

8 November 2018

Dr Shane Roberts, Manager, PIRSA Fisheries & Aquaculture -  
Aquatic Animal Health Unit  
Phone 08 8429 0505 / 0402 049 286 or shane.roberts@sa.gov.au

## FACT SHEET FOR OYSTER LICENCE HOLDERS

### POMS: Be alert as temperatures rise

With water temperatures rising as summer approaches, the SA Oyster Growing Association (SAOGA) and PIRSA remain on high alert for signs of Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) within South Australian oyster growing regions, and have been working closely together on prevention, preparedness and response strategies for the industry.

Early detection of POMS, or other significant aquatic animal diseases, is critical for an effective emergency response. Any response will be coordinated with industry to:

- minimise the spread of disease, thus reducing the time and cost to control it
- minimise any economic impact to industry and regional communities.

### Port River POMS Outbreak

Although feral oyster populations have been reduced in some areas of the Port Adelaide River, POMS outbreaks are likely to occur again this summer in feral oysters within the Port Adelaide River estuary system.

Containment of POMS to the Port Adelaide River remains a priority for PIRSA while industry prepare and future proof their business including (but not limited to) improved hatchery biosecurity and progress on the POMS resistant oyster breeding program ([www.asioysters.com.au](http://www.asioysters.com.au)).

Containment activities will include:

- the continuation of the Port River ban on removing bivalve shellfish
- associated compliance activities
- a communication and awareness campaign about POMS and associated risks, including promoting national biofouling guidelines to vessel owners.
- Further localised strategic knockdowns of feral Pacific oysters in the Port Adelaide River noting that total eradication is not achievable

PIRSA will also continue its support of current research projects related to the Port River POMS outbreak, such as those monitoring the virus in the Port, and predicting viral spread using oceanographic models.

## Prevention and Preparedness in the Commercial Growing Regions

### Feral Oyster Monitoring and Management

Feral oyster populations within, and adjacent to, growing regions pose a potential risk. The oyster industry have previously implemented oyster knockdown events. Contact your SAOGA Bay Rep for more details on organised knockdown events in your area.

If mortalities in feral oyster populations in the regions are observed, it should be immediately reported to PIRSA on **24-hour Fishwatch hotline 1800 065 522** or contact PIRSA directly on the below contact details. If you come in contact with any oysters suspected to have disease, please follow decontamination protocols outlined on PIRSA's website and do not subsequently visit a commercial oyster farm that same day.

For decontamination guidelines, see:

[www.pir.sa.gov.au/aquaculture/aquatic\\_animal\\_health/pacific\\_oyster\\_mortality\\_syndrome/port\\_river\\_outbreak\\_2018\\_feral\\_oysters](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/aquaculture/aquatic_animal_health/pacific_oyster_mortality_syndrome/port_river_outbreak_2018_feral_oysters)

### Early Detection of POMS

PIRSA has again secured external funding to continue the POMS early detection surveillance program across the State for Spring 2018 and Autumn 2019.

The active surveillance program was designed as an early detection tool for industry to detect the virus that causes POMS (OsHV-1), if present. Detecting the virus before mortalities occur would enable a rapid and effective emergency response.

PIRSA will be coordinating sample collection to assist with early detection surveillance through the SAOGA Bay Reps in the coming weeks. Please direct any questions to your Bay Reps as they will have all the necessary sample kits and information.

Previous test results from across the State's oyster growing regions have been encouraging, with over 2,500 oysters testing negative to OsHV-1 in 2017, and over 1,200 oysters testing negative in 2018 to date. Growers are urged to remain vigilant and familiarise themselves with the following advice on identifying and reporting any unexplained oyster mortalities.

### What should you do if you experience unusually high or unexplained mortality?

Unusually high or unexplained mortality, or suspected infectious and notifiable diseases, in aquaculture are required to be reported to PIRSA in accordance with the *Aquaculture Regulations 2016*. Guidelines to assist you in determining an unusually high mortality are as follows:

- Spat <2mm: report >40% mortality at first grading or within 4 weeks  
or
- Spat >2mm: report >20% mortality at first grading  
or
- Other oysters: report >10% mortality at grading.

These guidelines have been sourced from PIRSA's *Disease Response Plan* (Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome) or as advice from SAOGA.

Oyster growers who need to report a mortality event can follow these simple steps:

- 1) **Determine the extent of the mortality** - determine the percentage of oysters that have died (e.g. 10%, 15%, 30% etc).
- 2) **Collect samples**
  1. 40 live oysters (minimum) from the mortality site (e.g. from the same baskets).
  2. If possible, 40 live oysters from a site where there are no mortalities (e.g. at the grader or from another vessel out tending to another site) if you have immediate access to another batch of oysters.
  3. Separate the samples. Bag, label and place samples on ice ready for lab courier collection (within 24 hours).
- 3) **Notify**
  1. PIRSA immediately on **24-hour Fishwatch hotline 1800 065 522** or contact PIRSA Fisheries & Aquaculture Aquatic Animal Health Unit Manager, Dr Shane Roberts.
  2. Your Bay Representative (or SAOGA).

Please note: PIRSA will cover all costs associated with couriers and all laboratory testing with the primary aim being to rule out POMS or other infectious disease.

For further information on POMS, visit: [www.pir.sa.gov.au/poms](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/poms)

KEY CONTACTS	
<b>Shane Roberts</b> Manager, Aquatic Animal Health Unit PIRSA Fisheries & Aquaculture,	08 8429 0505 0402 049 286
<b>Matthew Bansemer</b> Aquatic Animal Health Project Officer PIRSA Fisheries & Aquaculture	08 8429 2100
<b>Trudy McGowan</b> Executive Officer, SAOGA	0407 883 333