



Arctic Invasive Alien Species (ARIAS) Strategy and Action Plan

Information for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC)



The Arctic Council approved this plan on May 11, 2017

The **Arctic Council** is the premier intergovernmental forum addressing regional Arctic concerns, in particular those related to sustainable development and environmental protection.

The **Arctic Council** is composed of:

- ▶ **8 Member States:** *Canada, Kingdom of Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, United States of America*
- ▶ **6 Indigenous Permanent Participant Organizations:** *Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East, Saami Council*
- ▶ Observer States and organizations

What Does the ARIAS Strategy and Action Plan say?

The plan provides a framework for Arctic stakeholders to address the threat and introduction of invasive species.

Invasive species are a significant and rapidly emerging threat to Arctic ecosystems and those who depend on them. Change in the Arctic, including warming, increased human activity from shipping, mineral and oil industries, and tourism, makes the region more vulnerable to invasion.

The plan encourages Arctic States and their partners to take priority actions in three categories.

1. Inspire urgent and effective action
2. Improve the knowledge base for well-informed decision making
3. Undertake prevention and early detection/rapid response initiatives

The plan has no specific requirements for Member States and implementation is voluntary.

Invasive alien species are non-native species that cause harm to the environment, economies, or human health. For example the colonial tunicate, *Didemnum vexillum*, (photo top right) that has covered a large area of Georges Banks, was discovered in Sitka in 2010, and European green crab (photo top left) is spreading north to Alaska from Canada.

What are the Next Steps?

NOAA, including **NOAA Fisheries, Alaska Region**, is participating in a U.S. Arctic Interagency Working Group that is exploring opportunities to implement the plan. Our goals include the engagement of Alaskan communities to combat the threat of invasive marine species.

The **U.S. is chairing the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group**, one of the two Working Groups that produced the plan, from 2017-2019, and intends to work across the Arctic Council and promote best practices to prevent invasive species from entering the Arctic.

What does the plan mean for fisheries?

- ▶ Some Arctic Council working delineations of the "Arctic" include the Bering Sea.
- ▶ Freshwater and marine invasive species could impact resources of concern to the NPFMC and commercial fisherman.
- ▶ Commercial fishing vessels could be unwitting vectors of invasive species spread.
- ▶ We have an **opportunity** to utilize the plan to raise awareness, improve the knowledge base, and undertake prevention and rapid response to invasive species in the Arctic through collaboration with the commercial fishing industry and multiple levels of government.

For More Information

Arctic Council Website: <http://www.arctic-council.org/>

Link to ARIAS Plan: <https://caff.is/strategies-series/415=arctic-invasive-alien-species-strategy-and-action-plan>

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