

Isle of Wight Workshop 1 Report

Findings from the marine invasives and biosecurity workshop on 30 March 2023 focussing on the Isle of Wight.

See Appendix 1 for delegate list.

See Appendix 2 for the Agenda.

Key Findings:

- For investment in biosecurity measures we need estimate costings and proof of concept that the technology works. Costings that show how best practice in dealing with fouling can reduce vessel fuel costs would be useful.
- Getting useful information in a correct and timely manner to people is just as important as having a biosecurity plan. The first stage of implementing measures is awareness raising and education.
- We need to provide information in a way that can be added to existing documents, plans, contracts, etc. We also need to tap into existing events for awareness raising.
- Provide online resources that others can then use to disseminate, for example, an online learning video on marine invasives that could be shown at sailing clubs in the winter.
- Regulatory authorities need to make sure that they are adhering to best practice and encourage their contractors to do the same. The use of planning or marine licensing conditions is a regulatory push for action.
- Local mentors or champions would be helpful and local best practice case studies.
- Port and harbour authorities need to sign up to the biosecurity plans and push the measures that are in it, ideally using existing methods they have in informing water users like harbour guides and newsletters.
- Educational material for children on marine invasives that can be used by organisations like UKSA would be helpful.
- Events are a good place to target informal recreational users, we need to have material available that people can download and use.

Are there any species of concern for your area/sector?

- Sargassum muticum – affecting seagrass.
- Magallana gigas – seen on beaches.
- Concerned about sea vomit on IOW as it looks horrible, but Wireweed is more of an operational concern.
- Cowes Yacht Haven are monitoring invasives to show school groups and raise awareness. Need for settlement panels to monitor more effectively.

What pathways are relevant to your area/sector/where you operate?

- Recreational boating from France, Spain and Germany.
- Small commercial fishing fleet.
- Small mobile craft – windsurfers, paddleboards, dinghies, keel boats, ribs, wet suits.

- Events – mainly local, but a lot national/international e.g. regattas, Cowes Week, national class dinghy, international classes e.g. cruiser racers from America and France.
- Ferries.
- Cruise ships.
- Native oyster culturing (about to start in Cowes).

What activities in your area/sector do you think are high-risk for spreading marine invasive species?

- Recreational boating.
- National/International events (support and spectator boats may not be as clean as competitors). Cowes classics, Round island race, SailGP.
- Repair yards – for high speed ferries from around UK and boat building.
- Wind turbine factory – barges.

What is currently being done to manage marine invasive species where you operate?

- There is a continuum of actions starting with raising awareness and monitoring. Need to get Key IOW stakeholders in the same room to talk and become educated.
- Disparate efforts and no coordinated action, including lack of biosecurity lead. Yarmouth did have lots of information on biosecurity, but this is now out of date.
- Recreation is informal and most people are not members of a club. Need public engagement events to reach these people.
- UKSA – Biosecurity Plan for native oyster culturing being drawn up with advice from Blue Marine Foundation.
- UKSA – Freshwater washing of very high turnover kit (wetsuits, PPE) but no time to 'DRY'.
- Isle of Wight Council – Mitigation measures asked for Interpretation Panels in planning request for new pontoons. Annual monitoring of seagrass in Yarmouth set as planning condition.
- Recreational boating - Use of dry-stack (Bembridge), plastic drive-on berths (Yarmouth).
- Citizen Science – Secrets of the Solent, Shoresearch, Seagrass and saltmarsh monitoring, could be used to look for marine invasives.
- Yarmouth Harbour bought wash-down kit with complex filtering system about 10 years ago, cost £10,000, but broke down after two weeks.

What practical actions do you think could be done to reduce the spread of marine invasive species where you operate?

- Need to provide estimate costings for a different range of biosecurity options.
- Landownership is an important factor as is responsibility for maintenance of infrastructure. Crown Estate could specify biosecurity measure adherence as part of granting leases.
- Can we use the planning system to put biosecurity measures in as a condition in planning applications for intertidal development?
- A lack of a policy driver causes problems. The Wildlife and Countryside Act is a soft driver, but no real legal driver in place to enforce biosecurity measures.
- Fuel efficiency does influence people for addressing fouling and is a carrot for commercial operators. Key harbour staff like Sustainability Commissioners need to be involved.

- Can we run a bioblitz?
- Yarmouth marina needed a marine licence for an extra pontoon, the MMO required clean check dry adherence.
- Raising awareness, suggestions included NNS/Biosecurity in residential courses for kids (booklets, event organiser materials).
- Event organisers encouraged to set conditions regarding fouling.
- Add facilities to marinas – wash downs.
- Enforce existing regulations and best practice.
- Dredging – ask companies to ensure boats, and equipment clean, good practice seen by Van oord (Yarmouth marina).
- Example of joint responsibility Bembridge Harbour Authority own Dry stack, and marina, not likely to impose conditions on themselves.
- Regular monitoring only likely if funded, or part of imposed conditions/regulations e.g. for aquaculture.
- To help facilitate we need money, physical space (a problem at Yarmouth marina), manpower, and enforcement.
- Mentoring very helpful e.g. Blue marine foundation helping UKSA.

If you think there is potential to implement biosecurity measures where you operate, in what format would you like biosecurity material in order to facilitate implementation?

- Online resources.
- Design a communication pack for wider use – tailored for the Island with some of the species.
- We need biosecurity training for large events such as Cowes Week and RiverFest. Invasives curriculum material for schools and higher education would be useful.
- It would be useful to have a template or pack for LPAs to help them understand the issues and staff training. Awareness raising with regulatory bodies is just as important as with the public.
- Public can sign-up to get iRecord App to ID species. MBA has master database of species – called DASH. Tie in with Solent Seascapes Project.

What do you believe the next steps are in agreeing a biosecurity plan for this area?

- EA need to clean kit and deliver good in-house practice. Lead by example and inform why they are doing it while working in the field.
- We need more than a plan, we need educated bodies on the ground. What actual use is a plan? We just need measures and actions. We do not need background and objectives etc. Embed measures in documents that local people have already with set of links to help.
- Catchment and coastal partnerships should join to apply funding to monitor invasives across the water environment. IOW is a Biosphere and so we can tie in with sustainability goals of UN.
- Need buy in from key stakeholders – Harbour Authorities, Solent Harbourmasters Association, Trust Port advisory bodies (Yarmouth), MMO.

- Engagement with groups not part of Solent Forum is important like boatyards, small clubs, sailing, angling, racers.
- Need technical expert to lead.

Summarise key points and feedback in the group

- Yarmouth had a washdown but broke within a few weeks. If we recommend technology it needs to work.
- Communicate information to other people – design a 5 slide pack to distribute.
- Get a small working group together coordinated by Solent Forum to include Carol Flux, Sarah McWilliam, Sue Hawley. This will carry the momentum to help with next steps. Ideally Carol will try and get funding for a person to work on invasive species.
- Citizen Science Bioblitz.
- Pathways to be addressed: Events - national and international activities. Mobile recreational kit, with high turnover e.g. wet suits, windsurfers, kayaks etc. Boat building/repair yards, and wind turbine factory. Ferries. Oyster culturing.
- Good actions in place to build on – awareness raising, mentoring, use of mitigation/planning conditions, citizen science.
- Need mentoring and other resources to move forward.
- Harbour Authorities must be on top of this.

Appendix 1: Attendees

Staff:

- Katie O'Shaughnessy, APEM Ltd
- Chris Wood, MBA
- Karen McHugh, Solent Forum

Delegates:

- Sue Hawley, Isle of Wight Estuaries
- Carol Flux, Island Rivers Partnership
- Sarah McWilliam, Environment Agency
- Mike Samuelson, RYA
- Grace Booth, Isle of Wight Council
- Amanda Ribbins, UKSA
- Scott Neill – Cowes Harbour

Appendix 2: Agenda

- Welcome and aims of workshop – Karen McHugh (Solent Forum)
- Why we are doing this work – Jess Taylor (Natural England, virtual)
- Introduction to marine invasive species – Katie O'Shaughnessy (APEM, Ltd)

- Invasive species display – Chris Wood (Marine Biological Association)
- Introduction to biosecurity – Katie O’Shaughnessy (APEM, Ltd)
- Discussion breakout sessions – all
- Summary of major discussion points – Katie O’Shaughnessy (APEM, Ltd)
- Closing statements – Karen McHugh (Solent Forum)