



Management Guidelines

Carpet sea squirt *Didemnum vexillum*

The *Didemnum vexillum* carpet sea squirt (CSS) response has transitioned to management. From 15 March 2025, the Quarantine Area Notice at the Australian Marine Complex Common User Facility (AMC CUF) and BAE Systems Australia Pty Ltd is no longer in place, however, CSS remains a noxious fish under the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* (FRMA) and a declared pest under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act).

Purpose of this document

This document aims to support stakeholders in understanding the requirements and recommendations should CSS be suspected or detected in Western Australia (WA) waters now that there is no longer an active biosecurity response being undertaken by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (department).

Declared pest control categories

Under the BAM Act, declared pests can be assigned control categories:

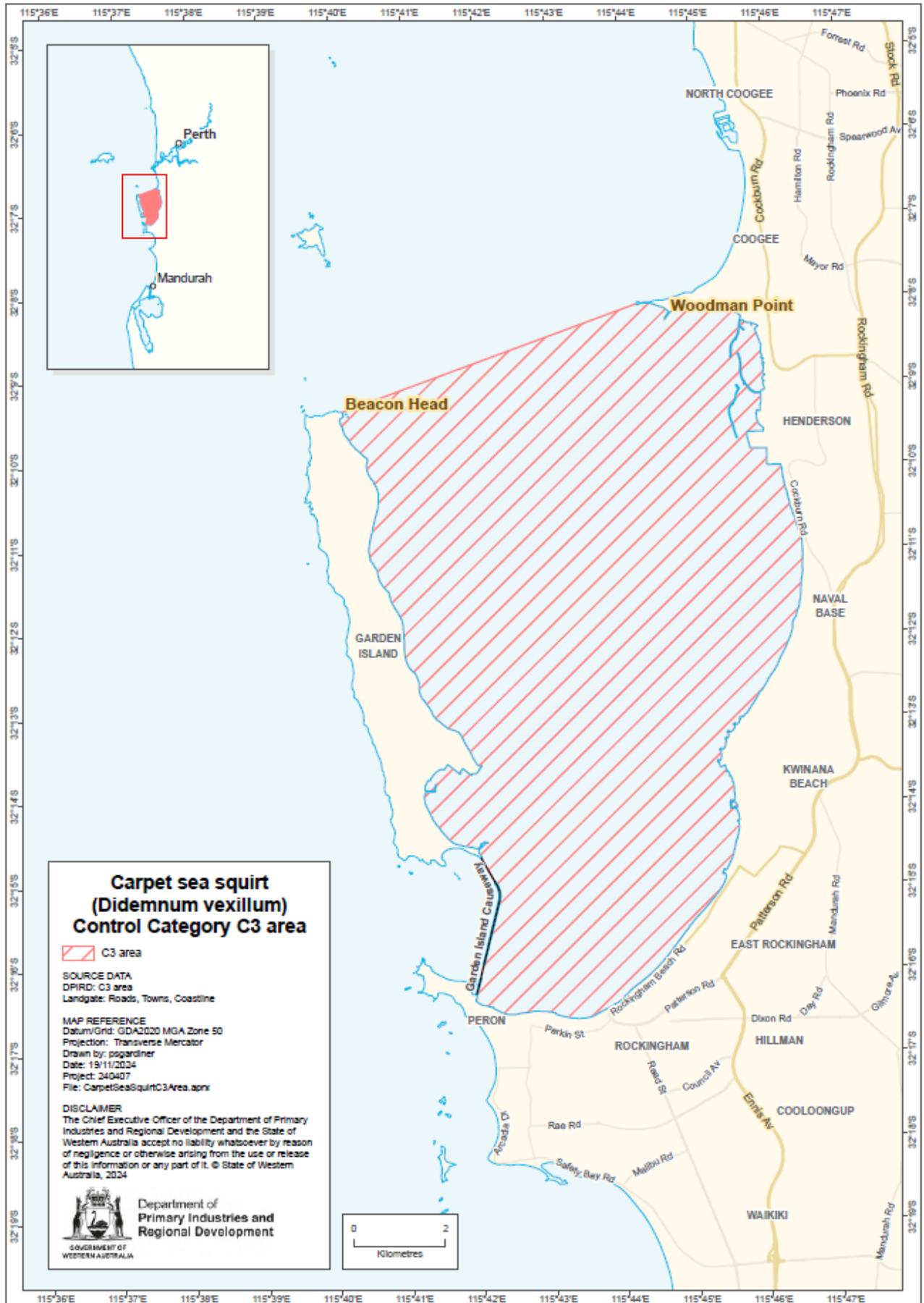
- (a) *Category 1 (C1) — Exclusion*: if in the opinion of the Minister introduction of the declared pest into an area or part of an area for which it is declared should be prevented;
- (b) *Category 2 (C2) — Eradication*: if in the opinion of the Minister eradication of the declared pest from an area or part of an area for which it is declared is feasible;
- (c) *Category 3 (C3) — Management*: if in the opinion of the Minister eradication of the declared pest from an area or part of an area for which it is declared is not feasible but that it is necessary to —
 - (i) alleviate the harmful impact of the declared pest in the area; or

- (ii) reduce the number or distribution of the declared pest in the area; or
- (iii) prevent or contain the spread of the declared pest in the area.

During the emergency response phase of the CSS incident, CSS was assigned a control category of *C1 – Exclusion* for the whole of the state except for the area surrounding the known incursion sites within Cockburn Sound. This area was assigned the *C2 – Eradication* category.

As it was determined that it was not technically feasible to eradicate CSS from Australia by the National Management Group, as recommended by the Consultative Committee on Introduced Marine Pest Emergencies, the control category for the Cockburn Sound area has been amended to *C3 - Management* (Figure 1).

CSS has not been detected outside of this area in WA and so the *C1- Control* category for the rest of the state is still in place. This will be reviewed should CSS be detected outside of the of the C3 area.



Suspicion of CSS on vessel or equipment

Definition of a vessel

For the purposes of these management guidelines, a vessel is defined as:

- (a) Any ship, boat or other description of vessel used, capable of being used or previously used as a means of transportation by water; and
- (b) Any equipment or other mechanical apparatus of any kind that is or has been in water and is not permanently attached to a permanent structure. This can include but is not limited to, items such as ropes, chains, fenders, buoys, pontoons, anchors, aquaculture equipment, sensors, and instrumentation.

Vessels remaining within C3 area

Vessels that are not being moved from the C3 area e.g., a vessel moving to and from HMAS *Stirling* to AMC, or equipment being shifted from AMC CUF to CUF North, should be managed in accordance with best practice biofouling management to reduce the likelihood of CSS being present on the vessel.

Vessels which remain within the C3 Area and CSS is suspected or confirmed to be present on the vessel, are to employ control measures as are reasonable and necessary to prevent spread.

Movement of vessels and equipment from C3 area

If vessels and equipment are to be moved out of the C3 area and into the C1 area, and CSS is suspected or known to be present on the vessel or equipment being moved, either through inspection when the vessel is removed from water, or as part of any in-water survey, the department is to be notified within 24 hours to enable management of the declared pest.

The department will advise on a case-by-case basis however if CSS is confirmed to be present, the following conditions are to be adhered to, to provide that the declared pest is not moved.

- (a) All treated surfaces must be free from any visible macro-fouling, or the fouling must have been rendered unviable. i.e., a low biosecurity risk
- (b) All collected material must be disposed of on land by an accredited waste management company and in compliance with the requirements of all relevant local authorities
- (c) Provide the department with evidence of the treatment if requested
- (d) The vessel should depart immediately after treatment

A vessel which transits through the C3 area frequently (i.e., tug service) need to be aware of the requirements regarding reporting and management of declared pests and should adhere to best practice biofouling management to mitigate the risk of spreading CSS outside of the C3 area.

In-water treatment

Any in-water cleaning operations being considered by stakeholders to mitigate the risk of spreading CSS from the C3 area is subject to approval required by the Fremantle Port Authority (FPA) who will liaise with the department to assess the biosecurity risk posed by the proposed operation.

Applicants are to contact DPIRD at vessel.management@dpiird.wa.gov.au, and FPA via Environment@fremantleports.com.au, CC to HarbourMaster@fremantleports.com.au.

Subject to approval, conditions will likely be imposed to ensure that the biosecurity and chemical risk of the operation is mitigated to an acceptable level.

C1 area

If CSS is suspected or detected in the C1 area (whole of state excluding the C3 area), the department is to be notified and will respond on a case-by-case basis in alignment with biosecurity principles.

The report is to be submitted to aquatic.biosecurity@dpiird.wa.gov.au or by calling Fishwatch 24-hour hotline 1800 815 507.

Resources and links

Australian Government 2024 Anti-fouling and in-water cleaning guidelines (exposure draft). <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/aircraft-vessels-military/vessels/marine-pest-biosecurity/biofouling/inwater-cleaning-australia>

Australian Government Outbreak Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases Carpet Sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*) <https://www.outbreak.gov.au/current-outbreaks/carpet-sea-squirt>

Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cmth) and the *Biosecurity Regulations 2016 (Cmth)*

Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 and the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Regulations 2013*

IMO 2023 Biofouling Guidelines.

<https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/MEPCDocuments/MEPC.378%2880%29.pdf>

Introduced Marine Pest: Carpet sea squirt

<https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/invasive-species/introduced-marine-pest-carpet-sea-squirt>

National guidelines for the management of *Didemnum vexillum* (available upon request)

National Introduced Marine Pest Information System. Species – *Didemnum vexillum*
<https://nimpis.marinepests.gov.au/species/species/147>

MyPestGuide Reporter <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/apps/mypestguide-reporter>

DPIRD Aquatic Pest Biosecurity Biofouling Biosecurity – Guideline 2025 [in draft]

DPIRD Aquatic Pest Biosecurity Interim policy position on in-water cleaning of Vessels in Western Australian waters (2025) [In draft]

Fish Resources Management Act 1994 and the *Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995*

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