to present the high-level discussion document to the Environment and Community Committee for their approval in February or March 2019.*
- *Consultation on the draft discussion document is planned to take place during March to May 2019. The consultation will be primarily targeted at recreational boat users as they will be most affected by any changes proposed through a marine pathways management plan.*
- *Following analysis of public feedback staff will provide a summary of this feedback to local boards. Local boards will then be able to provide their own feedback by June 2019.*
- *Following local feedback, staff will report back to Environment and Community Committee and the Upper North Island Strategic Alliance (UNISA) with recommendations on next steps in July 2019.*
- *Any questions on the key issues to be consulted on in the discussion document can be sent to Samantha Happy, Senior Biosecurity Advisor – Marine at samantha.happy@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz*

Context/Background

The need to address the threat of marine pest species

2. Marine pests can have a wide range of economic, ecological, recreational, social, cultural and human health impacts. Marine pest species generally arrive in New Zealand on the hulls of ships and in ballast water. Pests spread further through a range of activities including shipping and recreational boating, aquaculture activities and introduction of (human-made structures) in marine and coastal areas.
3. Shipping volumes in the upper North Island region are high, particularly around ports and marinas such as the Ports of Auckland, Whangārei and Tauranga. This makes the upper North Island a high-risk region in terms of its capacity to facilitate introduction, establishment and spread of marine pest species through biofouling (e.g. pest species attaching themselves to ship hulls).

Inter-regional collaboration through the Top of the North Marine Biosecurity Partnership

4. Central Government, regional and unitary councils both have statutory responsibilities under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and Resource Management Act 1991 to address the threat of marine pests

(outlined in the Pest Management National Plan of Action 2011). Regional and unitary councils are responsible for managing the marine biosecurity risks arising from intra-regional specific movement of vectors (e.g. vessels, structures and equipment). They are also responsible for managing risks associated with the development and maintenance of structures in the coastal and marine environment (e.g. marinas, wharves, jetties, moorings, and structures used in aquaculture practices).

5. Local authorities are precluded from making rules to manage the risks from ballast water discharge. Typically, once a new pest has established to the point that full eradication is no longer possible, responsibility for its management falls to regional and unitary councils.
6. The Biosecurity Act 1993 provides for the development of pest management plans to control identified pests and pathway management plans to regulate activities that can introduce or spread species. Pathway management plans which focus on reducing dispersion of specific pests in many cases provide a more effective means of addressing risks than traditional pest management plans, which rely on reducing pest presence at one location or controlling the sale, distribution or release of pests.
7. The Upper North Island Strategic Alliance (UNISA) endorsed the preparation of a discussion document for an inter-regional marine pest pathway management plan for the upper North Island in late 2017.
8. The discussion document is intended for informal consultation with the public and key stakeholders to help the four upper north regional councils, Department of Conservation and Ministry for Primary Industries understand people's views on how to prevent the spread of marine pests. The discussion document will focus on vessel hull-fouling which presents the highest risk of spreading marine pests.
9. A memo was provided to Environment and Community Committee notifying them of Auckland Council's participation in the development of the draft discussion document at its 12 June 2018 meeting.
10. A Top of the North working group, comprising of Auckland, Northland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty council staff has been established to develop the draft discussion document. These four council groups are developing the document on behalf of the wider Top of the North Partnership because the majority of vessel movements in the north are between these regions and the associated risks are concentrated in these areas

Discussion

Draft discussion document

11. The Top of the North working group are developing a draft discussion document. It is currently proposed that the document will:
 - provide a problem statement and address the question: why do we need marine pest pathway management?
 - describe different pathways related to the introduction and spread of marine pests (e.g. boat hulls, aquaculture, ballast water)
 - summarise current management approaches in the different regions
 - seek feedback on options for marine pest pathway management including high-level advantages and disadvantages and potential rules, for example
 - i. developing consistent rules only for managing hull-fouling across the four biggest boating regions – Northland, Auckland, Waikato, and Bay of Plenty
 - ii. developing rules for managing hull-fouling and other pathways such as ballast water
 - iii. not developing inter-regional rules, instead relying on the Ministry for Primary Industries to develop a national pathway approach.

12. In addition to the draft discussion document it is intended that each council will collate supporting information specific to their regions such as the number of boats, marinas and moorings, the known distribution and impacts of marine pests and high-level area-specific costs and benefits.
13. This work will be covered by the natural environment targeted rate 10-year budget for marine biosecurity. If marine pest pathway management options are identified through public consultation that go beyond the scope of this project, additional funding sources may need to be identified.
14. The feedback received from public consultation and local boards will be collated, analysed and reported back to participating councils and UNISA with recommendations on next steps. Staff intend to present this report at the July 2019 Environment and Community Committee meeting.

Next steps/implementation

15. The current timeline and process for development of the discussion document is outlined in Table 1 below

Table 1. Timeline for development of discussion document

Key tasks and milestones	Timelines
1. Seek endorsement from councils to prepare a discussion document for informal public consultation	Completed
2. Develop draft contents of discussion document through Top of the North working group	Under development
3. Each region to compile supporting information for discussion document	End of December 2018
4. Prepare communication plan for public and key stakeholder consultation	End of December 2018
5. Opportunities for informal input from elected members into draft discussion document. Informal feedback sought from local boards via memo	End of January 2019
6. Seek approval from Environment and Community Committee to release the discussion document for public consultation	February/March 2019
7. An information memo sent to local boards, with a copy of the discussion document and information on the details of public consultation	February/March 2019
8. Public and stakeholder consultation	March-May 2019
9. Consultation analysis made available to local boards for their information and informal feedback	June 2019
10. Analyse feedback and report back to Environment and Community Committee and UNISA with recommendations on the next steps	July 2019

16. If you have any queries relating to this topic, please contact Samantha Happy, Senior Biosecurity Advisor – Marine at samantha.happy@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz