

The NORMAN-20 Update, a Step Back on the Conservation and Preservation of the Amazon River

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The large volume of movements of goods around the world is responsible for a large movement of international maritime trade vessels, which carry in their tanks a major threat to aquatic ecosystems where they circulate, ballast water. Ballast water is considered a biodiversity threat environments where it is dumped because it may contain a variety of contaminants that can alter the composition of these waters and cause beyond environmental damage, damage to health and economic.

Living organisms contained in ballast water can be responsible for a species diffusion process which appears irreversible, the bioinvasion, which is considered one of the greatest threats to the planet's ecosystems. The invasive species is a competitive and completely free environment favorable to their development, competing with local species for space, food, and part of the process of eliminating the least protected species.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has sought over the last 40 years standardize procedures that would ensure effective protection of aquatic environments on the planet, and as a result, in 2004 finalized the drafting of the International Convention on the control and management of ballast water and sediments vessels (BWMC), of which Brazil is a signatory, and like other countries, by signing this document, undertakes to adopt measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment resulting from the use of technologies under their jurisdiction or control.

The Brazil navy, which represents the local maritime authority, in 2005 discloses the Standard Maritime Authority for Management of Ships Ballast Water (NOR-MAM-20 / DPC), which is an internalization of the guidelines contained in BWMC and how the document in which it is based, contains a number of guidelines that aims to establish requirements for the prevention of pollution from vessels in Brazilian Jurisdictional Waters (AJB), with respect to the management of ballast water.

In January 2014, the Navy of Brazil released the first update of NORMAN-20, which is a dangerous setback in the actions previously taken for protection and conservation of Brazilian waters, and especially to the waters of the Amazon basin, which every day is way for ships of international maritime trade carry their burdens.

The standard before upgrading brought in scope, more precisely in chapter three, a number of item 3.4 entitled "two ballast water exchange," which referred exclusively to the care that should be taken by those vessels to enter the fresh water the Amazon and its tributaries. Among the care came the requirement to hold a second ballast water exchange, which should be done at the entrance of the Amazon basin, in order to reduce the salinity of this water once exchanged at sea (first exchange).

The update in question does not refer to the particular situation of the Amazon basin, and not only exposes the Amazonian aquatic environments the risks of bioinvasões as possible the risk of spreading diseases that use water as a means of cultivation and development. The bioinvasões are responsible for serious damage to the environment to health and the economy of the places where it happens.

The first studies in the Amazon region and for the risk of ballast water discharge contamination already had a worrying scenario, before this update, when it could still count on a second exchange of ballast, as is knowledge of the scientific community that this directive requiring the exchange of ballast at sea is little respected by vessels, even with full knowledge of the risks related to this practice.

We will continue our studies in this region, and this new stage a map of ballast water management in the Amazon region is drawn, and with these results, together with the international and national law, will try to put the protection of the majestic river Amazon in the foreground, since at the present time are overwhelmed by the commercial interests of the international community.

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