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Asian Gypsy Moth (Flighted Spongy Moth Complex)



SHIPS

Asian Gypsy Moth (Flighted Spongy Moth Complex)

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Photograph courtesy of Ferenc Lakatos, University of West Hungary

Asian Gypsy Moth (Flighted Spongy Moth Complex) – An Unwelcome Traveler

Asian Gypsy Moth (Flighted Spongy Moth Complex) is the collective name given to a group of insects including the *Lymantria dispar asiatica*, *Lymantria dispar japonica*, *Lymantria umbrosa*, *Lymantria postalba* and *Lymantria albescens* varieties. These insects 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, Chile and Argentina are thus particularly concerned at the damage Asian Gypsy Moth (Flighted Spongy Moth Complex) might cause to their major forestry and fruit industries.

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

Flight Season

Female moths generally lay their eggs between May and September depending on region, 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 these moths. Due to sovereign regulations and policies, there are differences in FSMC procedures between the two countries.

Due to the term 'gypsy' potentially being deemed derogatory, the USA and Canada will now refer to the group of moths making up the FSMC family by flighted spongy moth complex (FSMC).

United States Department of Agriculture

Vessels that have called in a high-risk area during the high-risk period (see table 1 below), in the previous 24 months are required to have a freedom of FSMC certificate.

The certificate must be obtained at the last port the vessel visited within the high-risk area and be issued by an approved certifier. The approved certifiers are 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.

Vessels must send the agent a port of call list for the previous 24 months and the freedom of FSMC certificate at least 96 hours prior to arrival. The agent is to ensure that this information is provided to the relevant US officials.

The US Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will then determine which ships should be inspected for FSMC.

Ships without certification will receive an FSMC inspection at all U.S ports on each voyage when the itinerary suggests an FSMC risk.

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Vessels that have freedom of FSMC certification may still be inspected if deemed necessary following a risk assessment.

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.

Action by the Vessel

In recent years, very high numbers of moths were observed in many regulated ports. Due to these population outbreaks, a high number of vessels arrived in North American ports with FSMC egg masses. To prevent a similarly high number of vessels with egg masses arriving in 2023, extra vigilance in conducting self-inspection— in addition to obtaining FSMC certification— is requested.

For vessels that have called at the areas regulated for FSMC during the specified risk periods, as outlined in the table in the appendix, the following measures are required:

1. Vessels should be inspected and certificated free of FSMC by a recognized certification body. A copy of the certificate, stating that the vessel is free of FSMC life stages, should be forwarded to the vessel's U.S or Canadian agents. A certificate is valid until the ship calls on another port in a regulated area during the specific risk period. When vessels arrive without FSMC certification, or when FSMC is detected, significant delays in cargo loading or discharging activities as well as in routine clearance can occur.
2. Vessels must arrive in North American ports free from FSMC. To avoid facing re-routing, being ordered out of port for cleaning and other potential impacts associated with mitigating the risk of entry of FSMC 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 FSMC 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 vessel's Canadian or U.S. agent. The agent is to ensure that this information is provided to U.S. or Canadian officials.

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

USDA Gypsy Moth Inspection Pocket Guide

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 FSMC.

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)

The Asian Gypsy Moth risk period for Canada begins in Western Canadian ports on the 1 March and East Canadian ports on the 15 March. The period ends on the 15 September for all ports.

The CFIA require to be notified 96 hours in advance of arriving in Canadian waters for vessels that have visited ports (see table 1) in the regulated area during the periods listed in the current year or in the year immediately preceding the current year.

The notification should include:

- 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 outside the risk period, 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 FSMC certificate will be held at offshore anchorages and inspected 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**

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 from the information

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provided in the pre-arrival free pratique form. They may request that the vessel completes an FSMC questionnaire if the vessel is deemed to pose a particularly high biosecurity risk.

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 a risk area during the risk period in the previous 12 months are not permitted to enter New Zealand Territory unless the vessel has a valid Certificate of Freedom from Asian Gypsy Moth.

New Zealand is in the process of revising their requirements, which are expected to be implemented in 2023. Until then the risk areas and periods are:

Country	Risk Area	Specified Risk Period
Russian Far East	South of 60° North and west of 147° longitude (excluding those ports on the Kamchatka Peninsula)	July 1 to September 30
China	North of latitude of 31° 15' N	June 1 to September 30
Republic of Korea	In all areas	June 1 to September 30
Japan - Northern	In prefectures of Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima	July 1 to September 30
Japan - Western	In prefectures of Akita, Yamagata, Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa	June 25 to September 15

Japan - Eastern	In prefectures of Fukui, Ibaraki, Chiba, Tokyo, Kanagawa, Shizuoka, Aichi, Mie	June 20 to August 20
Japan - Southern	In prefectures of 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	In prefecture of Okinawa	May 25 to June 30

The valid certificate must be issued by the New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) recognised inspection body. Recognised inspection bodies are listed on the MPI website: **New Zealand MPI**

If a vessel does not have a valid certificate, the New Zealand MPI should be contacted to arrange for an inspection.

The Ministry will decide the time and place convenient for inspection - usually 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.

Chile

Any vessels that have visited a risk area during the risk period as the below table, during the previous 24 months, must be issued with an official phytosanitary certificate.

The certificate must state "The (vessel name) was inspected and is considered to be free from FSMC". 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.

Areas with presence of FSMC	Female Flying Season
Eastern Russia	July 1 to September 30
South Korea	June 1 to September 30
North Korea	June 1 to September 30
China (entire country)	June 1 to September 30
North Japan (Aomori, Fukushima, Hokkaido, Iwate, Miyagi Prefectures)	July 1 to September 30
Western Japan (Akita, Ishikawa, Niigata, Toyama, Yamagata Prefectures)	June 25 to September 15

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Eastern Japan (Aichi, Chiba, Fukui, Ibaraki, Kanagawa, Mie, Shizuoka, Tokyo Prefectures)	June 20 to August 20
Southern Japan (Ehime, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Hyogo, Jagawa, Kagoshima, Kochi, Kumamoto, Kyoto, Miyazaki, Nagasaki, Oita, Okayama, Osaka, Saga, Shimane, Tottori, Tokushima, Wakayama, Yamaguchi Prefectures)	June 1 to August 10
Far South of Japan (Okinawa Prefectures)	May 25 to June 30

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.

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.
Tel: 345 1101 / Fax: 345 1102
Email: dirnac@sag.gob.cl Website: www.sag.cl

Argentina

All vessels which have departed or stayed in areas with FSMC or Japanese Gypsy Moth (JGM) within the last 24 months are required to notify the Argentinian National Food Safety and Quality Service (SENASA) 72 hours prior to arrival to any Argentinean port. This is regardless of whether the call(s) occurred during the FSMC female flight periods identified in the table below. All vessels will then be subject to a risk assessment by SENASA, which can result in an inspection, and if any presence of the pest is detected, require cleaning and phytosanitary treatment.

Arriving vessels that have called at an identified port or zone during the flight period are also required to arrive with a 'Certificate of Vessel Free of FSMC', issued by the phytosanitary authority of the last port of departure or stay.

Port / Zone	Port	FSMC Flight Period
Russia Far East	Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, Vanino, Nevelsk, Kholmsk, Korsakov, Kozmino, Slavyanka, Posyet, Zarubino, Vostochny, Nakhodka, Vladivostok	July 15 to September 25
China	All ports	June 1 to September 30
Korea	Busan, Jinhae, Masan, Tongyeong, Jangseongpo, Okpo, Gohyeon, Incheon, Pyeongtaek-Dangjin, Daesan, Taean, Donghae-Mukho, Okgye, Hosan, Ulsan, Pohang, Gwangyang, Hadong, Samcheonpo, Yeosu, Gunsan, Mokpo, Boryeong	June 1 to September 30
Northern Japan	Aomori, Fukushima, Hokkaido, Iwate, Miyagi	June 1 to September 30
Western Japan	Akita, Ishikawa, Niigata, Toyama, Yamagata	June 25 to September 15
Eastern Japan	Aichi, Chiba, Fukui, Ibaraki, Kanagawa, Mie, Shizuoka, Tokyo	20 June to 20 August
Southern Japan	Ehime, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Hyogo, Kagawa, Kagoshima, Kochi, Kumamoto, Kyoto, Miyazaki, Nagasaki, Oita, Okayama, Osaka, Saga, Shimane, Tokushima, Tottori, Wakayama, Yamaguchi	1 June to 10 August
Japan Far South	Okinawa	25 May to 30 June

Failure to comply with SENASA's requirements may result in the vessel being fined and an inability to clean and treat the vessel will result in the vessel being banned from entering Argentinean ports.

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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 FSMC 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 FSMC Special Circular**

Disclaimer

The purpose of this publication is to provide a source of information which is additional to that available to the maritime industry from regulatory, advisory, and consultative organisations. Whilst care is taken to ensure the accuracy of any information made available no warranty of accuracy is given and users of that information are to be responsible for satisfying themselves that the information is relevant and suitable for the purposes to which it is applied. In no circumstances whatsoever shall North be liable to any person whatsoever for any loss or damage whensoever or howsoever arising out of or in connection with the supply (including negligent supply) or use of information.

Unless the contrary is indicated, all articles are written with reference to English Law. However it should be noted that the content of this publication does not constitute legal advice and should not be construed as such. Members should contact North for specific advice on particular matters.

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APPENDIX: CFIA /USDA ADVICE (FEBRUARY 2023)

The common name “Asian gypsy moth” has been changed as the term “gypsy” has been deemed derogatory. The group of moths making up the AGM complex are now referred to as the flighted spongy moth complex (FSMC). However, updates to websites, policies, forms, certificates, educational material etc., to reflect the new common name, are anticipated to take some time and may vary from country to country. Therefore, reference to AGM and Asian gypsy moth may continue to be seen during this time of transition and certificates using these names will continue to be considered valid if they have been issued by a recognized certification body.

FSMC is a serious pest that can be carried on ships and cargo. FSMC populations are prevalent in some seaport areas in Far East Russia, Japan, Korea, and Northern China. If introduced to North America, FSMC would have significant negative impacts on our forestry and agriculture, the natural environment, the commerce that relies on those plant resources, and market access.

Vessels must arrive in North American ports free of FSMC and should have obtained pre-departure certification. It is vital that the maritime industry and authorities in the United States (U.S.) and Canada collaborate on measures to minimize the risk of FSMC incursion. FSMC risk mitigation and exclusion efforts are a joint effort and a high priority.

Both countries are committed to working with industry partners on measures to reduce FSMC risk at origin. The shipping industry’s role in promoting and meeting FSMC requirements has been vital to preventing the introduction of FSMC to North America and maintaining shipping schedules. When vessels arrive without FSMC certification, or when FSMC is detected, 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.

In recent years, very high numbers of moths were observed in many regulated ports. Due to these population outbreaks, a high number of vessels arrived in North American ports with FSMC egg masses. **To prevent a similarly high number of vessels with egg masses arriving in 2023, extra vigilance in conducting self-inspection— in addition to obtaining FSMC certification— is requested.**

ACTIONS

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

- 1. Vessels should be inspected and certificated free of FSMC** by a recognized certification body. A copy of the certificate, stating that the vessel is free of FSMC life stages, should be forwarded to the vessel’s U.S or Canadian agents. A certificate is valid until the ship calls on another port in a regulated area during the specific risk period.
- 2. Vessels must arrive in North American ports free from FSMC.** To avoid facing re-routing, being ordered out of port for cleaning and other potential impacts associated with mitigating the risk of entry of FSMC 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 FSMC 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 vessel’s Canadian or U.S. agent.** The agent is to ensure that this information is provided to U.S. or Canadian officials.

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Table 1. Regulated Areas and Specified Risk Periods

Country	Port or Prefecture	Specified Risk Period* 2021	Specified Risk Period* 2022-2023
Russian Far East	Nakhodka, Ol'ga, Plastun, Pos'yed, Russkiy Island, Slavyanka, Vanino, Vladivostok, Vostochny, Zarubino, Kozmino	July 1 to September 30	June 15 to October 15
People's Republic of China	All ports in northern China, including all ports on or north of 31° 15'	June 1 to September 30	
Republic of Korea	All ports		
Japan - Northern	Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima, Akita, Yamagata	July 1 to September 30	June 15 to October 15
Japan - Central/Western	Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa	June 25 to September 15	June 1 to September 30
Japan - Central/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	May 15 to August 31
Japan - Far Southern	Okinawa	May 25 to June 30	

*Specified risk period is the time period when there is a risk of FSMC flight and egg mass deposition

Vessel operators are also reminded to ensure that the vessels are in good repair and decks are clear of debris and unnecessary obstacles in order to allow for thorough inspection both in FSMC regulated areas and upon arrival in North America. While in regulated ports during moth flight periods and where port operations and safety allow, reducing lighting and keeping exterior doors and curtains closed may reduce the number of moths being attracted to the vessel. **Arranging for inspection and certification services as far in advance as possible and providing two-year port of call history at the time of that request allows the inspection and certification body to better plan for delivery of the service in a timely manner.**

Upon arrival in North America there have been FSMC detections on vessels that obtained pre-departure certification. **During the flight period** inspection should be conducted and certification issued as close to departure as possible — ideally during daylight hours and on the same day as departure. Where vessel departure is delayed post certification, there is the possibility that moths may re-infest the vessel and deposit egg masses.

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

It is the responsibility of the shipping lines to meet all requirements for entry to the U.S. and Canada, including freedom from FSMC and other pest concerns. We strongly urge maritime interests to take all possible precautions. For further information on the FSMC program, please visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and/or Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's websites.