



Summary of Marine Biosecurity Meeting 4 June 2026 | Ponsonby Cruising Club

Yachting New Zealand (YNZ) and the Auckland Yacht & Boating Association (AYBA) recently co-hosted a marine biosecurity meeting to bring together key stakeholders across the boating sector. The purpose of the meeting was to better understand growing biosecurity challenges, particularly the increasing difficulty boat owners are experiencing in maintaining clean hulls, and to foster collaboration on practical solutions.

Biosecurity remains critical to protecting New Zealand's marine environment and upholding our clean, green reputation. While boat owners are committed to complying with regional biosecurity requirements, there is mounting evidence of increased marine growth on hulls. Contributing factors include warming coastal waters and declining effectiveness of some antifouling products, resulting in the need for more frequent cleaning and maintenance. These challenges are largely outside the direct control of boat owners and are being observed across haul-out operators and service providers.

The meeting brought together representatives from a broad range of organisations, including Ministry for Primary Industries, Auckland Council planning and environmental services teams, marine coating manufacturers and applicators, haul-out and maintenance operators, and representatives from the boating community. This provided a valuable forum to share insights, align understanding, and identify opportunities for collaboration.

Key themes discussed included:

- Ongoing national and regional biosecurity programmes, including vessel inspection regimes and potential changes to improve standardisation across regions for compliance rules.
- Research initiatives into antifouling alternatives and the biology of emerging marine species.
- Increasing hull fouling rates in particular locations and the limitations of current antifouling technologies.
- Constraints in haul-out and cleaning infrastructure, particularly during peak periods.

- The lack of a comprehensive boat registry, the changing demographics of vessels, with many larger in-water vessels and trailered vessels which limits data collection and makes planning for infrastructure and services difficult.
- The need for improved education, communication, and clarity of biosecurity requirements and practices for boat owners, including how to deal with new threats to the marine environment such as exotic caulerpa.

It was widely acknowledged that significant work is already underway across various organisations, but that visibility and coordination between these efforts have been limited. A key outcome of the meeting was strong agreement on the importance of greater collaboration, information sharing, and alignment across agencies, industry, and the boating community.

Looking ahead, there was consensus on several areas of focus:

- Strengthening education and outreach to support boat owners in maintaining compliance.
- Exploring research opportunities, particularly relating to increased barnacle growth and antifouling effectiveness.
- Understanding the fleet to facilities available to improve infrastructure planning to be able to meet current and future maintenance demands.
- Investigating training and standards for in-water cleaning practices.
- Creating more regular opportunities for sector-wide engagement and information exchange.

YNZ and AYBA will continue to support this collaborative approach and keep the boating community informed as initiatives progress. Yacht clubs play an important role in reinforcing awareness and good practice, and your ongoing support is essential in addressing these challenges collectively.

Keep up to date on biosecurity matters that impact boaties at marinepests.nz

Further updates will be shared as next steps are developed.

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