



---

# *Asian Gypsy Moth*

---

February 2009

United States and Canadian authorities have intercepted live Asian gypsy moth (AGM) egg masses on an unprecedented number of commercial vessels calling on west coast ports in 2008. This number has not been experienced since the early 1990's. Ten of these events were severe enough to consider vessels significantly infested resulting in the vessels being ordered into international waters. In all cases, delays in cargo loading and in routine clearance were significant. This has resulted in the loss of revenue, as the vessels were unable to conduct cargo operations, missed cargo charters, and have experienced significant schedule delays. These incidents can be avoided by adherence to strict sanitation standards involving the removal and destruction of all AGM egg masses prior to port arrival in the United States and Canada.

This situation is a very serious pest concern that could result in widespread pest infestations in U.S. and Canadian forests in a relatively short time. These recent events are leading U.S. and Canadian officials to believe that AGM populations in seaport areas in Japan and other parts of northeast Asia have risen dramatically and will continue into 2009. It is imperative that industry representatives collaborate with the U.S and Canadian authorities on measures closely to reduce these incidents as soon as possible.

Both Canada and the US are aware that the shipping industry is interested in quarantine compliance and maintaining schedules. Both countries are committed to working with industry to support measures that will reduce AGM risk at origin.

Reports of swarms of moths at various ports in Japan and elsewhere where AGM exists have been received. Moth flight occurs especially during night operations for cargo loading and unloading. Bright lights attract the gypsy moths to the vessels. The periods of risk for Asian gypsy moth flight and infestation range from June 1- August 15 in southern Japan to July 15- October 1 in northern Japan and Far East Russia. China and Korea have similar flight periods of risk.

U.S. and Canadian officials share the belief that a major AGM population spike may be occurring in Japan and China, as Russia has experienced the past two years. We also suspect that this may be occurring in Korea and China. Populations of gypsy moth worldwide are known to spike almost simultaneously, within 1-2 years of each other. Populations then decline for a couple of years before later collapsing.

U.S. and Canadian officials seek increased collaboration with shipping lines, agents, and associations in order to try to minimize these events with support of port monitoring and vessel pre-inspection techniques.

It will be necessary for shipping lines to order all vessel crews to conduct intensive vessel inspection to remove (scrape off) and destroy all egg masses prior to entering U.S. and Canadian ports. The egg masses can be found anywhere on the vessel superstructure and anywhere that doors were open while in port. Locations include barrel containers used for trash or liquid.

Egg masses may also be found on the lines used to moor the vessel to the dock, extra lines laying on the deck, very high on the vessel super structure, on air intake vents, vessel smoke stack, on the tracks used for crane movement, on the outside hull, on a container stored on the deck, and inside a wheel/tool house or room on the aft deck. The egg masses will also be seen throughout the vessel meaning on the aft deck, starboard and port sides of the deck and housing, on the bow, and on the main deck and upper decks of the main super structure, cargo hold framing, and other vessel framing including safety rails. The outside of containers must also be inspected.

In significant infestations in 2008, US CBP inspectors have detained vessels with 50 to over 100 live viable egg masses located throughout the ship. Each egg mass can contain several hundred eggs. Please note that this includes bulk cargo, grain and container vessels, as well as fishing vessels and cruise ships. Vessels found infested by US or Canadian authorities are not authorized to load or unload cargo until the free of AGM life stages (egg masses, live larvae, and live adults).

Due to North American coordination to prevent entry of this pest, vessels are informed that they cannot redirect to Canada or Mexico, but can choose to proceed to other foreign locations.

USDA and CFIA officials are not recommending avoidance of any foreign port. However, due to these extreme conditions, we are recommending that vessels transiting in far east Russia and Japan during designated periods maintain compliance by obtaining certification prior to departure from these countries. In addition, all vessels calling on China and Korea must insist on high levels of vigilance and self inspection to ensure that no egg masses remain on board the vessel when it arrives in the U.S. and Canada. The consequences of inadequate preparation are very high.

The purpose of this message is to warn maritime shippers that we have an emerging problem. Please disseminate this information to your membership. Thank you for your help in providing information to the shipping industry. USDA and CFIA officials will work with industry to produce information on AGM specific to vessel sanitation to support collaboration and minimize vessel clearance time at U.S. Canadian maritime ports.

Please contact the officials listed below for further information or questions.

Michael Simon  
Senior Staff Officer  
Quarantine Policy, Analysis, and Support  
USDA-APHIS-PPQ  
Riverdale, MD 20737  
PH: 301-734-4374  
FAX: 301-734-5269

Nancy Kummen  
Forestry Specialist  
Plant Protection Division  
CFIA  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 7S6  
PH: 250-470-5048  
FAX: 250-470-4899

[Michael.Simon@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Michael.Simon@aphis.usda.gov)

[nancy.kummen@inspection.gc.ca](mailto:nancy.kummen@inspection.gc.ca)