

051 - International biofouling | 2016 Congress portal

Latest version in this language: *Version as revised after first reading* | Published on: 14 Jun 2016

| Compare with other versions

Other languages: [Français](#) | [Español](#) |

Translate with Google

| Working language: English

RECALLING Recommendation 1.77 Marine Pollution and MARPOL (Montreal, 1996), strongly urging the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to work towards a binding framework to control the introduction of unwanted aquatic organisms from ballast water;

FURTHER RECALLING that Member States of the IMO committed to minimise the transfer of aquatic invasive species (AIS) in adopting the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004;

FURTHER RECALLING that the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the IMO adopted resolution MEPC.207(62), 2011, the first set of international recommendations for the control and management of vessel biofouling;

NOTING that Part XII, Section 1, Article 196 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides the global framework requiring states to work together to prevent, reduce, and control pollution of the marine environment;

FURTHER NOTING the Objectives of Article 1 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992, and that the transfer and introduction of invasive alien species (IAS) through biofouling from ships threatens the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

MINDFUL that 90% of world trade is carried by sea, demanding a globally consistent approach;

CONCERNED that biofouling of vessels is as harmful as ballast water discharge, a human-made vector for AIS;

RECOGNISING that implementing practices to control and manage biofouling of ships can reduce the spread of AIS, and reduce ship-borne greenhouse gas emissions through greater hydrodynamic performance;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that the interconnection of ports worldwide justifies the development and implementation of mandatory international biofouling standards; and

AWARE OF the substantial steps taken by Australia, New Zealand, and several jurisdictions in the United States to address and implement biofouling management;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Hawai'i, United States of America, 1-10 September 2016:

1. CALLS ON the Director General to:

a. promote and support cooperation among Members, governments, the business sector, stakeholders and

academia for the exchange of information, knowledge, technology, and best practices to prevent AIS introduction through biofouling; and

b. urge governments to create and implement legal frameworks to share responsibility for the prevention of AIS introduction through biofouling;

2. URGES all Members to recognise the urgent need for international coordination and cooperation to address biofouling; and

3. STRONGLY URGES the IMO to establish a convention to develop an internationally binding instrument to address the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens from ship biofouling.

Explanatory Memorandum

International-level work to manage vector-based invasive alien species (IAS) or aquatic invasive species (AIS) first began at the 19th IUCN General Assembly in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1994. Recommendation 19.47 *Marine pollution* recognised the lack of internationally binding ballast water management protocols and called upon all states to take positive steps to prevent marine pollution by adopting IMO's voluntary guidelines for ballast water treatment.

Two years later, the 1st IUCN World Conservation Congress ramped up its efforts by adopting Recommendation 1.77 *Marine Pollution and MARPOL* strongly urging IMO to work toward a legally binding framework to control the introduction of IAS from ballast water. Recommendation 1.77 reiterated IUCN's concern about the threat to marine biodiversity from introduced species and clarified the need for compulsory management.

Eight years after that, the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water & Sediments (2004 BWM Convention) was adopted. The Convention enters into force twelve months after ratification by 30 states, AND 35% of world merchant shipping tonnage. As of the time of writing of this memo, 47 countries have ratified the Convention, although their combined fleets only comprise 34.56% of global tonnage. Thus, the BWM Convention is on the cusp of entry into force. Regardless of this, the BWM Convention has made a tremendous impact internationally through the commitment of IMO Member States to reducing the spread of harmful species and pathogens.

Today, studies have shown that biofouling of ships is as important, or more important as a vector for introducing IAS as ballast water. For example, in Hawaii up to 78% of the 463 introduced and cryptogenic marine species in the state are believed to have arrived in the islands via vessel biofouling. In Australia, over 250 marine species have been introduced by vessels of all types. Of these, up to 75% are likely to have arrived as biofouling organisms. In recognition of biofouling as a clear risk, Australia, New Zealand, and the state of California have each taken steps towards creating legally binding mechanisms for managing biofouling.

Species such as the Asian paddle crab (*Charybdis japonica*), colonial tunicates, North Pacific seastar (*Asterias amurensis*), black striped mussel (*Mytilopsis sallei*), bay barnacle (*Amphibalanus improvisus*), and European

shore crab (*Carcinus maenas*) are prime examples of high-profile IAS that are capable of being translocated via biofouling.

In recognition that addressing IAS requires coordinated, consistent actions between nations, IMO adopted Biofouling Guidelines in 2011. Though voluntary, the Guidelines provide a globally consistent set of guidelines for IMO member states and the shipping industry, on measures to minimize the risk of transferring IAS via biofouling.

IMO has recently expressed the "possibility" of transitioning its current biofouling guidelines into a convention. As with the BWM Convention, full implementation of such a convention would take several years. Therefore, by adopting this motion, the IUCN would be sending a clear message to IMO that a biofouling convention is necessary for worldwide biosecurity, while providing a consistent framework for vessel hull husbandry across national and international lines.