

PRESS RELEASE

NEW BEST-PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR MARINE BIOSECURITY PLANNING IN SCOTLAND PRODUCED BY SRSL

In response to new Scottish legislation, and on behalf of the Firth of Clyde Forum and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), SRSL in partnership with Robin Payne, have developed guidelines on producing robust biosecurity plans for the marine environment. These will help Scottish marine users prevent the introduction of invasive non-native species and avoid prosecution under the amended Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act.

Non-native species (NNS) are species that are outside their natural. Human activities, such as increased international shipping have led to the dramatic increase in the number of NNS introduced globally. It is now estimated that invasive NNS cost British marine industries approximately £40 million per year in reduced efficiency, productivity and elimination expenses. Those heaviest hit include aquaculture, fisheries, power generation and shipping. More than 90 marine NNS have been identified from British and Irish waters, of which seventeen are now established in Scotland.

The guidelines were commissioned by the Firth of Clyde Forum and SNH in response to recent changes to the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2001, which is supported by a new Code of Practice on non-native species. Dr Adrian MacLeod of SRSL, who was instrumental in developing the new guidelines, explains *"The changes mean it is now an offence to introduce NNS to Scottish waters through commercial or recreational marine activities, even if the introduction was unintentional"*.

These legislative changes empower government agencies to serve Voluntary, Statutory and finally Emergency Species Control Orders (SCOs) on businesses to reverse the situation. Where offences occur, measures taken to eradicate NNS will be financed on a 'Polluter Pays Principal'. This has the potential to be costly for businesses, which could be temporarily shut-down and may be charged for imposed clean-up operations.

For this reason, the new Code of Practice sets a precedent for the implementation of biosecurity plans for all sites, operations or events in the marine environment. As a specialist marine consultancy, SRSL has unique expertise in advising businesses on preparing and implementing marine biosecurity plans, as well as providing training in this area. The guidelines they produced are available for download from the SNH website http://www.snh.gov.uk/policy-and-guidance/guidance-documents/document/?category_code=Guidance&topic_id=1628

"The Firth of Clyde Forum has been working on marine invasive NNS for a number of years and following the publication of our biosecurity plan for the Clyde and the subsequent revision of the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011, we felt there was a need to supply some guidance about what best practice in marine biosecurity might look like" - Sarah Brown, Firth of Clyde Forum

SRSL will be running a one-day **"Biosecurity Planning; A Practical Approach"** workshop on **October 3rd 2014** for small businesses in marine industries who need to amend or produce a biosecurity plan to ensure compliance with the new guidelines. The workshop will enable a small number of clients to produce their Biosecurity Plan on the day, according to best practice and with the expert assistance of SRSL staff. This course will run on the back of a two day CPD course in Invasive Species, run by SRSL's parent organisation, SAMS. For more information about the workshop or the course, please contact SAMScourses@sams.ac.uk

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NOTES TO EDITORS

SAMS Research Services Ltd (SRSL) began trading in 2002 as part of the SAMS Group (Scottish Association for Marine Science, est. 1884), based at the Scottish Marine Institute in Oban. SRSL has built a reputation for delivering independent and high-quality marine environmental survey and consultancy services, underpinned by cutting-edge research. The company mission is to enable clients to understand and mitigate the risks involved with in industry interaction with the marine environment.

A Biosecurity Plan is a document that details the steps a company could take to prevent and control any introduction of NNS. Having a scientifically-defensible Biosecurity Plan, based on current best-practice guidelines can help avoid prosecution and the associated financial cost if something does go wrong; it also highlights a business' green credentials in responding responsibly to a serious environmental threat.

The Firth of Clyde Forum is a voluntary partnership of local authorities, organisations, businesses and communities committed to working towards integrated, sustainable management of the Clyde's environmental, economic and community resources. For more information about the Firth of Clyde Forum visit www.clydeforum.com and www.clydeforum.com/projects/invasive-species

Scottish Natural Heritage is the government's adviser on all aspects of nature and landscape across Scotland. Our role is to help everyone understand, value and enjoy Scotland's nature now and in the future. For more information, visit our website at www.snh.gov.uk. SNH media is also now on Twitter at twitter.com/SNH_Tweets

For more information about Scottish Natural Heritage visit www.snh.gov.uk and for the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) 2011 Act www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/6/contents

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