

# Marine Pest Surveys

## Coming to your harbour soon

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) conducts regular checks for marine pests in a number of high-risk marine areas around the country and has been doing so since 2002. The focus of this surveillance is the early detection of a number of pests that are not known to be in New Zealand, and we are actively trying to keep out.

### What do we look for?

We target five species that have considerable harmful impacts overseas:

- » Northern Pacific seastar, *Asterias amurensis*
- » Asian clam, *Potamocorbula amurensis*
- » European shore crab, *Carcinus maenas*
- » Chinese mitten crab, *Eriocheir sinensis*
- » Aquarium weed, *Caulerpa taxifolia*

We also look for any and all new species in these locations, and established pests with limited distribution, like the Mediterranean fanworm, *Sabella spallanzanii*. For more information about what species we specifically target, go to <https://www.marinebiosecurity.org.nz/what-are-marine-pests/>.

### Why?

If these pests were to arrive in New Zealand, they could threaten our environment, the economy, our fisheries, native species or our enjoyment of our unique coastal and marine areas.

We undertake the surveys twice a year, so that we maximise the chance of detecting one of these pests early. The faster we find a pest the more chance we have to eradicate it before it becomes established.

### How?

The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research Ltd (NIWA) designed the surveys for MPI. A number of different methods are used to sample a wide range of marine plants and animals, including dive surveys, crab traps, benthic sleds (similar to a small scallop dredge),

shoreline searches and crab condos (juvenile fish and invertebrate settlement devices). Both the crab condos and the crab traps are deployed underneath surface buoys; these buoys will be marked **NIWA Research** with a contact phone number.

### Where?

The programme surveys a number of ports, harbours and marinas around the country twice a year, including this one. These locations were chosen because vessels arrive there from overseas, and marine pests are known to hitch a ride to new locations attached to vessels hulls or in ballast water. Within each harbour, potential habitats for the target species are surveyed in pre-selected locations, including wharfs and floating marinas, breakwalls, rocky reefs, aquaculture structures, beaches, sand flats and deeper soft sediment areas.

### Who?

NIWA is contracted to undertake the field work for MPI. A team of 5 – 8 NIWA scientists, divers and boat operators undertake the work at each port, and usually operate out of several small research boats. Key NIWA survey staff are authorised persons under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and may physically inspect the hulls of vessels and take samples of organic material or organisms for further inspection and testing, under sections 109 and 121 of the Act. If the person appearing to be in charge of the vessel is present NIWA staff will identify themselves as authorised persons prior to carrying out these inspections or, if there is no person appearing to be in charge at the time, written notice will be provided following the inspection that an inspection has occurred.

### How can i find out the results?

Email [surveillance@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:surveillance@mpi.govt.nz) stating your port(s) of interest, and you will be added to an email distribution list, and sent results as they become available. The full results for all ports and marinas around the country are available annually, via our website:

<https://www.marinebiosecurity.org.nz/surveillance/>

Questions or concerns Contact MPI: [surveillance@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:surveillance@mpi.govt.nz) or call 0800 00 83 33

The details of the next survey are:

Location	Dates	Contact
		<a href="mailto:surveillance@mpi.govt.nz">surveillance@mpi.govt.nz</a> or call 0800 00 83 33

To report suspected exotic land, freshwater and marine pests, or exotic diseases in plants or animals, call: **0800 80 99 66**