

DATE: 11/30/2016

DEPARTMENT POC: Hilary Smith

EMAIL: hilary_smith@ios.doi.gov

A. *Update on the implementation of past recommendations/action items*

Spring 2015 – Recommendation: ISAC recommends that the NISC member agencies develop the early detection and rapid response framework and emergency funding plan called for in the Council on Climate Preparedness and Resilience and Natural Resources Working Group’s Priority Agenda: Enhancing the Climate Resilience of America’s Natural Resources (October 2014); and, that they seek the involvement and advice of non-federal stakeholders, subject matter experts, tribal, state, and local government representatives who will be critical partners in the successful implementation of this framework and fund.

In February, the Administration released the interdepartmental report, Safeguarding America’s Lands and Waters from Invasive Species: A National Framework for Early Detection and Rapid Response (<https://www.doi.gov/ppa/reports-and-statistics>). The NISC Management Plan, released in July, incorporates recommendations in the report as action items. This includes undertaking a series of scientific, technical, and institutional assessments to determine the capacities and resources necessary to establish a national EDRR program. The NISC Secretariat is facilitating these assessments which are in progress. Additional action items within the NISC Management Plan related to the EDRR Framework include: Establish Terms of Reference for and institute a National EDRR Task Force within the NISC structure that will guide implementation of the EDRR Framework; Produce an implementation plan for a nation-wide program for EDRR; Assess investments, resource needs, and opportunities to leverage additional resources; Conduct cost-benefit analyses of EDRR programs for potential invasive species; and Promote pilot projects across a variety of U.S. ecosystems.

Spring 2015 – Action: Request NISC staff to liaise with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to identify and resolve issues that impede the timely and successful completion of Section 7 consultations under the Endangered Species Act for biological control agents.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) continues to conduct regular coordinating calls with USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Plant Protection and Quarantine (APHIS PPQ) to review outstanding questions on the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Petitions that are in the biological assessment (BA) / consultation phase.

USFWS has nearly cleared the backlog of biological assessments on permits for release of biological control agents of weeds (BCAW). USFWS is currently conducting informal consultation with USDA APHIS PPQ on two recently received (October 2016 and November 2016) biological assessments for BCAW (invasive knotweeds and gorse) and is working on its biological review and response to USDA APHIS PPQ for the proposed permits to release these biological control agents.

USFWS is retaining a detailee through mid-April 2017 to conduct Endangered Species Act review of USDA APHIS proposed permits of biological control agents of weeds; the detailee is also engaged in other aspects of USFWS review of BCAW petitions.

July 2016 – Recommendations: Various biological control recommendations

The Department distributed the white paper and recommendations to the DOI invasive species community, and integrated pest management coordinators in particular, for their consideration. Specific responses are below:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS):

- **Recommendation 1:** USFWS is actively working on identifying invasive species inventory and appropriate prioritization tools for use on national wildlife refuges; and, USFWS is interested in helping review new and existing criteria and developing a transparent process to prioritize criteria for managing invasive species using biocontrol at a landscape scale.
- **Recommendation 5:** The concept of an ecological risk/benefit analysis in regulatory decision-making is addressed in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and continues through a thorough implementation of NEPA as it pertains to biological control.
- **Recommendation 6:** Any timeline established would need to accommodate regulatory timelines associated with all federal statutes, such as the Endangered Species Act, that are directly or indirectly part of the biological control agent permitting process.
- **Recommendation 7:** USFWS agrees and has been actively engaged in efforts to improve communications with APHIS, the TAG, and with the scientists/petitioners who conduct biocontrol agent research. USFWS is willing to engage in work groups or other collaborations to continue improving communications among the agencies.
- **Recommendation 8:** USFWS and USDA APHIS PPQ conduct Endangered Species Act section 7 consultation that addresses permitted release of a biocontrol agent potentially anywhere in the United States or territories, as applicable.

Bureau of Reclamation: Reclamation works with USDA (or other agencies when appropriate) to implement bio-control. Recommendations are geared more to the research of new agents which is something Reclamation is currently not undertaking. The guidelines proposed would benefit Reclamation's' implementation when necessary.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM): BLM agrees with the recommendations, particularly those in regard to the importance of supporting monitoring of classical biological control programs (Recommendation 1), instituting a holistic ecological risk/benefit analysis in the regulatory decision-making process (Recommendation 5), and involving all parties from the beginning of the biological control decision-making process (Recommendation 8).

B. Departmental news of relevance to ISAC priorities

Federal/State Coordination:

DOI is participating in an effort led by the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture, Western Weed Coordinating Committee, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, with involvement from state weed coordinators and federal land management agencies, to develop a Western Invasive Plant Management Action Plan for the Sagebrush Biome. The plan builds upon recommendations generated during the November 2015 Western Invasive Weed Summit in Boise, Idaho.

Wildlife Health Impacts - Updates:

Spring Viremia of Carp Virus in Imported Amphibians

- Scientists at U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) collaborated with the USDA in the novel detection of a globally-significant fish virus, [Spring viremia of carp virus \(SVCV\)](#), in amphibians that were imported to the United States. USGS is working with USDA to understand the implications of this detection. This finding is relevant in regards to the recent [FWS Injurious Listing of Salamanders](#) due to the Bsal (salamander chytrid fungus) risk.
- The [publication](#) is available online. A USGS [news story](#) is available online.
- Ip, H.S., Lorch, J.M., and Blehert, D.S., 2016, [Detection of spring viraemia of carp virus in imported amphibians reveals an unanticipated foreign animal disease threat](#); Emerging Microbes & Infections, v. 5, e97, doi:10.1038/emi.2016.94

Salamander Chytrid Fungus (Bsal) Surveillance

- USGS's Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative (ARMI) and NWHC are collaborating in a [national surveillance effort for Bsal](#). To-date over 7,000 native salamanders have been tested but Bsal has not been detected.
- This effort is highlighted on [ARMI's website](#).
- A [map](#) of the surveillance sites is available online. Surveillance sampling was aligned with high-risk areas for Bsal based on risk assessments (incl. 2016 [USGS risk assessment](#)).
- The impetus was the 2015 USGS ARMI-led [Bsal workshop](#). In 2016, USGS published a [report](#) from that workshop. The story was picked up by the [New York Times](#) and highlighted in a [biographic](#).

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Detection in Alaska

- In early 2016, USGS published [research](#) to suggest that Alaska is still a likely portal for avian influenza (see USGS [News Story](#)).
- In August 2016, [USDA confirmed](#) the detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza in a wild mallard in Alaska. To-date, there has been no additional evidence of HPAI circulating in the United States in 2016.

West Coast Fish Parasite Detected in the East

- USGS's Leetown Science Center detected a fish parasite in the eastern United States that was previously only detected on the West Coast.
- The manuscript was published in the Journal of Aquatic Animal Health: "[Dermocystidium sp. Infection in Blue Ridge Sculpin Captured in Maryland](#)" (see USGS [press release](#)).

C. Departmental notes of relevance to ISAC

DOI Invasive Species Coordination: DOI's Invasive Species Task Force, comprised of bureau/office representatives, continues to make progress implementing the DOI Invasive Species Action Plan. Through inter-bureau work groups, teams developed a new Chapter in the Departmental Manual on invasive species management, which is near completion; submitted proposals for stronger performance metrics that improve consistency across bureaus; and canvassed DOI employees on opportunities to improve data access, data management, and data sharing for more strategic invasive species action. 496 respondents completed a department-wide invasive species data questionnaire to assess opportunities to create efficiencies and eliminate duplication among the Department's invasive species information systems and processes. Detailed analysis of the survey's results is ongoing.

Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF): The Fall 2016 ANSTF meeting was held on November 9-10, 2016, at the USFWS Headquarters in Falls Church, Virginia. The agenda included presentations on ballast water management, organisms in trade, and communication strategies for ANS. The State of Maryland presented its ANS Management Plan, which was approved unanimously by the ANSTF members. During the meeting, the ANSTF also reviewed results from the Reporting Form used to collect ANSTF accomplishments as they relate to the Strategic Plan. These results will be used to inform future Reports to Congress and ANS Strategic Planning. Action items from the meeting include inquiring about actions to better understand the pathway associated with live release for religious or cultural purposes; requesting information from ANSTF members and Regional Panels about needs for development, implementation, and evaluation of outreach programs; and exploring options for the expectations of members, as well as future work and structure to advance ANSTF Strategic goals. These actions will be reported on during the next ANSTF meeting, which is scheduled for May 2 – 4, 2017, and will be hosted by the Western Regional Panel in Lake Tahoe, California.

Working with Boat Manufacturers through the American Boat and Yacht Council: USFWS continues to work with the manufacturers of boats and associated equipment to develop guidelines and best practices to reduce the likelihood of spreading aquatic invasive species. The second meeting of the Project Technical Committee occurred on October 3rd in Tampa in conjunction with the annual International Boat Builders Expo. The third draft of the Technical Information Report is expected in January 2017 in conjunction with another large industry event, the Miami Boat Show.

Injurious Wildlife (Lacey Act) Multi-species final rule: On September 30, 2016, USFWS published a final rule in the Federal Register to list 10 nonnative freshwater fish (Amur sleeper, crucian carp, Eurasian minnow, European perch, Nile perch, Prussian carp, roach, stone moroko, wels catfish, and zander) and 1 crayfish (common yabby) as injurious species. All species have a high climate match in parts of the United States, a history of invasiveness outside their native ranges, and, with one exception (zander in Spiritwood Lake, North Dakota), are not currently found in U.S. ecosystems. The rule took effect on October 31, 2016, thus prohibiting importation and interstate transport of the 11 species.

Incentivizing Harvest of Invasive Species: USFWS continues to engage in the issue of whether to incentivize harvest of invasive species. The National Invasive Species Council's Management Plan includes an action item to develop best practice guidance. The International Union for Conservation of Nature World Conservation Congress also held discussions on this topic in September. USFWS staff were invited to share results of their research by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), with additional involvement by the Agence Française de Développement and Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial. Together, they led a knowledge café that took stock of existing experience worldwide, allowed for exchange of experience, and drew key lessons that will directly inform the design of a Pacific-wide initiative by SPC related to harvest of invasive species. Participants are expected to follow-up via e-mail soon to continue developing recommendations for the SPC to implement.

Prevention Policy: USFWS Region 1 (States of Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Pacific Island Territories) finalized its, "Region 1 Policy on Minimizing the Introduction of Invasive Species by Service Activities."

Non-regulatory Non-native Species Watch Lists: USGS Core Science Analytics, Synthesis, and Libraries Program continues

refining authoritative non-native species lists for the areas of AK, HI, and L48, in support of the National EDRR Framework's mention of the need to develop non-regulatory watch lists (p 19 and footnotes 9&11). It is anticipated that the list, which currently includes more than 9,000 names, will be submitted for peer review within the next six months.

Emerging Invasive Species: In August, the Department announced \$497,000 in additional Federal funding to combat a tree-killing fungus that causes Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD), a disease that threatens the State's tropical forests which could jeopardize local water supplies and Hawai'i's economic vitality. The funding activated an Early Detection Rapid Response Team and leveraged another \$673,000 of in-kind Federal contributions to suppress the disease. The EDRR Team comprised of Federal and state agencies and a consortium of scientists will conduct field surveys for the disease, support critical research to pioneer adaptive treatment protocols, and complete assessments of those treatments.

Capacity Building in U.S. Territories: A priority of the Office of the Insular Affairs (OIA) is to promote capacity building for invasive species management in the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Building on the progress of a June 2016 workshop hosted by OIA and the USFWS, which was attended by territorial and Hawaii officials, OIA provided technical assistance grants to each territory to complete invasive species action plans by the end of 2016. OIA is also working on a Memorandum of Understanding, which will be signed by OIA and all territories, to establish the U.S. Territories Invasive Species Coordinating Committee (USTISCC). USTISCC presents an opportunity for each territory to improve invasive species management practices through improved capacity building and better coordination between the U.S. territories and the federal government. On December 15, 2016, OIA plans on holding the first USTISCC meeting in Washington, D.C., at the U.S. Department of the Interior. Attendees will include OIA, the territories, and other federal agencies and non-governmental agencies dealing with invasive species.

Strategic Planning to Address Invasive Animals: The National Park Service (NPS) is developing a strategic approach to address non-native invasive animals. Specific objectives to be addressed include:

- Determine the extent of the exotic invasive animal problem across NPS in terms of both species occurrence and management concern and practices.
- Compare/contrast different organizational models for managing these animal species that NPS could adopt or use to inform development of its own organizational model(s). Focus will be on terrestrial vertebrates with the expectation that the model could be modified to apply to invasive invertebrate and aquatic animals.
- Analyze a myriad of pertinent studies (attempts, failures, successes), world-wide, of different management and resource contexts in which invasive terrestrial or aquatic vertebrate issues manifest themselves and apply in context with appropriate NPS units.
- Implement an interpretive educational and engagement component that will increase park visitor awareness of exotic invasive animal species impacts and improve NPS efforts to advocate "prevention" and "early detection" as the most effective means of invasive species management.
- Develop a framework and Servicewide Strategic Approach that includes a suite of tools and models to consider to manage exotic invasive animal species.

Participate in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Invasive Species Committee and address a strategic and collaborative process in regards to the biological and human dimension aspects of feral and loose cat impacts on wildlife and ecosystems.