



New Zealand  
**Biosecurity** Institute

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# Protect

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New Zealand  
**Biosecurity** Institute

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## Biosecurity Month 2017

CAPITAL RESULTS, WORKING TOGETHER



New Zealand  
**Biosecurity** Institute

*Working together to ensure New Zealand is protected from the adverse impacts of invasive species*

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The New Zealand Biosecurity Institute can be found on the web at [www.biosecurity.org.nz](http://www.biosecurity.org.nz)



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# Biosecurity Month: it's about community support and working together

July is Biosecurity Month with the theme this year of "Capital Results Working Together".

On that theme, in this issue there is an item from The Biological Heritage National Science Challenge Project Team about just that – Community cooperation, in particular on a nation-wide passive surveillance programme.

Also on the theme of working together is an update on the attempt to prevent the establishment of the oyster parasite *Bonamia ostreae* in the deep south (literally). The huge effort involved highlights the importance of working together and especially the importance of community support when a major incursion requires prompt and radical action.

Other articles continue to celebrate saves at the border including praise for a canine going beyond the call of duty. These border biosecurity stories

also highlight that there are still people who knowingly attempt to smuggle risk goods. As these pages will show MPI is happy to send them a costly message.

I look forward to seeing many of you at NETS2017 in Wellington 9 – 11 August, to learn about the Birds and the Beehive.

Many thanks for your support of Protect Magazine.

It's Biosecurity Month. Go forth and evangelise.

CHRIS MACANN,  
EDITOR

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■ FROM THE NZBI EXECUTIVE

## Biosecurity Month: highlighting working together

July is Biosecurity Month—a month dedicated to promoting the importance of biosecurity to the country. This year's theme is Capital Results Working Together.

The executive prepared a press release promoting the month and highlighting the importance of the work we all do. **There was no shortage of examples of high profile activities.** In particular the press release noted the myrtle rust incursion and the very real threat from the brown marmorated stink bug.

President Darion Embling presented to the first Biosecurity 2025 Strategy Working Group to get underway, on 29 June. He explained the history and purpose of the Institute. The Working

Group tackled the first strategic direction of five: A biosecurity team of 4.7 million. The Executive was keen to be part of this workshop because it believes achieving this aim is key to **achieving the success of the other four directions.**

The executive has noted the New Biosecurity Awards instigated in June by the Ministry for Primary Industries for individuals, groups or businesses who've made a positive difference to New Zealand's biosecurity. The winners will be announced in the week leading-up to NETS2017. We hope the Awards will mesh with our own Awards which will be announced at NETS2017.

Thank you to all who have planned Biosecurity Month-themed activities into the good work that you all do.

The Executive will next meet in Wellington on August 8 in advance of NETS2017.

Biosecurity, Biosecurity, Biosecurity, spread the good word.

THE NZBI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Darion Embling,  
President

## Some success stories from the Top of the South

### Top of the South Branch chair Jono Underwood prepared this report on a busy Field Day and AGM

A hardy bunch of NZBI TOS members turned out on 9th June 2017 to visit, discuss and share ideas regarding some regional biosecurity matters in the Marlborough district. The morning started with a cold and foggy visit to one of three active sites of African feather grass (species) in Marlborough located at Ngakuta Bay. Here Senior Biosecurity Officer from Marlborough District Council, Rob Simons, outlined the long history of management at this site. **The land affected was reclaimed "back in the day" and it is thought this is in some way linked to the presence of African feathergrass.** The site is now mowed frequently so plants being found often have small leafy top:rhizome ratios. Rob outlined concern that herbicide in this instance is proving to not be effective. As a result, where

small leafy tops are now being found, the rhizomes are being actively dug out of the ground. Member of the branch discussed difference herbicide options and also the variations in formulation of haloxyfop agrichemicals.

Next stop (for those who followed instructions...) was a quick visit to the most significant Moth plant site found in Marlborough since management began. Hidden behind a boat yard near Waiakwa Marina, the site has now gone from a solid canopy of ~50m<sup>2</sup> to now the long game of mopping up the regenerating seed bank.

After a stop at Marlborough's only successful tradscentia agent release site to see damage first hand (thanks to tradescantia leaf beetle), everyone managed to regather at Collin's Lookout near Havelock. Here Phil Clerke from the Department of Conservation Picton Area Office ran members through ups, downs and what can be said of the success story of the Marlborough spartina management programme. From hectares of solid spartina within the Pelorus and Kaitauna estuaries, the annual programme is now finding less than 20 active sites (commonly small individual plants) per annum. **Eradication is said to be near** but the biggest challenge now is keeping the work crews focussed during the long hot summer days.

At the AGM that followed, Secretary Dan Chisnall and Chair Jono Underwood were re-elected.



Members discussing African Feather Grass management at Ngakuta Bay. From L to R – Steve Price, Bradley Myer, Lindsay Barber (hidden), Mike Aviss, Dan Chisnall, Robin van Zoelen, Rob Simons, Geoff Stone, Jim Herdman.





## 4.7 million sets of eyes and ears vital for biosecurity

July is Biosecurity Month—a month dedicated to promoting the importance of biosecurity to the country.

Those who work in the sector reckon **New Zealanders should celebrate it as much as they do the All Blacks and Team New Zealand.**

Biosecurity sector group the New Zealand Biosecurity Institute wants New Zealanders to know **it's not just sailing and rugby that Kiwis are world beaters at.**

President Darion Embling said New Zealand is also recognised around the globe as a world champion of biosecurity.

"If there was a world cup for biosecurity we'd win it but we have to keep at it and we too need a support team of 4.7 million," he said.

Mr Embling said the arrival of the plant killer Myrtle rust this year, which threatens important horticultural and iconic native plants, is a wake-up reminder that everyone must be vigilant.



Mr Embling said the next serious imminent threat is the agricultural pest the brown marmorated stink bug which is native to Asia but has spread to Europe and the Americas with devastating effects.

"The pest so far has been kept at bay but border control staff have intercepted them on a number of occasions at sites within New Zealand.

"So far we have managed to prevent its establishment but we need 4.7 million sets of eyes and ears because we don't know if there are small populations already present."

He said New Zealand is fortunate to have a world class biosecurity system.

“If there was a world cup for biosecurity we'd win it but we have to keep at it and we too need a support team of 4.7 million.

~Darion Embling



**"Our pre and post-border surveillance system is second-to-none, and so is our research."**

Mr Embling said his **members want to see the Biosecurity Sector have a high profile in the community as well as in the education curriculum.**

"I'd like the word "biosecurity" to be as common a catch-cry for all New Zealanders as the phrase "location, location, location".

Biosecurity month occurs every July in the run-up to the NZ Biosecurity Institute's combined annual National Education and Training Seminars (NETS). This year NETS is in Wellington 9-11 August.

Mr Embling said every year, in the course of their jobs, NZBI members spend hundreds of hours controlling or managing the risks to the economy and the environment from the effects of unwanted pests.

"This work costs the country hundreds of millions of dollars each year through control, research and border

control budgets. This money is coming out of all New Zealanders' pockets," he said.

"We need everyone to play a part in protecting what's precious and unique about New Zealand."

The NZBI is the professional training and networking organisation for people involved in biosecurity. Its 450 members work for research organisations, educational institutions, regional councils and government departments.

All are involved in protecting NZ from invasive species.



# Clean hull rules under a year away

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has reminded skippers, as well as vessel owners and operators that a new standard for biofouling on vessels arriving in New Zealand will apply from May 2018.

The standard means that **all vessels must arrive with a 'clean hull'** as part of efforts to reduce the threat of marine pests and diseases to New Zealand's marine environment.

MPI Director Plants, Food and Environment Peter Thomson said clean hull requirements will vary depending on a vessel's itinerary.

"For vessels coming to the country for fewer than 20 days, some slight fouling will be acceptable, while for long-stay vessels, the requirements are stricter. It's important to remember that **the hull includes niche areas such as sea chests and bow thrusters** too.

"Skippers and vessel owners or operators should make sure they're familiar with the new standard before it comes into force in May 2018. Vessels that don't comply may be required to be cleaned, or directed to leave New Zealand waters. The costs associated with these, and any changes to a vessel's itinerary, must be met by the operator."

The requirements can be met by cleaning or treating the hull prior to arrival, or carrying out continued maintenance which includes applying an antifouling coating to the hull and niche areas. Documentation of these steps will be needed to verify compliance.

Detailed guidelines on managing biofouling are also available from the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and operators who follow these will meet the new requirements.

# Cruise ship accreditation to stay

A trial accreditation programme has boosted biosecurity for international cruise ships and will be expanded for future seasons, reported the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) in June.

**The scheme involves collecting background information about vessel stores and pest management practices to determine biosecurity risk.**

"**It is about knowing where the stores came from**, and making sure they are free of biosecurity risk should passengers bring them ashore," said Steve Gilbert, MPI Border Clearance Services Director.

MPI checked information supplied by cruise lines at the beginning of the season. Further checks were carried out during the summer. **Vessels were also expected to provide additional biosecurity education to passengers before landing in New Zealand.**

As part of the arrangement, accredited vessels received less biosecurity scrutiny on the gangway by MPI biosecurity officers when they arrived in New Zealand.

Mr Gilbert said the **extra biosecurity education proved its worth**, with MPI finding fewer risk goods on passengers leaving accredited vessels than ships that weren't part of trial.

"Even when our officers did pick up fruit and other goods from passengers, we had peace of mind the items were free of risk, as they already been vetted under the inventory and pest management controls required under the scheme.

"I really want to give credit to the cruise industry, who have made a real effort to improve biosecurity compliance.

"By reducing gangway inspections, the scheme has also allowed us to free-up officers to focus on higher risk work, including inspecting cargo for brown marmorated stink bug, and helping clear the huge increase in tourist numbers at Auckland Airport.

"In addition, the scheme improves the travel experience for disembarking passengers, as it means less holdups due to biosecurity checks."

He says the scheme will be expanded to cover more cruise vessels coming to New Zealand.

Two cruise lines took part in the trial. Accredited vessels made 401 port visits to New Zealand during the summer season.

**The seizure rate (seizures of biosecurity risk goods per 1000 passengers) was 0.9 for accredited vessels compared with 1.5 for uncredited vessels.**



# Birdsong and a milestone for possum control

**Possums in Southland are facing a losing battle, with more than 300,000 hectares of land now part of the highly successful Possum Control Areas (PCA) programme.**

The programme reached the major milestone in June, just eight years after the first PCA was established.

Senior biosecurity officer Dave Burgess said the success of the programme is largely due to the commitment of landowners who have recognised the significant economic and environmental impacts of managing possums on their properties.

"Most landowners are aware of their responsibilities for possum control, however

having large areas in designated PCAs reduces the chances of possum reinvasion between neighbouring areas and achieves a much better level of control with everybody working together."

Environment Southland biosecurity staff support and assist landowners within PCAs, by implementing any initial possum control work required at no cost.

"We make sure possums are reduced to a low level that landowners can effectively manage and maintain. Sometimes areas don't require an initial control programme and then we go straight to the next phase of setting up bait stations in areas of prime possum habitat."

Dave says landowners are then provided with ongoing support and are strongly advised to use a recommended contractor.

"One of **the early signs reported by landowners who have achieved good possum control, is the return of birdsong** to their property."

## Joint tech research to locate hidden wallabies

**New thermal detection technology is being used to help track down Bennett's wallabies, one of the most problematic introduced pests in South Canterbury.**

Environment Canterbury, Otago Regional Council and local farmers are working with Landcare Research on a three-year trial to determine the effectiveness of thermal imaging technology to locate wallabies from planes and helicopters.

Environment Canterbury biosecurity team leader Brent Glentworth said wallabies were notoriously difficult to locate in very low numbers and were often hidden under scrub and bush cover.

**"It really is hard and time-consuming to detect them using 'man and dog' – they are largely solitary nocturnal animals, extremely fast and can hide very easily in tussock and scrub,"** he said.

Locating wallabies can be especially problematic in areas where they have spread out of the Environment Canterbury containment area or have been released or escaped from being kept – often illegally – as a pet.

In New Zealand, it is an offence for people to keep, capture or release wallabies without a permit from the Ministry for Primary Industries and there are steep fines or conviction.



Brent said the trial will involve capturing small groups of wallabies from different habitat areas and fitting them with GPS trackers. This will then allow field staff to assess the effectiveness of the thermal imaging technology when it is used to locate the GPS-tagged pests in remote environments.

"If the imaging works well and we're picking up most of the tagged wallabies it will mean it's worth moving forward with the technology. **We're really hopeful it will make it much easier to pinpoint and destroy these isolated wallabies from the air,"** Brent said.



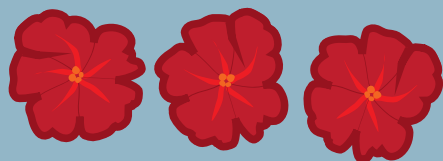
## New Biosecurity Awards

In June the the Ministry for Primary Industries announced a new biosecurity awards scheme and began the hunt for individuals, groups or businesses who've made a positive difference to New Zealand's biosecurity.

"Whether it's through engaging in innovation (e.g. to drive smarter, better or more efficient ways of detecting and managing biosecurity risk across New Zealand), science (e.g. research), community or leadership that supports New Zealand biosecurity, we want to hear about it." the promotion said.

There are six award categories: Community, Māori, Industry, Government, a Supreme Award, and the Minister's Biosecurity Award (for an individual)

Entries closed on 7 July 7, 2017. The awards ceremony is on 2 August 2017 in Wellington.



## Unauthorised GM petunias may be in New Zealand

MPI reported in June that it took action after an overseas recall on unauthorised genetically modified (GM) petunias.

Several varieties of GM petunias have been reported in Europe, USA and Australia, and are being recalled by regulatory authorities there.

MPI has identified potentially affected seeds from one importer in New Zealand and has sent them for testing in an MPI-approved laboratory overseas.

MPI said it felt there were sufficient parallels with what's going on elsewhere in the world for us to take pre-emptive action.

It said there is negligible biosecurity risk from these seeds and no risk to people or the environment. However, New Zealand has strict controls around genetically modified organisms (new organisms).

## Tomato smuggler refused entry

A Korean traveller has been refused entry to New Zealand after trying to hide some tomato seeds from Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) biosecurity officers.

The woman arrived at Auckland Airport in June. The seeds were found in tissue paper hidden between the flaps of a box during a baggage search.

She was forced to return to Korea on the next available flight after MPI staff referred the matter to Immigration New Zealand.

She admitted plans to plant the seeds in her daughter's garden in Auckland.



## Biosecurity tip makes it into travel advice column

In article in the Herald on Sunday at the beginning of July Will Ashcroft, chief sales officer for insurer Allianz Worldwide Partners New Zealand, included in his top travel tips for making overseas family holidays run smoothly this piece of advice:

To avoid breaking any biosecurity laws, don't forget to discard any uneaten fresh snacks at the end of the flight or declare them before you go through customs.

## You can't fool Clawson the hero

Fresh crow and squirrel legs with the bones sticking out were the gory discovery for Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) biosecurity staff at Auckland's International Mail Centre in May.

Arriving from the United Kingdom, the package also contained crow feathers. It had been labelled as craft jewellery, but that didn't fool biosecurity detector beagle Clawson, who sniffed out the illegal goods on the mail belt.

MPI sometimes comes across animal hides brought into New Zealand as ornaments, but they are normally commercially treated. To come across something this fresh with the bone exposed is very rare.

Detector dog Clawson has been working for MPI for 3 years. He is four years old.

## Chef pays price for bringing in dried duck kidneys

An attempt to bring dried duck kidneys into the country by making a false declaration on his passenger arrival card has cost an Auckland chef close to \$4,000.

The man lied to quarantine officers about the contents of two packets of food in his luggage when he returned to New Zealand from Hong Kong in July last year.

He was fined \$3,700 plus court costs when he appeared in the Manukau District Court at the beginning of June this year.

The man said he knew the product was duck meat but said it was seafood because he wanted to keep it.

The biosecurity risks associated with duck meat and its products are serious.

There are a number of diseases prevalent within the Hong Kong/ Chinese chicken stocks such as Newcastle disease and avian influenza.

"This man knowingly and recklessly displayed a lack of regard for our biosecurity. These sorts of actions won't be tolerated," MPI said.

# Rakino Islanders protect their pest-free island from plague skinks

By JAMIE MACKAY AND JACQUI WAIREPO  
- WILDLAND CONSULTANTS LTD

Rakino Island is a 150 ha island in Auckland's Hauraki Gulf. It has enjoyed a 'pest free' status since the mid-2000s, having successfully eradicated rodents and preventing the (re)invasion of other harmful invasive species.

The island continues to be monitored by Auckland Council and the Department of Conservation (DOC) as part of their joint 'Treasure Islands' initiative, whose goal is to protect Hauraki Gulf islands from the harmful ecological effects of invasive pest species.

Rakino Island has approximately 75 houses (mostly baches), along with a permanent population of approximately twenty residents. On Monday 1 May 2017, a second hand flat-pack garage was transported from Auckland's mainland to the island. Prior to embarking upon the barge, the package was inspected for pest species as part of the usual Treasure Island biosecurity protocols, which include the use of sniffer dogs that target for rodents and Argentine ants.

**Rakino Island is home to large populations of several indigenous skink species, and the establishment of Australian plague skinks (the only invasive lizard species to have established in New Zealand) on the island could negatively affect them via competition for resources and the potential for vectoring diseases.**

The risks around transporting plague skinks were communicated to the landowner, along with instructions about what to look out for when unpacking the freight. As a result of this information, two skinks were sighted and captured when the freight was unpacked, and the owner immediately contacted Auckland Council for lizard identification and instruction on what to do.



*View of the incursion site showing the exclusion fence and tarpaulin-wrapped flat-pack shed*

Within 24 hours of the report, Auckland Council Biosecurity Advisors arrived on the island to initiate an immediate biosecurity response with the full support of DOC and assistance from a team of local residents.



*Sticky trap and artificial cover object set in kikuyu*

A containment fence was erected around the area where the freight had been unpacked, and everything within it was promptly fumigated. To support the wider area surrounding the property, a network of specialised traps were set up which, under the careful guidance of Auckland Council staff, were able to be serviced by local residents. After two weeks of trapping, a further three plague skinks were captured, bringing the total catch to five.

To ensure the greatest likelihood of preventing their establishment, consulting herpetologist and eradication experts from Wildland Consultants Ltd were engaged to enhance and sustain the trapping efforts for a further two weeks. An additional 274 traps were installed around the incursion zone and other high risk sites, none of which yielded any further plague skink captures. This provided a high level of confidence that all the stowaway plague skinks had

been caught. However, due to the cooler autumn conditions at the time of the incursion, **further monitoring has been recommended to coincide with warmer weather, when skink activity is typically much higher.** Upon the removal of lizard traps, long-term monitoring devices were installed in 29 locations surrounding the incursion zone.

The plague skink incursion has emphasised the vital role played by the Treasure Islands advocacy programme in preventing the establishment of new populations of invasive species on Hauraki Gulf islands.



*Sticky trap shelters prior to being deployed*





*Cutting tracks through dense kikuyu*



*Copper skinks on a sticky trap*

Auckland Council and Wildlands would like to thank DOC for its assistance with transport and technical advice, the Auckland Harbourmaster for transport assistance, and the residents of Rakino Island for trapping assistance and support throughout the incursion response.

## Enhancing Surveillance capabilities: a Biological Heritage National Science Challenge Project

The Biological Heritage National Science Challenge Project Team has contributed this article on how they intend to maximise passive surveillance through partnerships to protect New Zealand's biological heritage from biosecurity risks.

New Zealand is recognised internationally for its approach to biosecurity: we are world leaders. Effective surveillance that can detect incursions of non-native organisms is crucial to support incursion response activities and prevent the establishment of new pests that may threaten our natural and productive ecosystems.

Numerous government-led surveillance programmes provide structured surveys that target particular species or sites that are considered high risk. However, biosecurity is everyone's responsibility, and as part of the New Zealand's Biological Heritage National Science Challenge Stephen Pawson and his team are working with central and regional government, Māori, and primary industry sectors (NZ Forest Owners Association, Kiwifruit, Pipfruitnz, HortNZ, NZ Avocados, ApiNZ, Dairy NZ, Beef + Lamb New Zealand, and NZ Wine) to develop a technology and communication platform that facilitates greater participation in general surveillance activities. This effort is aligned with the desire of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) for a biosecurity team of 4.7 million to augment existing surveillance efforts.

**A combination of mobile technology tools will be used to facilitate the submission and subsequent identification of observations.** The technology solutions developed will be flexible and allow biosecurity intelligence from MPI and other agencies to be communicated to specific primary industry sectors and localities.

The team includes: Stephen Pawson, Andrea Grant and Eckehard Brockerhoff all from Scion; and Jon Sullivan and Melanie Mark-Shadbolt both from Lincoln University.

At the Crazy & Ambitious Conference in Wellington in May this year, (the first national meeting for people involved New Zealand's Biological



*A combination of mobile technology tools will be used to facilitate the submission and subsequent identification of observations.*

Heritage National Science Challenge) Stephen Pawson reported on the inaugural workshop where participants defined the scope, structure and technology platform that they will use over the next two years of the project. This presentation is available at: <https://youtu.be/FHKnVc4cQwk>

More information about the project can also be found at: <http://www.biologicalheritage.nz/programmes/risks/mobile-technology>

Parts of the Crazy & Ambitious Conference can be viewed at:

- Biological Heritage youtubehome page
- Crazy & Ambitious - Biosecurity 2050 symposia
- Crazy & Ambitious - Protecting NZ's primary industries symposia





# Biosecurity 2025: the story so far

The Biosecurity 2025 Direction Statement, launched late last year, will guide New Zealand's biosecurity system through to 2025 and beyond.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is now leading a collaborative process to put together the detail on how to get there. This process will develop the Biosecurity 2025 Implementation Plan to turn the Direction Statement into a reality.

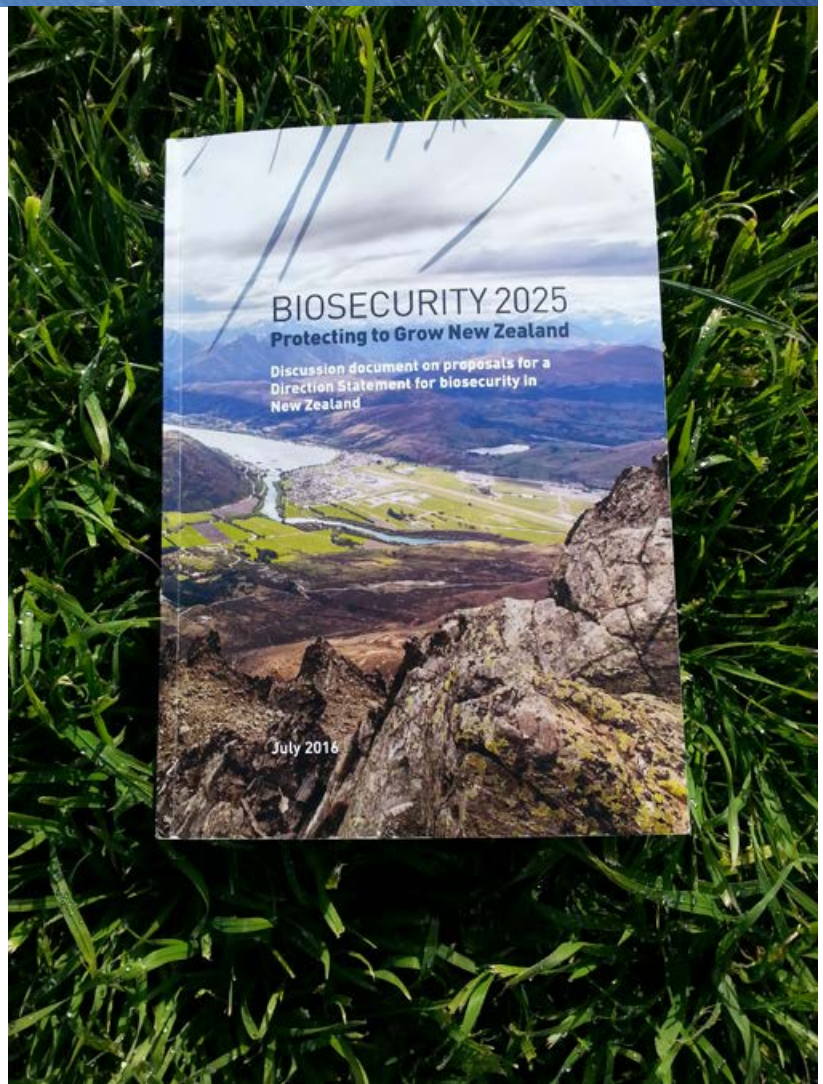
To make it happen, MPI is setting up five Working Groups (one for each of the strategic directions) made up of participants from across the biosecurity system. Each group will develop a work plan that will set a course of action for each strategic direction out to 2025. The individual plans will make up the Biosecurity 2025 Implementation Plan, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

The Working Group for Strategic Direction 1: A biosecurity team of 4.7 million, is the first working group to get underway. That's because it is seen to be a key part of success in delivering the other four directions. It aims to make every New Zealander a biosecurity risk manager and to get every business managing their own biosecurity risk.

Roger Smith, MPI's Chief Operations Officer and chair of the Steering Group, which oversees the implementation process, was delighted at the enthusiasm around the table so far.

"The work undertaken to date by the Steering Group and in the first Working Group is evidence of partnership in action. It is only by working together that we can successfully implement Biosecurity 2025," he said.

"Everyone has a stake in the success of our country's biosecurity system and the Implementation Plan will enable New Zealanders to understand the relevance of biosecurity in our everyday lives."



### A reminder of the five strategic directions:

A biosecurity team of 4.7 million: A collective effort across the country; every New Zealander becomes a biosecurity risk manager and every business manages their own biosecurity risk

A toolbox for tomorrow: Harnessing science and technology to transform the way we do biosecurity

Smart, free-flowing information: Tapping into the wealth of data available, building intelligence and using powerful data analysis to underpin risk management.

Effective leadership and governance: System-wide leadership and inclusive governance arrangements support all system participants in their roles.

Tomorrow's skills and assets: A capable and sustainable workforce and world-class infrastructure provide the foundation for an effective system.

For more information visit: [Biosecurity 2025: Making it happen newsletter](#)

CONTRIBUTED BY THE MINISTRY FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

# Top of South allies fight fanworm

Marlborough is joining forces with Nelson and Tasman councils to fight back against the marine pest Sabella.

Already established in the north and in Lyttelton, the fanworm latches on to boat hulls, wharves and rocks. It can also attach directly to shellfish. It settles on mussel lines and can reduce mussel growth by altering water flow around the lines and competing for nutrients.

Sabella has now been found at Tarakohe and Nelson Haven. Since 2014, nine specimens have been detected in Picton Marina and on the hulls of three vessels in nearby Waikawa Bay.

Currently, **councils do not have power to compel boat owners to take action** if Sabella is discovered. However, by working through the Top-of-the-South



Marine Biosecurity Partnership Forum, the three **councils are planning measures to step up the battle.**

Marlborough District Council is a member of The Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership which includes Tasman District Council, Nelson City Council, MPI, DoC, the aquaculture industry, port companies, tangata whenua and other stakeholders. The aim is to see a marine environment where the top of the South Island is protected from marine pests and diseases.

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New Zealand Biosecurity Institute





# ***Bonamia ostreae* in Southern Oysters**

**In May 2017, MPI detected the flat oyster parasite *Bonamia ostreae* on two flat oyster farms on Stewart Island.**

It has been in New Zealand since 2015 in the Marlborough Sounds and Nelson. This was the first time it had been found in another area of New Zealand. Here is summary of events so far:

In response, MPI reissued a Controlled Area Notice restricting movements of some shellfish species, including their spat, into and out of Nelson, Marlborough Sounds, and Stewart Island. It also restricts movements of farm equipment and vessels out of Stewart Island. On 12 June MPI delivered a Notice of Direction to flat oyster farmers in Big Glory Bay in Stewart Island and Marlborough requiring the removal of all flat oyster stocks.

On 29 June MPI issued this update:

The second week of operational activity to remove flat oysters from Big Glory Bay, Stewart Island continues to progress well. **The oysters are being removed in a bid to halt the spread to the Foveaux Strait wild fisheries.**

MPI field headquarters manager Catherine MacGowan said this week's focus has been on phase two of the operation, which is removing the remaining cages.

"Almost 400 cages have been removed this week and we expect that, by the end of tomorrow, we will have removed 40 tonnes. This brings the overall total of removed material to around 80 tonnes.

"The next phase will move to uplifting ropes and strings. We met with farmers in Bluff and on Stewart Island this week to complete the planning for this stage and we hope to be able to start lifting ropes next week. Our approach will continue to be fine-tuned as the operation progresses. **The removal operation is a huge task and we are thankful for the support of the community and assistance from oyster farmers to make it happen.**

"Testing has also been a priority this week. Last week MPI responded to public concerns by committing to running an additional round of sampling and testing of wild oysters from Foveaux Strait. This week we completed the sampling and the samples are now at the lab for testing. We are expecting to have results within three weeks.

"Recent testing has also been done on oyster larvae from a hatchery in Bluff and nearby wild oysters. *Bonamia ostreae* was not detected. This testing

was done to provide further assurance that the parasite is contained in Big Glory Bay.

"This operation is having a significant impact on the affected farmers, their families and staff, and the wider community. MPI is working closely with the Rural Support Trust, government agencies, the city, district and regional councils, and political leadership to ensure welfare services and support are available to anyone who needs it. This is a high priority for us.

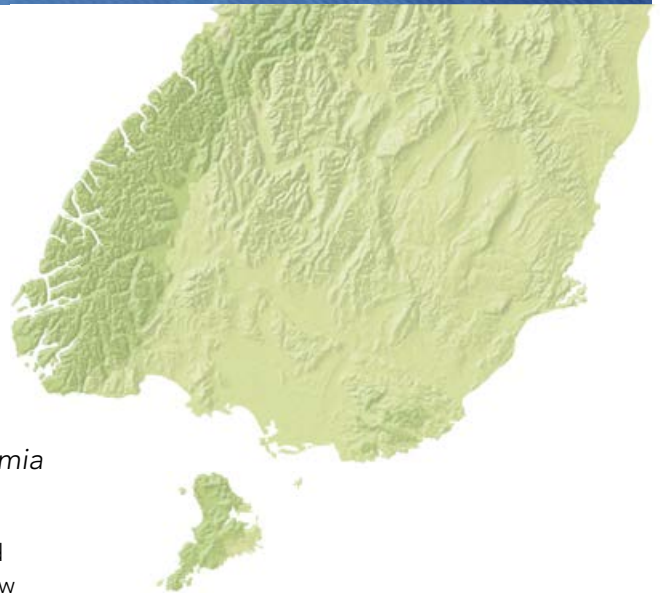
"Stress and anxiety affect people differently so we encourage anyone feeling symptoms to ask for help early.

"MPI now has two primary industry recovery coordinators on the mainland, and is contracting a local Stewart Island primary industry recovery coordinator. These roles are focused on making sure welfare needs of the affected farmers are understood and met.

"The coordinators will be available at all times to provide support, including advice and information on how to access services from other support organisations, such as the Rural Support Trust and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

"In addition, MPI intends to contract a compensation specialist to be based in Southland to provide the affected farmers with further help on obtaining compensation.

Planning is underway for the removal operation in Marlborough.



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