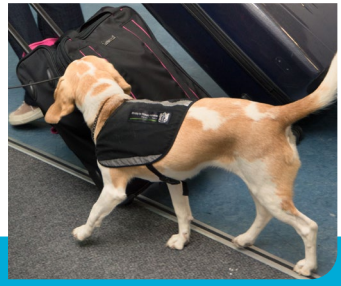
Biosecurity New Zealand
Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

The BorderSpace

Working together to secure New Zealand's borders from biosecurity threats





Issue 64 | September 2025

Biosecurity on screen

In-flight biosecurity video sequel

An updated in-flight video will help build biosecurity awareness among arriving air passengers.

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Scheduled for release ahead of the summer peak, the refreshed video will emphasise traditional biosecurity messages as well as provide guidance on completing the New Zealand Traveller Declaration (especially the digital version).

The **existing video**, starring former quarantine officer Fin Lambermon, has been in use since 2019. It has been an important channel for reaching international travellers, with more than six million passengers viewing it each year.

Production recently wrapped following filming at Christchurch Airport and in Auckland. The new video features three current officers and detector dog Joplin, supported by voices from industry – Hugh Jackson (2025 Young Farmer of the Year), Grace Rehu (2023 Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower of the Year) and Ashton Reiser (Check, Clean, Dry ambassador and champion kayaker).

Fin, who now works elsewhere in Biosecurity New Zealand, also makes a guest appearance.

Fin Lambermon – the face of our existing in-flight video.

Starring role for detector dog Joplin.

Border Patrol continues

Production is expected to begin shortly on series 16 of *Border Patrol*, the top-rating reality TV show that showcases the work of frontline biosecurity officers and other border agencies.

This follows strong ratings for the current series (series 14), which is airing on TVNZ at the time of writing. Series 15 (12 episodes) was recently completed, but we're yet to hear when it will screen.

After six episodes, series 14 ranks among the top shows on New Zealand television, with a daily average audience of more than 550,000 viewers.

Dog Squad not so lucky?

***Dog Squad* is also back this year, but possibly for the last time.**

The latest series (series 14) premiered on TVNZ on 16 September, once again celebrating New Zealand's working dogs, including our very own biosecurity detector dog teams. Series 15 (six episodes) is in the can, but we don't know when it will air.

Word is *Dog Squad* may not return for another season, although this has yet to be confirmed. If the show does end after series 15, we're hopeful our detector dog teams will continue to have a starring role in its sister show, *Border Patrol*.

BMSB measures back

The brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) season is upon us once again.

Seasonal biosecurity measures aimed at preventing this invasive pest from establishing itself in New Zealand began on 1 September and will run until 30 April 2026.

As in previous seasons, vehicles, machinery, and parts from identified high-risk countries (Schedule 3 countries) must undergo treatment or other approved measures before being shipped to New Zealand. The same requirements apply to sea containers arriving from Italy, where BMSB is widely established.

There have been no changes to import rules ahead of this season. However, a review of the import health standard for vehicles, machinery, and parts is underway and may result in some tweaks (see adjacent story). This includes the proposed addition of Uzbekistan to the list of 38 Schedule 3 countries, following confirmation that the Central Asian nation has an established BMSB population.

Our quarantine officers will again be out in force throughout the season, enhancing our regular presence and checking all potential BMSB entry pathways.

Here's some of what is planned for the 2025/26 season:

General cargo

Officers will again carry out additional inspections of cargo from Schedule 3 countries. We will also focus on watchlist countries such as the United Kingdom. We anticipate targeting more than 1900 full containers for auditing, monitoring, or verification during the season.

Breakbulk cargo

All vessels arriving in New Zealand with breakbulk (uncontainerised) BMSB-risk cargo will be subject to deck-by-deck surveillance. The extent of surveillance will be determined by reports provided by crew. We are interested in hearing about sightings of bugs during the voyage, or signs of treatment failure. We continue to work with agents to encourage proactive reporting by vessel operators.

New vehicles and machinery

We plan to inspect some 5100 new vehicles and 700 new machinery items during the season.

Detector dog surveillance

As with previous seasons, a detector dog will be available in Auckland throughout the season to respond to any post-border callouts. We are also getting a second BMSB dog, which will help with surveillance at Auckland Airport.

Educating air passengers

Officers will meet higher risk flights – particularly from the United States and Canada – and provide advice to passengers, including what to do if BMSB is found in luggage.

BMSB rules under review

There's still time to have your say on proposed changes to the import rules for vehicles, machinery and parts.

Intended to bolster biosecurity defences against brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB), the proposed changes to the import health standard include:

- adding Uzbekistan to the list of countries that are required to treat goods for BMSB;
- introducing a new treatment requirement for ballast water systems in used boats;
- aligning import requirements for used parts and whole vehicles/machinery;
- updating the commodities that are eligible to use a manufacturer's declaration to be excluded from BMSB requirements;
- adding post-treatment requirements for used wires, cables and ropes.

Make your submission

Email your feedback on the proposed changes before 5pm on 10 November 2025 to **vmp.consultation@mpi.govt.nz**.

Year-round heat treatment for Japanese used vehicles

We are not currently proposing this – but we are interested to know how requiring year-round treatment for Japanese used vehicles could impact you and your business. We welcome your feedback through a submission or email to **standards@mpi.govt.nz**, or **vmp.consultation@mpi.govt.nz**.

5100 new vehicles and **700** new machinery items to be inspected during the 2024/25 BMSB season.

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Bug alert widens

The latest BMSB public awareness campaign is set to run from November through to May 2026.

This season, the campaign is targeting a specific new audience – backpackers and working holiday visa holders, particularly those using campervans – using tailored ads both before arrival and while on the road.

The campaign will continue to target traditional audiences – including online shoppers, gardeners, DIYers and Māori communities.

Anyone who has spotted what they think could be a brown marmorated stink bug is asked to catch, photograph and report it.

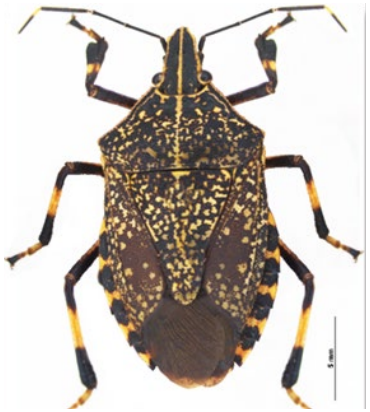
BMSB's stinky cousins

Brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) is not the only invasive shield bug species we're trying to stop from hitchhiking to New Zealand. Here are a few of its lesser-known regulated cousins.

Yellow spotted stink bug

Larger than BMSB, these bugs (*Erthesina fullo*) have distinctive yellow markings on their backs. They are native to Asia and found in China, Japan and Indonesia. There have also been reports of them outside Asia – in Albania, Greece and Brazil.

This bug feeds on a variety of plants, including economically important crops such as apples, pears, stone fruit and citrus.



Mottled stink bug

With a similar appearance to BMSB, the mottled stink bug (*Rhaphigaster nebulosa*) feeds on mainly tree and shrub species. It is also a nuisance pest, often finding its way into homes while seeking winter shelter. When threatened, it can produce a secretion that may be harmful if swallowed.

This bug is mostly found in the southern parts of Central Europe, including France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Polished green stink bug

This species (*Glaucias subpunctatus*) is found in Indonesia, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and Thailand. It is sometimes detected with vehicle imports from Japan.

In Japan, it feeds on cypress and cedar tree nuts in forests, and has become a major pest of peaches, apples and citrus in orchards. Like BMSB, it shelters in large aggregations over winter and emerges in spring.

Cruise control 2025/26

The 2025/26 summer cruise season will officially kick off on 15 October with the arrival of the Celebrity Edge, bringing close to 3000* passengers to New Zealand.

Several notable arrivals are due:

- Queen Mary 2, Cunard's flagship, will visit as part of its 2026 round-the-world voyage. The world's largest cruise ship when launched in 2004, it hasn't visited New Zealand since 2018.
- The Odyssey and The World, two unique residential cruise ships, will also call in. Both offer the opportunity to purchase a villa or apartment and live at sea.
- The Oceania Riviera, considered one of the world's most luxurious cruise vessels, will make its first-ever visit to New Zealand.

Comparing seasons

The 2025/26 season is forecast to see a decline in both vessel visits and passenger numbers compared with last season, which saw 45 ships arrive.

The downturn is largely attributed to rising operational costs – including port fees and fuel – and broader global economic pressures such as inflation. These challenges are affecting cruise destinations worldwide. For example, the Australian cruise industry anticipates a 30% reduction in cruise capacity for the same season.

39 CRUISE SHIPS

EXPECTED TO VISIT NEW ZEALAND BETWEEN OCTOBER AND MAY

...continued overleaf

Working together

Biosecurity New Zealand is very aware of the commercial pressures facing the cruise industry and is working to make compliance with New Zealand's biosecurity requirements as straightforward as possible – both above and below the waterline.

In preparation for the season, we've been actively engaging with cruise operators through webinars, meetings, and updated guidance, helping ensure a clear understanding of our requirements and available options for managing biofouling through continual maintenance and in-water cleaning.

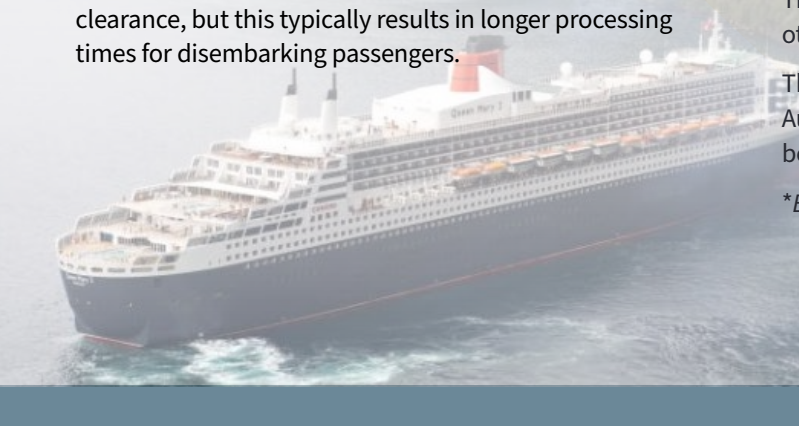
The rules

New Zealand's biosecurity rules are based on the Craft Risk Management Standard (CRMS), which was updated in 2023 to clarify expectations and streamline documentation. There have been no recent changes for cruise ships.

Cruise lines must operate under approved management systems to address biofouling – the accumulation of marine organisms on ship hulls.

To manage risks above the waterline, the Recognised Cruise Line Programme (RCLP) sets rigorous controls before arrival at New Zealand ports. The programme covers things like disposal of food waste, crew training, monitoring of provisions and passenger education.

Cruise lines not signed up to the RCLP can opt for full clearance, but this typically results in longer processing times for disembarking passengers.



Biofouling compliance on the rise

It's encouraging to see biofouling compliance steadily improving across all international vessels. In 2024, the shipping industry achieved 96% compliance with biofouling requirements. We're obviously keen to see this trend continue.

Last season, only three cruise ships initially failed their pre-arrival assessments. All issues were resolved before arrival, with just one vessel requiring cleaning.

More cleaning options on the way

Efforts are ongoing to improve in-water cleaning technology and expand options for managing biofouling risks.

Biosecurity New Zealand is working alongside the International Maritime Organization, domestic ports, and dive firms to support development of cleaning systems that safely capture biological and chemical discharges.

With our support, trials by the Port of Auckland and a local diving company have shown strong promise and are seeking approval from Biosecurity New Zealand.

As a result, a new hull cleaning facility could be operational later this year. It will allow ships to undergo underwater cleaning of niche areas, including sea chests and discharge pipes, while berthed. This may eliminate the need to head offshore in many cases for biofouling removal.

The new facility is intended to be portable, allowing use at other ports in the future.

The initiative is part of a broader investment by the Port of Auckland, which also includes a new cruise terminal and berth at Bledisloe North Wharf.

**Exact numbers will be confirmed closer to arrival.*

Yacht season starts

The international yacht season is underway for 2025.

We now have three officers based in Northland, following the establishment of a new position earlier this year. They'll be joined by one officer from Tauranga and another from Auckland to provide extra support for yacht clearances during the busiest period from mid-October. Other Auckland-based officers will also assist in Whangarei as needed.

Each year, around 500 yachts arrive in New Zealand between 1 September and 31 December. All international yachts and pleasure craft must arrive at one of New Zealand's approved ports of first arrival. Officers inspect documentation, assess biosecurity risks above and below the waterline, and clear vessels and passengers for entry.

We expect about half of the vessels to arrive in Opua, a third in Whangārei, with the remainder heading to Auckland and Nelson.

In recent years, we've trialled and adopted underwater cameras to help officers check vessels for biofouling. Pole cameras have been used in Opua and Auckland over the past few seasons, and more recently in Nelson.

Following successful trials, we're now using four new cameras across the three North Island ports and Nelson. (See page 8).

Spreading the biosecurity word

Each year, we strive to educate yachties planning to sail to New Zealand after regattas in the Pacific Islands about our biosecurity requirements.

In September, our team attended the Musket Cove Regatta in Fiji to speak with yacht masters, owners, and crew to help them prepare for the entry process.

These conversations lead to better compliance and reduce biosecurity risks such as biofouling and invasive species like termites.

While there's no regatta in Tonga this year, we'll be attending an online seminar with industry representatives to raise awareness and will provide information packs for distribution.

Yacht biofouling checks

Yachties take note – private recreational vessels can now receive biofouling clearance prior to arrival.

For the first time, this season Biosecurity New Zealand will request your clean hull evidence prior to arrival (via email). The approach is intended to streamline the clearance process for everyone involved.

Most yachts and recreational vessels arriving in New Zealand fall under the long-stay category of the Craft Risk Management Standard for Vessels (CRMS). A long-stay vessel is one that remains in New Zealand for 29 days or more and/or visits locations not designated as places of first arrival.

Long-stay vessels must show they are free of any fouling except a slime layer and goose barnacles. The best way to meet the requirements is by thoroughly cleaning the vessel's hull and niche areas prior to departing for New Zealand.

Our advice to yachties is to submit evidence early to **vessels@mpi.govt.nz** – and keep your cleaning records handy. It'll save money and hassle, and you'll be doing your bit to help protect New Zealand's precious marine environment.

Further details are available online.

Pushing the biosecurity envelope

Technology advances are transforming how we protect our borders. Here are some recent innovations.

Underwater camera upgrade

We're rolling out a new underwater camera for inspecting yachts that's lighter, simpler and more reliable.

Used for hull inspections, the upgraded setup features a GoPro-style camera mounted on an extendable pole – called a Dunder Pole Camera – which connects directly to a phone for easy video download.

A new supplier now provides integrated kits that include the pole, cable, aerial, phone attachment and waterproof camera housing. Previously, we assembled all components ourselves, which added complexity and made troubleshooting more difficult.

This season, four underwater camera units will be deployed at ports of first arrival.

Pre-season trials of the new underwater camera at Marsden Cove, Whangārei.

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Flies don't lie

Our technology team is currently trialling a promising new approach to residual "disinsection" – aimed at improving insect control on aircraft.

Residual disinsection involves applying insecticide that remains active on surfaces for several weeks.

We know some mosquitoes are becoming resistant to the current residual insecticide. Also, Permethrin, the active chemical used in the existing formula, is no longer approved for use in the United States.

In response, the supplier has developed a new formula and invited Biosecurity New Zealand to help trial it.

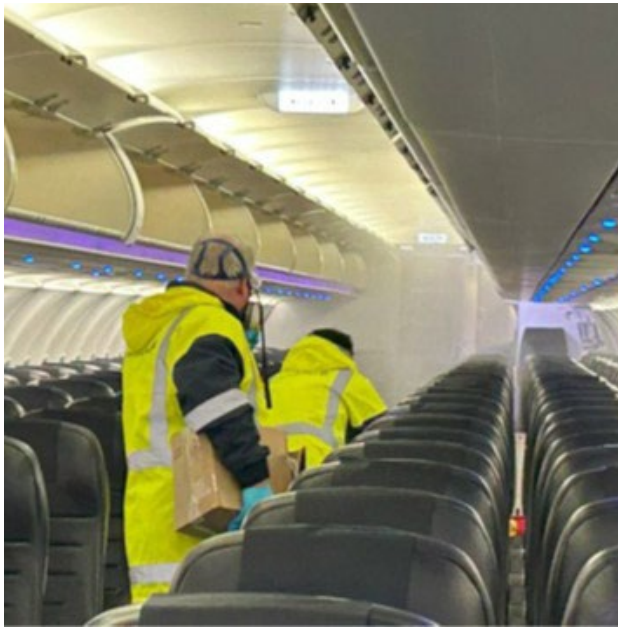
Laboratory flies for the disinsection trials

Working in partnership with Air New Zealand, we've begun testing the new insecticide on a domestic aircraft using laboratory-bred house flies (*Musca domestica*).

The testing involves placing 10 cages – each with six flies – throughout the aircraft, which undergoes fogging with insecticide. As one of our former advisers used to say, "Flies don't lie."

The trials, which have been running for the past two months, are showing encouraging results and could pave the way for WHO authorisation as an approved disinsection treatment.

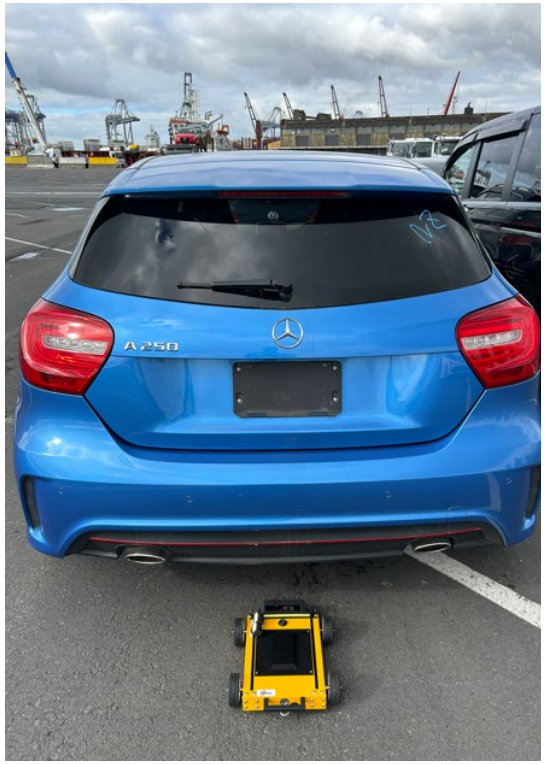
In addition to the new formula, the approach uses a simplified application method – a spray can that airline staff can use themselves. This would remove the need for professional equipment and specialist personnel, simplifying the entire disinsection process.



Fogging with insecticide

Robot trial

We're preparing to trial a new inspection robot (HADES-6) to assist with shipping container checks.



Robotic vehicle inspection using the HADES-5S

Free from health and safety concerns, the robot can operate under containers raised by forklifts or hoists. This would reduce the need to secure containers on a hardstand for inspection by our officers – improving both efficiency and safety.

Smaller ports with limited access to hardstands could find the technology particularly helpful.

Known as "The Bug" by our officers, earlier versions of the robot have been in use since 2019 to inspect the undersides of new vehicles that would otherwise require ramping.

HADES-6 features a larger camera than the two units currently used for car inspections.

The camera includes zoom capability and is designed for brighter light conditions – rather than the dark, enclosed areas beneath vehicles.

Keen readers of **The Border Space** may recall a previous story about introducing HADES-6 for vehicle inspections. We were getting ahead of ourselves – that was actually HADES-5S, which offered enhanced features compared with our other inspection robot – HADES-5Z.

Border force boost

More sniffing power

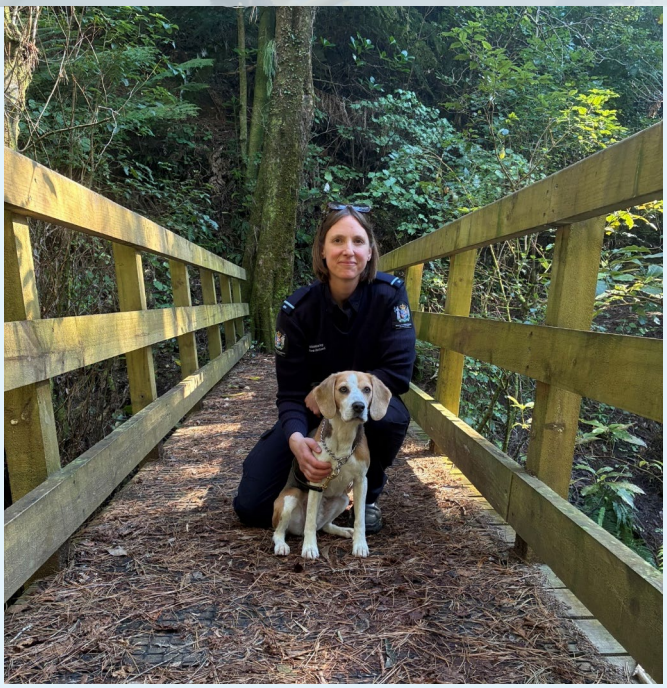
Another five biosecurity detector dog teams will soon be helping protect our borders from biosecurity threats.

The latest graduates from our training programme include four handlers for Auckland and one for Wellington.

All five handlers successfully completed an intensive 12-week training programme, during which they were paired with their canine partners.

The Auckland teams have begun airport induction and quarantine officer training. They will officially join the team roster in December.

Handler Maria and her detector dog Neon in Wellington recently wrapped up their worksite induction and have already started sniffing duties.



Maria and detector dog Neon will be based in Wellington

New Auckland detector dog teams – Chloe and Starsky, Hannah and Sage, Hayley and Rubix, and Sophie and Stevie.

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Taonga training for latest recruits

Our latest cohort of quarantine officer trainees has been honing their skills through workshops and assessments ahead of their graduation at the end of September.

This second cohort for 2025 comprises 21 Auckland-based and three Queenstown-based officers.

In August, the recruits attended a Taonga workshop in Auckland as part of the Whanake Ngatahi induction programme. They gained a deeper understanding of the concept of taonga, the special care required for culturally significant items, and their responsibilities as kaitiaki of these treasures.

Our next cohort – three Wellington-based trainees – started in September. All going well, they will graduate in December, bringing the total number of new quarantine officers for 2025 to 50.

Climbing the quarantine ladder

Thirty-one more officers have been promoted to senior ranks after completing our career pathway course.

This follows the recent graduation of two new cohorts from the Tairangatia te Whakapakari programme, part of Biosecurity New Zealand's border career development pathway.

The final training course for the year will be held in Auckland in November. By the end of 2025, we expect nearly 90 officers to progress to senior quarantine officer roles.

We're proud of our officers' commitment to developing their skills to better protect New Zealand's borders.

Newly promoted senior officers in Auckland.

NEW QUARANTINE OFFICERS PLANNED FOR 2025

Auckland	40
Wellington	6
Queenstown	3
Dunedin	1

From the frontline

A selection of interesting interceptions and other border activity...

Termites thwarted in Blenheim

Good spotting by an accredited worker at a Blenheim transitional facility stopped a potentially destructive pest from spreading into the local environment.

Live termites were found in a 40ft container from China on 31 July – despite the consignment having been fumigated offshore. The infestation was traced to excess moisture trapped in shrink-wrap around a wooden crate.

The container, destined for a local accommodation business, was swiftly fumigated with methyl bromide at Port Nelson. It was then devanned at the same Blenheim facility that had made the initial discovery. No further signs of life were found.

The second container in the consignment showed no contamination, suggesting the shrink-wrap may have prevented effective fumigation of the affected crate.

Redback hitchhikers

Webbing on the underside of a crash-damaged vehicle from Australia shouted out spiders – and that's exactly what was found after the inspector reached for her trusty can of insecticide.

Several live redbacks dropped down following the spraying. The vehicle was sent for fumigation and later re-inspected.

No other vehicles were found to be contaminated with redbacks in the shipment of 21 uncleared cars, inspected at the Port of Auckland in August.

Super termite makes landfall

July, it seems, was a popular month for exotic termite species looking for a home in New Zealand.

Dirt tunnels on the inside and underside of a sea container arriving in Auckland from American Samoa were a clear sign of unwanted termite invaders.

Known as "mud tubes," subterranean termites use these tunnels to move between their colony and food sources.

The container underwent tent fumigation with methyl bromide. Laboratory analysis identified the species as the Formosan termite (*Coptotermes formosanus*). This dangerous species is native to southern China and has spread to South Africa and the United States.

It is known as a super termite due to the large size of its colonies and its ability to consume wood at a rapid rate.

From the frontline....continued

Giant snail detection

The detection of a giant African snail (GAS) during unloading of a container vessel from Taiwan triggered a biosecurity alert at Auckland's Fergusson Terminal on 14 August.

Containers located on the deck near the discovery were moved to the inspection area for thorough checks. No further snails were detected.

Containers located on the deck near the discovery were moved to the inspection area

The specimen was later confirmed to be *Lissachatina fulica*, one of the world's largest and most destructive snail species. GAS can grow up to 30cm long and have a voracious appetite for a wide range of plants, including brassicas, lettuce, potatoes, onions and sunflowers.

Blood-sucking hitchhiker

An Aussie leech tried to hitch a ride to Queenstown in August attached to the leg of an unsuspecting air passenger.

Arriving from Brisbane, the passenger made the gruesome discovery (the leech was fully engorged with blood) before disembarking.

Airport ground handlers alerted our team, who promptly inspected both the aircraft and the passenger. It was quickly confirmed that the leech was a lone stowaway.

The passenger, who lives in a rainforest area and is no stranger to leeches, was remarkably unfazed by the incident.

Not so pretty in pink

Queenstown officers made an eye-catching interception in July – after passengers arriving from Sydney declared a batch of pink eggs.

The eggs had been boiled and then salted – giving them their unusual colour, something the local team hadn't seen before. On closer inspection, officers found the eggs weren't fully cooked in the centre, raising biosecurity concerns.

The eggs were destroyed in line with import rules.

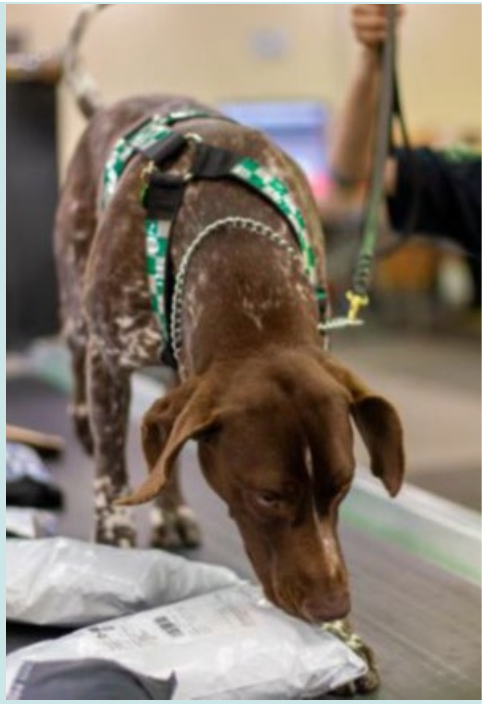
Fruit fine

Even regular travellers aren't immune from declaration mistakes…

Detector dog Ozark recently sniffed out three bananas and a bunch of table grapes in a bag carried by an airline crew member passing through Auckland Airport's express lane. The fruit hadn't been declared, and Ozark zeroed in on the suspicious odour.

The crew member received a $400 infringement notice. The fruit was destroyed.

Ozark's express lane detection.



Ozark on mail screening duty.

From the frontline....continued

Grape exporter pleads guilty

Australian biosecurity authorities, with a little help from us, successfully prosecuted a table grape exporter for putting New Zealand's multi-billion-dollar horticultural industry at risk.

In August, the Penrith District Court fined The Grape House Pty Ltd A$1.05 million (NZ$1.161 million) after it pleaded guilty to six counts of making false representations – with a further 23 related offences taken into account.

The investigation began after suspicions were raised about grape exports claimed to originate from pest-free zones in Australia – exempting them from the mandatory cold treatment designed to kill Queensland fruit fly. The claims turned out to be false.

Biosecurity New Zealand earned praise for its role in supporting the Australian-led investigation and prosecution. Our officers provided a witness statement and were prepared to give evidence via video link or in person, had the case gone to trial.

Seeds returned to sender

A trader using Facebook Marketplace has been stopped from selling non-compliant seeds and agrichemicals from China to New Zealand customers.

Meta (Facebook) prevented the trader from listing these products for sale in August after officers intercepted more than 500 items arriving in New Zealand as mail through the Auckland Processing Centre.

Biosecurity New Zealand and NZ Post then worked together to find a solution for the high volume of items held at the border. In this case, the Universal Postal Union return-to-sender process was used to ship the non-compliant items back to China.

Non-compliant products purchased online await return to China.

Mail team plug

The prestigious 2025 Spirit of Service Awards provided a huge plug for biosecurity staff involved with setting up the newly opened **Auckland Processing Centre (APC)** .

Together with NZ Customs and NZ Post, our team was named as a finalist for the Te Tohu Auaha Hou Innovation Award for its work in improving border clearance processes.

And congratulations to Hutt City Council, who won the award, announced in September, for their use of generative AI to streamline business operations.

Carpark patient makes full recovery

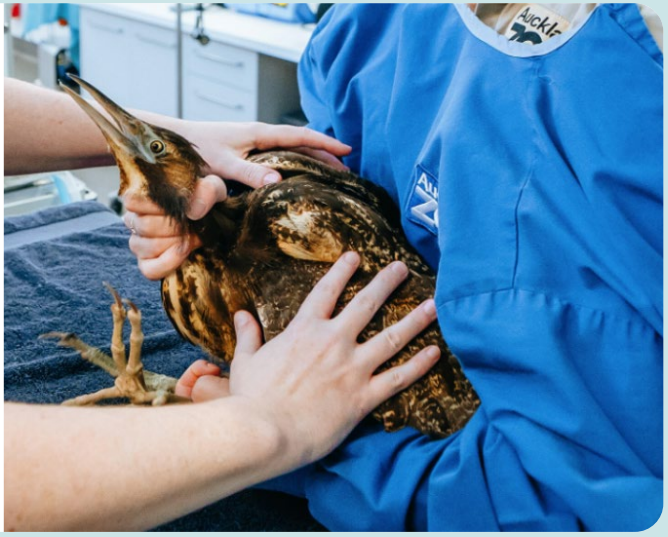
It was heartening to hear that a very unwell matuku-hūrepo/Australasian bittern, found by officers in the carpark of our operations centre near Auckland Airport, has made a full recovery at Auckland Zoo.

These critically endangered native wetland birds number only around 250–1000 mature individuals in the wild.

Confirmed as female by DNA testing, the bird was severely emaciated (weighing just 600g) and dangerously dehydrated when found on 3 July. Haematology results confirmed severe anaemia, starvation, and signs of an ongoing infection.

According to the most recent update, she is now strong and active enough for release – a great outcome for a rare and vulnerable species.

The sick bittern in our carpark.



Treatment at Auckland Zoo.

From the frontline....continued

Bernard and Ozzy find new homes

When our Detector Dog Programme team shared a Facebook post in July about finding new homes for Bernard and Ozzy – two trainee beagles who didn't quite make the grade – we were almost overwhelmed by the response.

The post quickly went viral, resulting in more than 200 emails from people across the country keen to adopt – the biggest rehoming response we've ever had.

We're thrilled to share that both Bernard and Ozzy have now settled into new homes. Bernard has been adopted by a family in Hamilton, and Ozzy is now living with a family in Auckland.

Bernard and Ozzy – huge interest in rehoming doggy school dropouts.

Serpentine hitchhikers

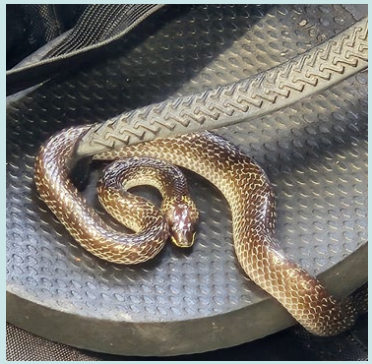
Two live snakes recently tried to slither their way into New Zealand.

On 29 August, a traveller returning to Christchurch from Bali got the fright of their life when they found a 30cm serpent in their suitcase – wrapped around a jandal toe.

We quickly dispatched trained snake handlers to the scene. The hitchhiker was later (provisionally) identified as a wolf snake – a type of non-venomous boa. It was humanely euthanised.

No other snakes were found at the house.

Staff from a transitional facility in Hastings helped with the second detection in early September – this one in a shipping container arriving from India. They called in specialist support from Biosecurity New Zealand after finding two fresh snake skins.



Our handlers captured a metre-long snake.

We thank both the facility and the passenger for their prompt reporting.

Dragon discovery

A large lizard tucked under a pallet in a container of bricks from Australia required a careful retrieval effort at an Auckland transitional facility.

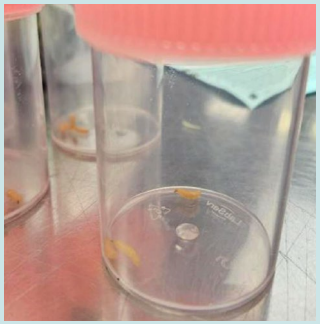
Facility staff acted swiftly to secure the area after detecting the reptile in late August, placing pallets around the site to prevent its escape. Replacing the pallets with boards to allow safe access, our officers positioned a plastic container and gently coaxed the lizard inside.

The animal was later identified as an adult male Eastern Water Dragon (*Intellagama lesueurii lesueurii*), a common Australian lizard found in parks, gardens, and bushland. Although not endangered, the species is subject to movement restrictions under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Following advice from the Department of Conservation, the lizard was humanely euthanised at Auckland Zoo.

Melon fly interception

Four air passengers arriving from India in early September declared half a suitcase of risk items, including fresh onion, potatoes, zucchini, carrots, beans, apples, capsicums, chillies, limes, cucumber, cabbage, pickles, and ghee.



One thing they didn't declare was melon fly larvae (*Zeugodacus cucurbitae*) – a significant agricultural pest that affects a wide range of plants.

The larvae were detected during baggage checks after the passengers were referred to our search benches at Auckland Airport.

Border activity for July and August 2025

	July 2024	**July 2025**	August 2024	**August 2025**
Passenger				
Total arrivals	541,827	**570,169**	475,206	**497,302**
NZ/Australia	368,822	**399,202**	300,601	**340,439**
Rest of world	173,005	**170,967**	174,605	**156,863**
Risk items seized	8,521	**9,060**	7,485	**8,203**
Risk items treated or destroyed	5,614	**5,827**	4,933	**7,627***
Infringement notices	698	**647**	625	**627**
Mail				
Mail items screened	976,003	**915,529**	1,044,846	**844,681**
Mail items requiring further inspection	1,454	**3,411**	1,633	**2,907**
Risk mail items treated or destroyed	186	**388**	217	**135****
Sea Containers				
Sea containers arrivals	62,018	**62,001**	61,999	**59,333**
Sea containers inspected	3,817	**3,185**	3,259	**2,395**
Cargo				
Cargo lines of interest to MPI	19,008	**20,016**	19,915	**19,933**
Cargo lines inspected	5,272	**5,532**	5,587	**5,628**
Cargo lines treated, reshipped or destroyed	926	**817**	719	**827**

*This now includes items collected from amnesty bins

**This figure is provisional and will likely be adjusted upwards. Importers are given 28 days to decide whether to treat, reship or destroy mail.

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