

NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife

DIVISION HATCHERIES' FISH HEALTH POLICY

This policy establishes the Division of Fish and Wildlife's fish health requirements for the Division's fish culture facilities which must be met prior to stocking fish in fresh waters of the State. See also N.J.A.C. 7:25-6.26. These basic provisions are consistent with Federal standards developed in response to viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) outbreaks in the Great Lakes (occurring at that time) and addresses concerns of the potential transfer of other identified fish pathogens in other associated areas of the country, as they relate to specific species. Requiring fish to be certified free of pathogens will help reduce the risk of these major pathogens being introduced into existing fish populations.

A. The Division will complete the following prior to releasing any fish stock into the environment:

1. Annual fish health inspections will be performed on all species raised.
2. All fish received from sources within areas where Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis (IHN) or Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) viruses are known to occur, will be inspected and found free of those viruses.
3. Salmonids (trout or salmon) to be stocked in waters with reproducing trout populations, or in designated Holdover or Trophy Trout lakes, must be inspected and found free of major pathogens known to pose a risk to salmonid populations. These pathogens include:
 - i. Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis Virus (IPN)
 - ii. Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis (IHN)
 - iii. Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS)
 - iv. Bacterial kidney disease (BKD)
 - v. Bacterial Furunculosis (BF)
 - vi. Bacterial redmouth (BRM)
 - vii. Whirling disease, *Myxobolus cerebralis*
4. Accurate records of fish health and disease related inspections, as well as, records of transfers of fish both into and out of their facility will be maintained.

B. In addition, the Division will also implement the following as part of its fish health policy:

1. For sample size and procedures, the more stringent guidelines provided by the American Fisheries Society, Fish Health Section Blue Book, Suggested Procedures for the Detection and Identification of Certain Finfish and Shellfish Pathogens (<http://www.afs-fhs.org/blue-book.php>) will be followed.
2. Fish positive for Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis Virus (IPN), Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis (IHN), Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS), Bacterial kidney disease (BKD), Bacterial Furunculosis (BF), Bacterial redmouth (BRM) and whirling disease, *Myxobolus cerebralis* will not be stocked in the wild.
3. Fish in which a pathogen that poses a risk to salmonid populations has been previously detected will not be stocked in waters with reproducing trout populations, or in designated Holdover or Trophy Trout lakes.
4. Fish treated with antibiotics or other aquatic treatments will be held at the facility for the established holding times prior to stocking.
5. The Division will use a risk assessment analysis (Form RA-2. Risk assessment for pathogen movements out of a facility) developed by the Great Lakes Fish Health Committee (GLFHC). The form will be used to ascertain the risk level when transferring fish from a hatchery to the wild during stocking events after encountering a regulated disease in the hatchery. In addition to the risk analysis, the Model Fish Health Program recommendations developed by the GLFHC will be followed.
6. Best Management Strategies shall be used to address species and densities based upon susceptibility to any disease or pathogen.

Date Adopted: March 11, 2014

David Burke, Acting Chair
New Jersey Fish and Game Council