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## Animal Biosecurity Advice 2020-A07

# Draft update of non-salmonid marine finfish risk species lists for human consumption and baitfish

This Biosecurity Advice notifies stakeholders of the proposal by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment to implement import conditions for various non-salmonid marine finfish species imported into Australia for human consumption, and for use as baitfish.

The department invites your comments on this proposal by 29 January 2021. Comments can be submitted at [haveyoursay.awe.gov.au/updating-non-salmonid-marine-finfish-species-risk-lists](https://haveyoursay.awe.gov.au/updating-non-salmonid-marine-finfish-species-risk-lists)

The changes are proposed following the completion of a departmental review of the risk species lists for non-salmonid marine finfish for human consumption and baitfish on BICON (risk species lists). The review identified several finfish species ([Appendix B](#)) that are not currently listed, but have been determined to be susceptible to a disease of concern to Australia outlined in the 1999 [Import risk analysis on non-viable salmonids and non-salmonid marine finfish](#) (1999 non-viable marine finfish IRA).

The department is therefore proposing that the risk species lists are updated to account for this new information, and that the risk management measures set out in the 1999 non-viable marine finfish IRA are subsequently applied to these species to meet Australia's Appropriate Level of Protection.

This review was initiated to ensure that the risk species lists for non-salmonid marine finfish for human consumption and baitfish on BICON (risk species lists) are up to date, effective at managing biosecurity risk and promote safe trade. Specifically, the review was aimed at incorporating information about species' susceptibility to diseases that has been published since the risk species lists were first developed from the 1999 [Import risk analysis on non-viable salmonids and non-salmonid marine finfish](#) (1999 non-viable marine finfish IRA).

To complete this review the department studied equivalent lists of susceptible species published by recognised overseas agencies, relevant disease-specific chapters published by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and reviewed the literature on the susceptibility of finfish species to the diseases of concern that were outlined in the 1999 non-viable marine finfish IRA.

The department followed a newly-developed procedure ([Appendix A](#)) to determine if a species of finfish should be recognised as susceptible to a disease of concern, given the strength of the scientific evidence available. This procedure was used to review the current risk species lists to determine if any additional species should be listed as susceptible to the diseases of concern to Australia outlined in the 1999 non-viable marine finfish IRA. The susceptibility of 160 species of finfish to diseases of concern were assessed as part of this review.

The diseases of concern to Australia are described in the 1999 non-viable marine finfish IRA and formed the basis of this review. These diseases are:

- Viral haemorrhagic septicemia virus (VHSV)
- *Aeromonas salmonicida*, exotic typical (furunculosis) and atypical strains (farmed fish only)
- Infectious pancreatic necrosis virus (IPNV)
- Red sea bream iridovirus (RSIV) and closely related iridoviruses, for example Infectious Spleen and Kidney Necrosis virus (ISKNV)
- *Photobacterium damsela* subsp. *piscicida* (for baitfish only)
- Aquabirnaviruses (other than IPNV)

The department plans to update the risk species lists ([Appendix B](#)) to account for this new information ([Appendix C](#)) and apply the risk management approaches set out in the 1999 non-viable marine finfish IRA in order to meet Australia's Appropriate Level of Protection.

The department also plans to simplify the names of the risk species lists.

- The list 'Non salmonid finfish high-risk species (specified species)' will be renamed the 'High-risk species list'
- The list 'Risk species (approved specified species)' for non-salmonid finfish sourced from all countries in and islands surrounding Asia (including Japan) will be renamed the 'Medium-risk species list'.
- The list 'Specified bony fish species other than from the Salmonidae & genus *Plecoglossus*' will be renamed the 'Baitfish species list'.

The department is proposing the list; 'Risk species (approved specified species)' for non-salmonid finfish sourced from all countries other than New Zealand is removed from BICON ([Appendix B](#), Table B3).

Prior to publication of this notification and completion of the review, some species were assessed to pose a significant risk to Australia's biosecurity system relative to other species, and the risk management approaches set out in the 1999 non-viable marine finfish IRA were applied. These species are *Lates calcarifer*, *Lethrinus* spp. and *Scomber* spp. which were recognised as susceptible to RSIV.

The department currently has a list of specified approved baitfish species, which include *Scomber* spp., *Sardinops* spp., *Clupea* spp. and *Sprattus* spp. that were considered as only being susceptible to VHSV. Specified approved baitfish species can be imported under conditions established that manage the risk of VHSV.

As *Scomber* spp. are now also recognised as susceptible to RSIV, permits to import whole *Scomber* spp. for use as baitfish from Asia, and islands surrounding Asia (where RSIV is reported to occur) will not be issued or renewed until biosecurity measures have been developed and implemented to manage the risks of RSIV, as well as VHSV. This has been done as the previous import conditions for specified approved baitfish only manage risk for VHSV.

Exporting countries seeking to use alternative risk management measures for finfish recognised as susceptible to a disease of concern to Australia can provide a submission for consideration by the department. This submission must include supporting scientific argument that clearly explains how the biosecurity risks will be managed to an equivalent level.

Stakeholders are also now invited to provide comments on the procedure and the proposed updates to the risk species lists (including the changes that have already been made) by 29 January 2021. The department will carefully consider all submissions before finalising any changes.

Australia has also issued a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Notification to the World Trade Organization (WTO) SPS Committee to inform its trading partners of the proposed updates to the risk lists.

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Please pass this notice to other interested parties.

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