

Report to the Ornamental Fish Management Implementation Group Report on the review of the grey list of ornamental fish - 5 November 2008

Introduction

Terms of reference for a nationally agreed approach under *A strategic approach to the management of ornamental fish in Australia* (DAFF 2007) included the establishment of an agreed list of high risk noxious species. This was in response to the fact that many ornamental species currently traded within Australia had been imported without adequate assessment of their potential risk to the Australian environment.

A national noxious list was agreed comprising approximately 569 species (DAFF 2007). Through the work of the Ornamental Fish Management Implementation Group (OFMIG) the states and territories have been implementing the agreed noxious list through their respective legislation.

A second list of species and genus that were potentially noxious were identified as the 'grey list' from the species known to be traded in Australia (DAFF 2007). The list includes approximately 780 species. The review of this list to identify potentially high risk noxious species is the subject of this report.

The ornamental fish trade continues to evolve. It is well recognised that among the 2000 or more ornamental fish species likely to be in Australia there is a third group not included on either the agreed noxious list or the grey list. This third group is yet to be identified or reviewed in terms of risk and warrants consideration in terms of implementation of a national approach to the management of ornamental fish.

Review method

The risk assessment framework in the national strategy described the use of the Bomford model (Bomford 2006). Science based risk assessment models are relevant but on a species by species assessment are resource intensive and the available resources for the review were limited. Available scientific information to support such approaches to risk assessment is also limited. The review method was revised to broaden the base of information on available to assist in the review.

The revised methodology involving use of a review matrix and involvement of expert through a workshop was agreed in principle at OFMIG's meeting in April 2006. The review matrix [Attachment F](#) described in [Attachment A](#) is the result of further development since April 2008. Comments and suggestion were included from industry, states, and the experts participating in the workshop on 16 October 2008 e.g. *hardiness* was added as a criterion and scoring for some criteria were revised.

The review matrix provides a useful framework for reviewing available information across criteria that are relevant to decisions on whether a species could be considered high risk or not. Available information is used to develop a score for each criterion. The species' cumulative score is compared against a threshold score to indicate whether a species could be considered a high risk.

The review matrix worked in practice using available information and inputs from the expert workshop. The review matrix is a repeatable method and could be used to in any future review if dedicated resources are available. Some refinements to the approach may be possible although it should be noted that manipulation of the current threshold would deliver a different result. While changing the threshold is possible it should not be done to manipulate the results to favour outcomes for industry or regulators. A more useful approach would be the consideration management options and controls for species that are indicated as high risk. For example, for each species, the higher scored criterion could help identify if risks could be mitigated and possible approaches.

Results of the review

[Attachment B](#) lists 160 high and low risk species reviewed to date using the process agreed to by OFMIG. This list is the result of the BRS work and contributions from experts participating in the expert workshop on 16 October 2008.

The focus of the expert workshop was on species indicated as borderline i.e. within a range of 2 of the nominated threshold, or lacking information on 3 or more criterion. The record of the expert workshop is at [Attachment C](#). The populated review matrix showing the inputs from the expert workshop is at [Attachment D](#).

An approach to genus level review was suggested from the expert workshop as indicated in [Attachment C](#). 65 genera comprising 160 species were reviewed with input from the expert's workshop. It was noted that the principle of accepting a genus as high risk should also include accepting that within that genus there may be some low risk species justifying different treatment.

A list of 39 grey list species not fully reviewed is also provided. BRS has undertaken review of these species but these have not yet been considered by an expert group. Further work involving an expert group may be needed on these species.

Other outcomes of the review process include:

- The expert workshop identifying species of interest to the industry and hobbyists. These are marked in [Attachment B and D](#) to assist OFMIG consider high risk species and to help focus communication with the sector.
- A range of relevant issues for OFMIG to consider in relation to recommending species or genus be noxious (see below and in the expert workshop record).

Review recommendations

That OFMIG:

- o Note there has been a campaign from hobbyists reacting to noxious listing of species.
- o Consider the species and genus listed at [Attachment B](#) for their inclusion on the national noxious list.

- o Note that genus on the grey list that have been reviewed as high risk be considered on the basis that:
 - Genus level review was based on a sample of species.
 - The principle of considering a genus high risk was based on a precautionary approach.
 - Low risk exceptions within a genus may be identified through consultation with industry and hobbyists.
- o Consider the value of states and territories coordinating communication of the implications to the industry and hobbyist within the ornamental fish sector before further noxious listing.
- o Consider the use of remaining OFMIG resources to complete the review of grey listed species and genus listed at Attachment E, which have not been considered by an expert workshop.
- o A further process should be initiated subject to resources to identify and review species not included on either the agreed noxious list or the grey list. This third group warrants consideration in terms a comprehensive national approach to the management of ornamental fish.
- o Consider the issues highlighted (e.g. as detailed at Attachment C)

The ornamental fish trade continues to expand in terms of species traded and this trend is likely to continue lawfully or unlawfully.

Scientific names used in the review are inclusive of strains.

Industry's view that high risk species of importance to the industry should be subject to further risk assessment before decisions are made.

There are species of interest to the industry and hobbyists and effective communication needs to occur with a focus on these species.

The review matrix method worked with some refinements. It could be used for future reviews.

Genus level review is an option subject to low risk species exceptions being considered for genus considered high risk.

The adequacy of internal state and territory coordination and communication of information and outcomes at a state and territory level.

A consistent approach to control of noxious listed species is desirable.

The need to identify the additional species (freshwater and marine) being traded and review these.

Attachments

Attachment A - Description of the review matrix methodology and criteria as applied to the review of ornamental fish.

Attachment B - High and low risk species and genus as reviewed to 16 October 2008. Attachment C - Record on the expert workshop held on 16 October 2008.

Attachment D - Revised and populated review matrix showing the inputs of the 16 October 2008 expert workshop.

Attachment E - BRS's review of grey listed species and genus not yet considered by an expert group.

Attachment F - Review matrix. References

Bomford 2006 - - Risk assessment for the establishment of exotic vertebrates in Australia: recalibration and refinement of models, Bureau of Rural Sciences, 2006

http://www.feral.org.au/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.ReferenceDetails&fer_reference_uuid=B1F1ED41-FC82-C237-F27BOSD9551A2C99

DAFF 2007 - *A strategic approach to the management of ornamental, fish in Australia, Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, 2006.*