Partners Newsletter

Keeping you informed

Spring 2017

Fanworm on the barge

First action on fanworm management

A small scale management programme for Mediterranean fanworm - *Sabella* – was declared in the Tasman District, on 1 July 2017. It was immediately tested by a report on the same day of the worm on a barge operating between Tarakohe and Wellington.

The Council established a programme to manage and eradicate the fanworm in the Tasman District. Parallel declarations were also made in the Marlborough District and Nelson City areas. The purpose of the programme is to eradicate *Sabella* or to reduce its spread through:

- Surveillance;
- Monitoring and information collecting;
- Direct control of any *Sabella* found;
- District-wide advocacy initiatives;
- Risk mitigation practices through the aquaculture industry; and
- Regulation where appropriate under the Biosecurity Act.

Because *Sabella* is not named as a pest in the Regional Pest Management Plan, the Council has to use Small Scale Management Plan powers under the Biosecurity Act.

On 1 July Diving Services New Zealand reported that they were in Tarakohe harbour completing survey and clearance work for *Sabella*, and, under an agreement with Heron Construction, inspected their tug and barge hulls. They found lots of small fanworms on the barge that were concluded to have been acquired in Auckland. With the barge operating between Tarakohe and Wellington it would pose a risk at both ports.

The Council and Heron Construction worked together to deal with the risk. This resulted in the barge being wrapped in plastic and dosed with chlorine to kill the pests on 11 July. The work was done under the emergency provisions of the Resource Management Act with the company bearing the costs as well as the costs of checking the seabed for any dislodged fanworms. The treatment was 100% effective and no fanworms were found on the seabed.

The rapid and effective response undertaken by NZ Diving Services, and facilitated by the Council and Heron Construction, shows the immediate effectiveness of the small scale management programme.

What to do if you find a suspected marine pest

You are in the front line in reporting potential marine pests spreading in our region. Here we explain what to do, what to report, and what not to report. For more information see marinebiosecurity.co.nz.

1. Take a photo
2. Collect a sample
3. Record location and landmarks
4. Call 0800 80 99 66 to report find

Reporting procedure

When you find a possible pest, always follow steps 1 to 4 (noting two species below that are too widespread to report).

Two to report

Sabella

Styela

Two to *not* report

Didemnum

Undaria

Two pests are well established and will be found often. Please do not report these. These are the sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*), and the edible Japanese kelp Wakame (*Undaria pinnatifida*). These have resisted eradication attempts, and show how unmanaged pests will spread. Although *Undaria* is officially listed as unwanted, it is too widespread to bother reporting in the region.

Sampling

Samples that are collected need to be kept cool (e.g. put in fridge, but not frozen), to maintain them in the best possible state before they are preserved in a fixative such as formalin. Samples may need to be sent to a taxonomic specialist for identification.

In the case of *Styela*, the identification can usually be confidently made from a good photograph, in which case arranging for sample transport is unlikely to be necessary. *Sabella* samples are likely to be required so that they can be sent away for assessment of reproductive status; this information helps to inform subsequent management.

For both species, but especially for *Sabella*, it will assist if you can count or estimate how many individuals are present. If 10 or less, collect, bag and refrigerate all specimens, otherwise collect a sample of 10 that represent the range of sizes present. Be careful when sampling so that the whole animal is retained, not just parts of it.

Note that if you have collected samples which aren't required, please dispose of them in a biosecure way (e.g. in rubbish for landfill).

Boaties habits spread risks

The latest technical report from the Coordination Team scientist Barrie Forrest shows that hull maintenance practices are a key in containing the spread of marine pests.

Barrie conducted biofouling assessments of recreational boats from across the TOS region, and surveyed boaters on voyage habits and maintenance practices. His full report can be found at http://www.marinebiosecurity.co.nz/resources.

Biofouling assessments and boater surveys were also undertaken travel-lift operators at the Nelson and Waikawa hard-stands.

Barrie found that The TOS region is highly connected internally and externally by recreational vessel movements. He concluded that, “Given the extent of fouling, and the associated occurrence of designated marine pests, it is clear that recreational vessel movements may represent a significant risk of spreading marine pests to many of the remote bays that characterise the TOS. Such areas may not otherwise necessarily be susceptible to the introduction of marine pests by natural dispersal or other anthropogenic pathways.”

The hard-stand data highlighted that many boaters rely on in-water cleaning as a fouling control method, with almost a third of boaters conducting their cleaning in locations away from the main vessel hubs. Such cleaning has the potential to transfer marine pests to remote areas directly, by dislodgement to the seabed, or by the stimulation of spawning as a result of cleaning disturbance.

The patterns in the data relating antifouling age to LOF provided some indication that cleaning may in fact make hull fouling worse.

Barrie said “Given the importance of antifouling as a management measure, it is also important to recognise that paint age alone is not the only important attribute of the antifouling coating. The paint type used needs to be suited to the operational profile of the boat, and it is important to recognise that antifouling efficacy will depend greatly on the extent to which antifouling is conducted in line with instructions provided by paint manufacturers. These relate to a range of factors, including:

- Hull surface preparation.
- Recommended paint thinners.
- Application methods (e.g. brush, spray), target coating thickness and number of coats.
- Minimum coating drying times (for paint re-application and boat relaunch) under local conditions.
- Cleaning methods during recommended antifouling intervals.

The experience of the Coordination Team is that some boaters conduct practices that are not consistent with these types of recommendations, and which will only serve to undermine coating efficacy. For example, some operators/owners use inappropriate thinners (e.g. petrol), spread the coating as thinly as possible to save on paint and cost (which undermines paint effectiveness and operational life), and add herbicide or pesticide to try and enhance antifouling activity (but which will compromise efficacy).

PROFILE

Paul Sheldon

Tasman District Council TOS Marine Biosecurity Partnership Management Committee Chair

Paul Sheldon has been with the TOS Marine Biosecurity Partnership since it was just an idea that he shared with a few other visionaries including Alan Johnson from Marlborough.

In March 2008 Paul and Alan's work with MAF Biosecurity and the three Top of the South Councils formally initiated the processes that formed the Partnership as we know it today. At the time Paul was the Environmental Monitoring Coordinator and Policy Planner for the Nelson City Council, roles he had held since 1992 under a range of titles following Nelson City becoming a unitary authority.

Diversity has been the theme of Paul's career since he started in 1983 at Gabites Porter and Partners working on major Canterbury and Otago irrigation schemes. He has ably spanned both technical and planning roles from preparation of the Nelson City Regional Policy Statement to being responsible for monitoring air quality and contaminated sites.

Paul now heads up the Biosecurity Team at Tasman District Council which also provides biosecurity services for the Nelson City Council. He is frequently called on by both Councils for advice on a wide range of matters and represents the region in national forums.

Paul has always been passionate about the sea and caring for it. He is often found on the water, particularly in the Marlborough Sounds, where the only access to his bach is by boat. Paul and his partner Helen have five children between them, now all adults.

Paul is chairing the TOS Partnership Management Committee until early next year when Jono Underwood returns to this role after a break to focus full time on writing the Marlborough Pest Management Plan.

Biosecurity Awards

The TOS Marine Biosecurity Partnership received a highly commended in the inaugural New Zealand Biosecurity Awards.

MPI said it is working to grow New Zealand's biosecurity team to 4.7 million people – and the New Zealand Biosecurity Awards recognise work towards that goal. They celebrate individuals, communities and organisations who have made a positive difference to New Zealand's biosecurity.

The 2017 winners were announced on 2 August 2017 at an awards ceremony at Parliament, Wellington. The number of entries far surpassed MPI's expectations, and they said they were a great example of how everyone can be part of a biosecurity team of 4.7 million. MPI congratulated this year's winners, and all who entered.

The TOS recognition was in the Government category which was won by the Supreme Award winners, Department of Conservation, for the Great White Butterfly eradication project in Nelson. Also recognised in this category was the Northland Regional Council Marine Biosecurity Programme. MPI said there were some fantastic entries within this category, so the judges decided to award 2 certificates.

The Minister's Award went to Don McKenzie (Northland Regional Council). This award is given to an individual who's made at least 10 years of continuous, outstanding contribution to biosecurity in New Zealand. Don McKenzie, from the Northland Regional Council, has worked for over 20 years to improve biosecurity in Northland. Don was nominated by Peter Lawless, the TOS Coordinator. For more information see http://www.mpi.govt.nz/about-mpi/our-work/conferences-and-events/new-zealand-biosecurity-awards/.

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