Tackling Invasive Non-Native Species in the UK Overseas Territories

Hull fouling assessment tool

The aim of this protocol is to provide a simple and easy to use indicator of the degree of fouling on yachts. It is intended for environmental officers and biosecurity officers.

Method:

- Gather biosecurity information from visiting vessels at the earliest opportunity:
  - Port of origin for this journey
  - When anti-fouling was last applied to the hull
  - When the hull was last cleaned
- Carry out rapid visual hull inspection on all vessels from above the water surface:
  - Make a visual inspection from a boat or the wharf of the submerged areas around the bow, waterline, and stern/rudder
  - Rank the yacht overall on a scale of 0 to 5 according to the table overleaf.

Actions:

- For vessels scoring Ranks 0 or 1:
  - Acceptable.
    - No action required.
- For vessels scoring Rank 2:
  - Borderline.
    - Vessel advised of the need to clean the hull in the near future, or before returning to the Territory (if appropriate).
- For vessels scoring Rank 3, 4 or 5:
  - Unacceptable.
    - Action required, and what is appropriate depends on the territory (eg vessels to haul out and clean the hull / vessel advised to leave territorial waters).
    - On no account should the vessel be allowed to clean the hull while in the water.
    - A follow-up visit is required to confirm compliance.

Further information


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Visual estimate of fouling cover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No visible fouling. Hull entirely clean, no biofilm* on visible submerged parts of the hull.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Slime fouling only. Submerged hull areas partially or entirely covered in biofilm, but absence of any macrofouling.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Light fouling. Hull covered in biofilm and 1–2 very small patches of macrofouling (only one taxon).</td>
<td>1–5 % of visible submerged surfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Considerable fouling. Presence of biofilm, and macrofouling still patchy but clearly visible and comprised of either one single or several different taxa.</td>
<td>6–15 % of visible submerged surfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Extensive fouling. Presence of biofilm and abundant fouling assemblages consisting of more than one taxon.</td>
<td>16–40 % of visible submerged surfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very heavy fouling. Diverse assemblages covering most of visible hull surfaces.</td>
<td>41–100 % of visible submerged surfaces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Biofilm: Thin layer of bacteria, microalgae, detritus and other particulates.