

SeaNet - Fighting Marine Pests

Over time, more than 250 exotic marine plants and animals been introduced into Australian waters. Some have taken over native habitats, damaging fishing and aquaculture industries. Like cane toads and rabbits, getting rid of [marine pests](#) is virtually impossible.

OceanWatch Australia participated with governments, researchers and industry in developing a [National System for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pest Incursions](#). The National System is designed to prevent new pests arriving and to minimise the spread and impact of pests that are already established in Australian waters.

OceanWatch through SeaNet has now been commissioned to roll-out the introduction of the '[National biofouling management guidelines for commercial fishing vessels](#)'. These guidelines are designed to prevent further introduction or spread of marine pests.

Rollout of marine pest guidelines: NT case study

NT SeaNet Officer, Lyn Lambeth recently caught up with a prawn trawler crew just in from their long and exhausting work at the end of the banana prawn season. The trawler, on its way back to their home port of Cairns, had an unscheduled stop in Darwin due to a machinery breakdown. The skipper and crew of the Ruby Enterprise have been working in the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF) for many years and have a high degree of pride in their fishery. Skipper, Paul Williamson, sits on a steering committee for bycatch management and has been involved in trialling new bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) for the fishery. "I have a great deal of interest in ensuring the NPF strives for highest level of environmental responsibility" said Paul.

Paul and his crew, Katie, Peter and Danny, were very glad to receive the marine pest resource material and information developed by the Australian Government. The T-shirts were an especially big hit with the crew, though Paul ensured they also got the message contained in the flyers, guidelines and laminated card.



Extension of marine pest information

Crew member, Peter was in Darwin during the black-striped mussel outbreak in 1999, and remembers the impact that had on the fishing industry at the time – closing three marinas for three weeks right at the start of the banana prawn season. However, they were all interested to

learn of the potential long term effects and ongoing costs to industry if that outbreak had not been successfully contained, or if a new outbreak were to occur. “I hope we don’t have any more outbreaks, we certainly need to protect our industry and these materials and Lyn’s visit will help with this. It’s actually really lucky we broke down and had to come in to Darwin!” said Katie.

For more information:

Discover marine pests near you [Marine Pests Interactive Map](#).