

Asian Gypsy Moth

Contents

Asian Gypsy Moth – An Unwelcome Traveler.....	1
Flight Season.....	2
USA and Canada.....	2
Australia.....	3
New Zealand.....	3
Chile.....	4
Role of the Charterer.....	4
Appendix – USDA Advice.....	5



Photograph courtesy of *Ferenc Lakatos*, University of West Hungary

Asian Gypsy Moth – An Unwelcome Traveler

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Asian Gypsy Moths are found predominantly in eastern Russia, northern China and some parts of northern Japan. During the summer, there is a strong possibility they will lay eggs on visiting ships which will then inadvertently carry them to other parts of the world.

The problem is that in their larval stage, when they look like caterpillars, the moths are big eaters of all types of plant leaves. The USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Chile are thus particularly concerned at the damage Asian gypsy moths might cause to their major forestry and fruit industries.

This briefing provides an update of the various restrictions in force in these countries.

Asian Gypsy Moth

Flight Season

Female Asian Gypsy Moths generally lay their eggs during August and September, during the so-called 'flight season'. The females can fly up to 40 km, are attracted by bright lights (such as those on ships) and lay a considerable number of eggs in a mound or 'egg mass' in any sheltered area. These mounds are very durable and can survive all kinds of adverse weather conditions.

When the eggs hatch, the larvae find a vertical surface and climb quickly to a high point, spin a thread and get carried away on the breeze. When they land on a plant or tree, they begin to feed on its leaves.

USA and Canada

The USA and Canada have harmonised procedures to guard against the introduction of the Asian Gypsy Moth. Any arriving ship will be classified as either high or low risk.

High Risk Ships

High risk ships are those which have been in Eastern Russian ports during specified high-risk periods of the previous year, or been in specified high risk Japanese, Northern Chinese or South Korean ports, and arrive in continental US or Canadian ports during specified high-risk periods.

High risk ships are excluded from US and Canadian ports prior to inspection. The inspection will be carried out either at sea or at remote locations. Boarding arrangements for such inspections must be made by the vessel's agent, although the US Coast Guard or Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service may arrange necessary transportation.

A ship which would otherwise be high risk will be deemed to be low risk if it carries a valid certificate from the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance of the Russian Federation, international Plant Quarantine Accreditation Board in the Republic of Korea, the China Certification and Inspection Co Ltd or from a limited list of approved inspection companies in Japan.

Low Risk Ships

Low risk ships do not require prior inspection at a remote spot though they may still be inspected in port.

Inspections

The inspectors are looking for:

- egg masses which are light brown, furry mounds of approximately 40 mm by 15 mm in the holds, on cargo or on the superstructure
- signs of spot-cleaning or painting in places where egg masses might be found
- hatching larvae.

The relevant authorities have the power to order the ship to leave port and/or move outside territorial waters. Alternatively, the authorities may arrange for treatment of any egg masses by specified spray methods.

US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

Detailed guidance is provided on the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) website pages dedicated to Asian Gypsy Moth. This includes an alert list of vessels that visited designated Russian and Japanese ports during the last flight season:

[USDA APHIS website](#)

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

CFIA now requires all marine vessels that enter a Canadian port, during the period 1 March to 15 October, that have visited ports in the regulated area during the periods listed in the current year or in the year immediately preceding the current year to provide the vessels Canadian agent with:

- A summary of the ports called upon by the vessel for the past two years.
- A copy of a Phytosanitary Certificate or other approved certificate(s).

Vessels that enter a Canadian port during the period of 16 October to 28 (or 29) February, which have visited ports in regulated areas, will be permitted to enter without interruption. These vessels are subject to inspection at any time during their stay in Canada.

A Phytosanitary Certificate or other approved certificate(s) is not required for entry into Canada during this period.

Vessels seeking entry to Canada without a valid AGM certificate will be held at offshore anchorages and inspected

Asian Gypsy Moth

by CFIA officials during the high risk period. Such vessels will also be subject to financial penalties for failing to comply with CFIA regulations.

A summary of CFIA requirements can be found at the following website:

[CFIA website](#)

Proactive Action by the Vessel

It has been advised that, where vessels originating from high risk ports do not have the necessary official certification showing the vessel to be AGM free, the authorities will look favourably on proactive efforts by the vessels to identify and remove infestations. The USDA has produced a pocket guide that may assist vessel crews in carrying out their own inspections for AGM egg masses. The process should consist of (a) maintaining a protocol and procedure for the inspection of the superstructure and containers or cargo holds for AGM egg masses and (b) producing a log showing when such inspections took place.

Alternatively the authorities would also look favourably upon efforts by vessels to utilise professional contractors in the USA and Canada to conduct an AGM inspection and removal. However, as this program is new there is as yet no list of approved inspectors.

It should be understood that the authorities will reserve the right to conduct their own inspections irrespective of any proactive action taken by the vessel.

A copy of the USDA 'Gypsy Moth Inspectional Pocket Guide' can be downloaded from the following link:

[USDA Gypsy Moth Inspection Pocket Guide](#)

Submission of Vessel Ports of Call List

All vessels arriving to the New Orleans Tri-Port (New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Gramercy) are requested by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to submit the Ports of Call list, for the past calendar year, prior to arrival from foreign ports. This will ensure that agriculture specialists can focus on high risk vessels requiring an AGM inspection, whilst facilitating the berthing of lower risk vessels.

CBP request the Port of Call list to be submitted to the Passenger Analysis Unit (PAU) by fax or email:

Tel: +1 504 623 6620

Fax: +1 504 623 6635

Email: PAU-MSY@dhs.gov

Australia

Vessels which have called at Russian Far East ports during the specified period within the past 24 months are no longer required to provide a Certificate of Freedom from Gypsy Moth prior to arrival in Australia. The Australian Department of Agriculture will make a risk based assessment of each vessel based on the information provided in the pre-arrival free pratique form.

Should a suitable phytosanitary certificate have been issued by an agricultural authority in the United States, Canada, Russia, New Zealand or Australia since the last visit to a Russian port then this will be taken into account as a part of the risk assessment.

The result of the risk assessment will then determine whether or not an inspection of the vessel will be carried out.

In order to assist with the risk assessment, Members are recommended to collate as much information as possible on the movements of the vessel. Actions taken by the crew to inspect the vessel and photographs of any efforts taken to eradicate any moth eggs found should be provided as this will assist Australian authorities to conduct the risk assessment.

Further information on vessel inspections can be found at the following website:

[Department of Agriculture](#)

New Zealand

In New Zealand, vessels that have visited eastern Russian ports during the last two years between 17 July and 16 October must have a Certificate of Freedom from Asian Gypsy Moth.

If they do not, they should contact the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to arrange for an inspection. The ministry will decide the time and place convenient for inspection and this may be at least 8 hours before sunset and at least 4 nautical miles offshore. The cost of inspection will be recovered from the ship or agent.

Asian Gypsy Moth

Chile

With effect from November 2015, vessels that arrive from ports located in North East and Far East Asia between 20°N and 60°N must be issued with an official phytosanitary certificate stating that “The vessel (*vessel name*) was inspected and is considered to be free from AGM”. A copy of the logbook or a list of the ports called must be provided at least 24 hours prior to arrival at a Chilean port.

The requirements will be applied to vessels which have, during the past 24 months, been in Eastern Russian, Japanese, Chinese or Korean ports during specified female AGM flight periods. This period can be reduced if suitable documents are available confirming the vessel has been sailing for less than 24 months or that the vessel owner has changed.

Depending on the region visited, the female AGM flight period runs from 25 May through to 30 September.

While Chilean authorities have not specified which official bodies must issue phytosanitary certificates, Members may find it useful to refer to the list of approved issuing bodies listed on the [USDA APHIS website](#)

Vessels arriving without suitable certification will be subjected to an inspection and phytosanitary treatment prior to being granted clearance to enter the port.

Full details of the requirements in relation to Asian Gypsy Moth can be obtained from:

AGRICULTURAL AND LIVESTOCK SERVICE / SAG

Headquarters. 140 Presidente Bulnes Ave., 8th floor.
Santiago.

Telephone: 345 1101 / Fax: 345 1102

Email: dirmac@sag.gob.cl

Website: <http://www.sag.cl>

Role of the Charterer

The expenses arising from the presence of the Asian Gypsy Moth on board a vessel will in the first instance normally be the responsibility of the owners or operator of that ship. However, it is possible to argue that a charterer should also have responsibility for some or all of the expenses involved, depending on the circumstances of the incident.

The position may not always be clear and it is therefore advisable to include a suitable clause in the charter party. This will introduce a degree of certainty into the contractual relationship and the possibility of disputes can be reduced if not avoided altogether.

BIMCO have introduced a clause for time charter parties, which aims to provide a simple, practical and commercial solution focusing on the basic obligations and responsibilities of owners and charterers when dealing with the Asian Gypsy Moth.

The clause applies to all life stages of the moth and it places a strict obligation on the owners to deliver the vessel free of AGM with a reciprocal obligation on the charterers at redelivery.

Further details, including the text of the clause with explanatory notes can be found at:

[BIMCO AGM Special Circular](#)

Asian Gypsy Moth

Appendix – CFIA /USDA Advice

Copy of CFIA / USDA Advisory Notice Issued February 2017

Asian gypsy moth (AGM) is a serious pest that can be carried on ships and cargo. AGM populations are prevalent in some seaport areas in Far East Russia, Japan, Korea, and Northern China. If introduced, AGM could have significant negative impacts on the North American plant resource base, commerce that relies on those plant resources, and to market access.

Vessels must arrive in North American ports free of AGM and with required pre-departure certification. It is vital that the maritime industry and the United States (U.S.) and Canadian authorities collaborate on measures to minimize the risk of AGM incursion. Although the plant health and agricultural agencies of the U.S. and Canada are independent and have variances in their legislation AGM risk mitigation and exclusion efforts are a joint effort and considered a high priority.

In all cases of vessels arriving without the required AGM certification, or upon detection of AGM, significant delays in cargo loading or discharging activities as well as in routine clearance can occur, resulting in loss of revenue to the shipping line and associated parties.

The shipping industry has significantly enhanced its awareness of necessary quarantine compliance for AGM. This has been vital to maintaining shipping schedules. Both countries are committed to working with industry partners to support measures that will reduce AGM risk at origin.

Actions

For vessels which have called on areas regulated for AGM during the specified periods, as outlined in Table 1, the following measures are required:

1. Vessels must be inspected and must obtain pre-departure certification from a recognized certification body. A copy of the certificate, stating that the vessel is free of Asian gypsy moth life stages, must be forwarded to their U.S or Canadian agents. The inspections should be performed as close to vessel departure time from the regulated port as possible. The certificate must be issued from at least the last port of call in a regulated area that was visited during the specific risk period.

2. Vessels must arrive in North American ports free from AGM. To avoid facing inspection delays, re-routing and other potential impacts associated with mitigating the risk of entry of AGM to North America, shipping lines should perform intensive vessel self-inspections to look for, remove (scrape off) and properly dispose of or destroy all egg masses and other life stages of AGM prior to entering U.S. and Canadian ports.

3. Vessels must provide two year port of call data, at least 96 hours prior to arrival in a North American port, to the Canadian or U.S. agent. The agent is to ensure that this information is provided to U.S. and Canadian officials.

In addition, vessels are reminded to **ensure they are in good repair and decks are clear of debris and unnecessary obstacles to allow for thorough inspection both in AGM regulated areas and upon arrival in North America.**

Upon arrival in North America, there have been detections on vessels that obtained pre-departure certification. Where certification has been issued many days prior to ship departure from an area regulated for AGM, re-infestation can occur. **Therefore, it is important that inspection and certification be conducted as close to time of departure as feasible. It is also of vital importance that a ship's crew ensures freedom from AGM by conducting inspection of the ship superstructure while en route to North America and removing and destroying all life stages of AGM detected.**

It is the responsibility of the shipping lines to meet all requirements for entry to the U.S. and Canada for freedom from AGM and other pest concerns. We strongly urge maritime interests to take all possible precautions.

Please be advised that, although the U.S. and Canada are in full agreement on the requirement for AGM pre-departure certification and vessels arriving free from all AGM life forms (egg masses, pupae, adults), due to sovereign regulations and policies, there are differences in port of-entry processes between the two countries. Please contact local inspection authorities in the port of entry if you have any questions regarding AGM import requirements or clearance procedures.

Asian Cypsy Moth

Table 1. Regulated Areas and Specified Risk Periods		
Country	Port or Prefecture	Specified Period
Russian Far East	Nakhodka, Ol'ga, Plastun, Pos'yot, Russkiy Island, Slavyanka, Vanino, Vladivostok, Vostochny, Zarubino, Kozmino	July 1 to September 30
People's Republic of China	All ports in northern China, including all ports north 31° 15'	June 1 to September 30
Republic of Korea	All ports	June 1 to September 30
Japan – Northern	Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima	July 1 to September 30
Japan - Western	Akita, Yamagata, Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa	June 25 to September 15
Japan - Eastern	Fukui, Ibaraki, Chiba, Tokyo, Kanagawa, Shizuoka, Aichi, Mie	June 20 to August 20
Japan - Southern	Wakayama, Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo, Tottori, Shimane, Okayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Kagawa, Tokushima, Ehime, Kochi, Fukuoka, Oita, Saga, Nagasaki, Miyazaki, Kumamoto, Kagoshima	June 1 to August 10
Japan - Far Southern	Okinawa	May 25 to June 30