

# **Health protocol for movement of aquatic animals for aquaculture in Queensland**

**Aquaculture Protocol FAMPR008**

**April 2017**

This publication has been compiled by John Dexter of Fisheries Queensland and Tim Lucas of Biosecurity Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

© State of Queensland, 2017

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of its information. The copyright in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia (CC BY) licence.

Under this licence you are free, without having to seek our permission, to use this publication in accordance with the licence terms.



You must keep intact the copyright notice and attribute the State of Queensland as the source of the publication.

Note: Some content in this publication may have different licence terms as indicated.

For more information on this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en>

The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The Queensland Government shall not be liable for technical or other errors or omissions contained herein. The reader/user accepts all risks and responsibility for losses, damages, costs and other consequences resulting directly or indirectly from using this information.

## Introduction

Translocation of aquatic animals carries risk of genetic contamination and spread of disease, which can impact on the economy, the environment and human health. These risks are different for each species. Specific assessments have been completed for the translocation protocols below:

- Prawn broodstock FAMPR001
- Barramundi FAMPR002
- Bivalve molluscs FAMPR003
- Crabs and Lobsters FAMPR004
- Eels FAMPR005
- Freshwater crayfish and prawns FAMPR006
- Freshwater native finfish other than barramundi and eels FAMPR007

This protocol is designed to facilitate movement of species not captured in the protocols above. This protocol assumes no information is available for the species in question and uses broad-based data on oceanic species distribution and catchment boundaries to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

The Principal Fishery Manager, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) may alter the conditions for specific translocations based on specific circumstances, using an evidence-based risk assessment.

## Scope

This protocol applies to all persons undertaking the aquaculture of fisheries resources in Queensland which involves the translocating of live aquatic animals into and within Queensland.

This protocol does not apply to aquatic animals that are covered under a specific translocation protocol.

This protocol is to be read and applied in conjunction with the *Fisheries Act 1994*, the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*, associated regulations and all other relevant policies of the DAF. The protocol also applies to all aquaculture operations deemed as 'Self Assessable' unless there are unique and specific factors that justify its variation under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*.

This protocol is restricted to translocation of animals for the purpose of aquaculture. The stocking of farm dams, impoundments and river systems with freshwater finfish is outside the scope of this protocol. Movement of animals across Australian borders is controlled under Commonwealth legislation governing national quarantine arrangements and is also outside the scope of this protocol.

## Requirements

### Movement within biogeographical regions

Movement within biogeographical regions (Figure 1) is allowed for land-based aquaculture unless stated otherwise in the conditions of the aquaculture development approval. Such conditions may be applied if there is evidence to suggest a species has distinct populations, with different genetic makeup or disease status, present within a biogeographical region.

### Movement into Queensland or between biogeographical regions

The following conditions apply when moving live aquatic animals for the purpose of aquaculture:

- into Queensland from interstate; or
- between distinct biogeographical regions (Figure 1) within Queensland; or
- from a land-based facility to an aquaculture area in the marine environment (i.e. sea cages or ranching) including within the same biogeographical region.

Exemptions may be deemed appropriate for movement of small distances (<100km) across these boundaries, provided that these movements will not result in cross-contamination of freshwater catchments. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Advise DAF of proposed translocation**

The Principal Fishery Manager, DAF, should be advised of any proposed translocation at least 2 weeks prior to the submission of an application and health testing. Earlier advice is recommended where a risk assessment for the locations, facilities and/or species have not been undertaken and provides time for any risks to be identified and addressed prior to the movement occurring.

### **Submit application for approval**

The form to apply for translocation approval can be obtained from the Queensland Government website: [https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/72468/Translocation-application-form.pdf](https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/72468/Translocation-application-form.pdf)

The completed form should be submitted to the Principal Fishery Manager, DAF, at least 2 weeks before the intended translocation date. Each translocation must be approved before any movement can occur. It is a breach of aquaculture approval conditions to allow movement to occur without an approval in place.

### **Health certification**

A health certificate or pathology report, issued by DAF's Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory, or by another NATA accredited laboratory for pathology of aquatic animals, indicating freedom from disease, is required for each translocation of live aquatic animals prior to approval. It is a requirement that the pathology report is dated no more than 14 days before shipment date. The health certificate or pathology report must include a statement that the specimens originate from:

1. a hatchery, farm, aquaculture premises or region which is recognised as free from infection by the diseases on the Queensland Declared Disease List based on the requirements listed in the OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals, current edition (Fourth Edition 2003 or later) for recognition as free from infection; or
2. a hatchery, farm, aquaculture premises or region in which an appropriate targeted surveillance scheme over two years has been undertaken under the supervision of State or Territory Fisheries or fisheries approved Veterinary authorities and where the requirements for recognition as free from infection by diseases of concern for that species on the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Code current edition (2016 or later) have been met; or
3. a single batch of gametes, larvae, fry, post-larvae, spat or early juvenile or adult of a species of finfish, crustaceans or molluscs, isolated from open waters, which has been tested using suitable techniques to provide evidence of freedom from disease.

Any of the following signs of disease or lesions may be reason for a pathology report not indicating freedom from disease (or absence of significant pathogens or lesions):

- the presence of any virus associated with a lesion (e.g. inclusion bodies or focal necrosis) or a virus known or suspected to be pathogenic to pearl oyster species; or

- the presence of any protozoan associated with an inflammatory or degenerative lesion or a protozoan known or suspected to be pathogenic to pearl oyster species (the presence of symbiotic or opportunistic protozoa will not be regarded as a sign of disease); or the presence of metazoan parasites that cause a lesion in the pearl oysters or which are suspected to be pathogenic for the species in question; or
- the presence of a fungal infection that causes lesions (e.g. necrosis / inflammation) in the spat; or
- the presence of bacteria associated with lesions or inflammation; or
- the presence of Rickettsia associated with lesions or inflammation; or
- the presence of unexplained lesions; or
- the occurrence of unexplained mortalities in the batch at a level which the certifying pathologist considers unacceptable

However, finding one or more of these lesions does not automatically mean the animals will not be approved for translocation. In these circumstances, a specific risk assessment will be undertaken by the pathologist and further testing may be done to define the pathogen and determine if it is on the national list of quarantine disease agents.

A copy of the pathology report must be provided to the Principal Fishery Manager, DAF, for approval prior to each translocation. A health certificate or pathology report that does not indicate freedom from disease will result in the translocation application **not being approved**.

### **Record keeping and reporting**

Records must be kept by the applicant for each consignment, detailing source of stock and the date received and location on the aquaculture farm. These must be retained for a minimum of 3 years. Copies of these records are to be made available for inspection by DAF officers if requested.

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* a person has a general biosecurity obligation to take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent or minimise the biosecurity risk. At any stage in production, unusual signs or mortalities that could indicate significant disease must be reported to Biosecurity Queensland. This is vital for Australia's passive surveillance system and is a crucial step for effective response to disease outbreaks. During business hours contact an aquatic veterinarian or the biosecurity sciences laboratory. If requested, samples must be taken and sent to the laboratory.

### **Subsequent movement**

Depending on the species and locations, Fisheries Queensland may identify the risk of translocation as very low. In these instances there may be no requirement for health testing or a specific approval to translocate.

This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by Fisheries Queensland according to risk assessment. Where there is insufficient evidence to adequately evaluate the risk the precautionary principle will apply and health testing and approval will be required.

## **Contacts**

### **Principal Fishery Manager, DAF**

Email: [translocation@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:translocation@daf.qld.gov.au)

Phone: (07) 3087 8035

Fax: (07) 3087 8002

### **Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory**

Health and Food Sciences Precinct

Block 12, 39 Kessels Road

Coopers Plains, Qld 4108

Phone: (07) 3276 6062

Fax: (07) 3216 6620

Email: [bslclo@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:bslclo@daf.qld.gov.au)

Contact the Duty Fish Pathologist before sending samples.

Figure 1 - Biogeographical regions of Queensland for translocation of aquatic animals

