

Make 'clean' part of your routine

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Why clean aquatic gear and equipment?

Aquatic diversity, ecology, native species and their habitats, and industries of NSW, are under threat from potential impact of introduced aquatic pests and diseases. Movement of boating, fishing, aquaculture gear and equipment from one waterway to another can increase the risk of spreading pests and diseases between NSW waterways.



Introduced European Green Crab (*Carcinus maenas*) (Photo: Matt Tyler)

Introduced aquatic pests and diseases can easily hitch a ride on boats, motors, and other aquatic equipment. Furthermore, many types of aquatic pests and diseases can survive for lengthy periods of time away from water. With suitable environmental conditions, introduced pests and diseases can establish new populations in previously uncontaminated areas.

Case study

Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) was detected in the Georges River and Sydney Harbour in 2010 and 2011 respectively, marking the first documentation of this disease in Australia.

In 2013 POMS was detected in the Hawkesbury River and caused significant negative impacts on the local oyster farming industry, with some farmers reporting up to 80% crop loss to the disease. POMS has also been detected in Brisbane Water. NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) implemented strict biosecurity conditions and protocols that restrict movement of oysters and oyster farming equipment to limit the spread of POMS to other estuaries. This disease outbreak highlights the genuine economic and environmental risk introduced pests and diseases pose.

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Fragment of the introduced marine alga *Caulerpa* (*Caulerpa taxifolia*) on anchor chain (Photo: NSW DPI)

Prevention is the best medicine

Once established, introduced pests and diseases are nearly impossible to eradicate. Significant economic costs are incurred both directly and indirectly by introduced species in NSW each year. Raising awareness of, and seeking prevention of the spread of pests and diseases is the most cost efficient and effective control measure available. Do your part to keep our waterways healthy. Just remember to **Make 'clean' part of your routine!**

What can you do to help?

Prevent unwanted hitchhikers! Thorough cleaning of vehicles, boats, boat trailers and equipment when moving between NSW waterways can significantly reduce the risk of transporting aquatic pests and diseases.

When arriving at a waterway:

- Check your equipment is clean and remove any visible soiling before entering the water
- Avoid boating, swimming and diving near known populations of introduced pests (such as *Caulerpa taxifolia*)

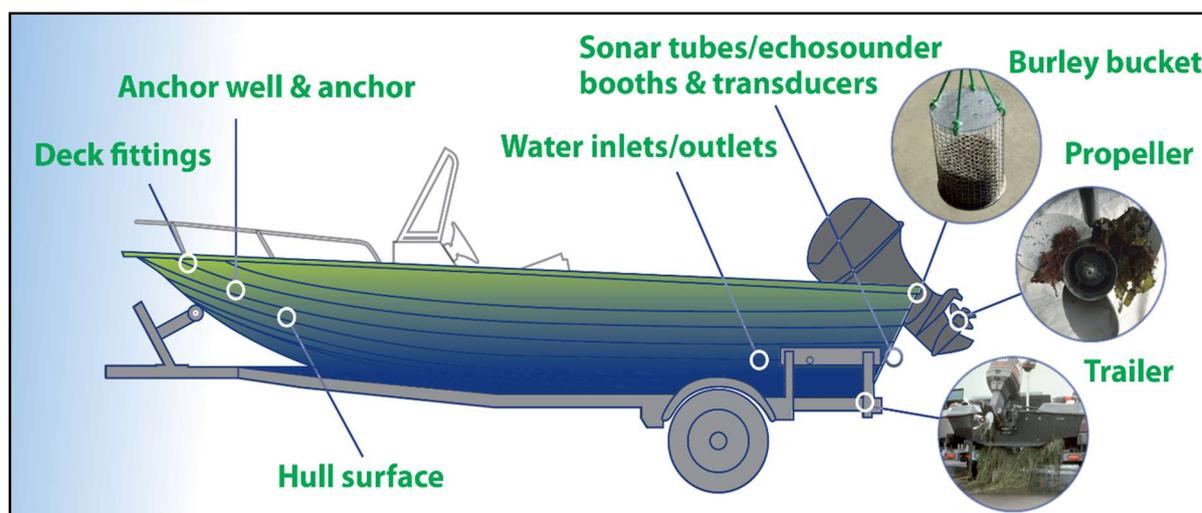
When departing a waterway:

- Use fresh, clean water to flush outboard motors, trailers, vehicles and equipment. Commercial car wash facilities provide high pressure sprayers and are a good option
- Ensure that all visible debris and biological material is removed – dispose of all waste collected during cleaning in general waste
- Pay particular attention to areas where biological material tends to accumulate such as wheel arches, boots and fishing tackle (see *Boat inspection and cleaning* figure)
- Drain all water from trailer-boats prior to leaving a location - ensure waste water does not return to any other NSW waterway
- To the best extent possible, all washed items should be allowed to completely air dry before being used at a new location
- Take photos and report suspect sightings of aquatic pests or suspected aquatic diseases to the 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline: **1800 675 888** or email: aquatic.biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au



Washing down fishing gear (Photo: NSW DPI)

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Boat inspection and cleaning (Image: BIA Vic.)

For more information

Visit: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/aquatic>

Acknowledgements

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© State of New South Wales through Regional NSW 2021. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (April 2021). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Regional NSW or the user's independent adviser.
