

Marine Biosecurity Information Note 4

May 2024

Reducing the Marine Biosecurity Risk: Aquaculture

Background

- Aquaculture is becoming increasingly popular to cultivate edible seafood stocks as a long term strategy for increased food security. Aquaculture can have potential impacts on ecology and marine environments.
- **Aquaculture has the potential to inadvertently transfer invasive non-native species (INNS) if biosecurity protocols are not in place.**
- **INNS may be transferred** via the below **pathways**:
 - As **biofouling** attached to nets, equipment or shellfish
 - In **water** used to transport aquaculture
 - Some INNS may be transferred if present as **parasites** in cultivated stock
 - **Accidental release** of a cultured species which is not native to the area, e.g. during a storm where holding equipment may become damaged. Escaped species may then complete or breed with native species to create hybrids which may impact local ecosystems.

Actions to reduce the biosecurity risk from aquaculture in Peel Ports

- A Marine Works Licence may be required from Peel Ports for the installation of aquaculture facilities. Where this is the case, a biosecurity risk assessment assessing the equipment used for construction or installation will be required as part of the application process. **local marine teams must therefore be consulted prior to any works.**
- The Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat have developed a **Pathway Action Plan (PAP)** which highlights some control measures that can be implemented to reduce biosecurity risk from aquaculture activities. Although it primarily targets [fisheries](#), the PAP recommendations provide high level suggested control measures to reduce INNS transfer risk.

- **Biofouling should be routinely removed from aquaculture infrastructure and disposed of appropriately**, a biosecurity risk assessment is required before commencing and the operator is responsible for sourcing all required waste permits or licences from regulators.
- Where possible, **structures should be removed from the marine environment before cleaning to avoid any possible spread of INNS that may be present** [NNSS guidance is available online: [Biosecurity for anglers \(nonnativespecies.org\)](https://nonnativespecies.org)]
- **Active monitoring of infrastructure** is advised to check for high risk INNS (e.g. carpet sea squirt, slipper limpet, leathery sea squirt, vase tunicates, Japanese oyster drill)
- Any suspected INNS which are found should be reported on [irecord](#) to verify and advise on next steps.