

Fish Disease Control Order

Angler Fact Sheet

June 2007

1. **Why are these regulations being put in place?** With the rapid increase in fish diseases invading our state, it has become critical to enlist anglers as allies in this fight to protect their fishing opportunities.

Many angler behaviors are excellent ways to move pathogens from water to water including the indiscriminate use of live and frozen baitfish and fish eggs (roe) regardless of where they came from, the movement of live game fish from water to water, and the movement of live well and bilge water from water to water. The recent fish kill in Budd Lake, Clare County was likely caused by Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) which likely got into the lake by one of the above listed practices. The regulations are designed to have a set of best management practices for anglers to ensure that they are not a vehicle to move pathogens around our waters. We do not want anglers to be a cause for fish disease outbreaks.

2. **Why are there two parts to the regulations?** The regulations have two parts. The first is a set of general provisions that cover a range of angler actions and provide for a mechanism for certified free bait to be available for anglers. The second part are regulations that directly address issues with specific fish diseases and this section will infrequently change to address new diseases.

Fisheries Division will manage specific fish diseases using “Management Areas” as you can only manage around fish diseases not eliminate them. The idea is to keep the pathogen free areas as far as possible from those areas that are positive and to place a buffer area in between these areas. The system is designed to slow the movement of infected fish to new waters. The three areas will be: 1) a Positive Management Area where the disease is known to be present; 2) a Surveillance Management Area where the disease is not known at present but is likely to show up soon; and 3) a Pathogen Free Area where the disease has not been found and is not likely to be soon.

3. **How will this order affect me the angler?** There are six key areas that anglers will need to pay attention to:
 - a. The list of Prohibited Fish Species that is attached to the order and periodically updated on our website (www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing) is important as this lists the species affected by the order.
 - b. You will need to have a receipt with you while fishing for all baitfish and roe purchases from bait shops for species on the Prohibited Fish Species list. The receipt will tell anglers which Disease Management Areas they can use the bait from that shop.

- c. If you collect your own bait or purchase your bait, you will need to know where you can use the bait and which waters are in which Disease Management Areas.
- d. You can only use bait including live, dead, frozen and parts of fish on a hook if the baitfish or fish species is on the Prohibited Species List. This includes roe from the species listed on the Prohibited Species List.
- e. You can not move live fish from water to water. This includes both gamefish and baitfish on the Prohibited Species List.
- f. You will need to drain all water from live wells and bilges upon leaving a water.

4. Which fish species are currently on the Prohibited Fish Species list?

- a. Key Prohibited Fish Species list that are typically used as live bait include emerald shiners, spottail shiners, and white suckers. Some other species on the Prohibited Fish Species list that occasionally show up in the bait supply are bluntnose minnows, trout perch, gizzard shad, shortnose redhorse and silver redhorse.
- b. Prohibited Fish Species that are typically used as cut bait and are usually purchased frozen include gizzard shad and Pacific herring.
- c. Prohibited Fish Species that are used as roe include Chinook salmon, coho salmon, pink salmon, brown trout, and steelhead.
- d. Fathead minnows or golden shiners are currently **not** on the Prohibited Species List at this time and the regulations do not apply to either of these commonly used bait species. Atlantic herring and alewives are also **not** on the Prohibited Species List and the regulations do not apply to these species that are often used for cut bait.

5. What is included as bait in these regulations? Bait includes all live or dead species of fish, or parts of fish that are used by anglers to catch fish that are included on the Prohibited Fish Species list. This also includes roe or fish eggs from the fish species on the Prohibited Fish Species list.

Bait, both baitfish and roe, on the Prohibited Fish Species list can only be used if on a hook. You can use single salmon eggs and spawn sacks as these are clearly attached to a hook. You can not broadcast eggs from species on the Prohibited Fish Species list if they are not on a hook. The broadcasting of large numbers of potentially infected eggs is an excellent way to spread a pathogen in a waterbody which is why we decided to limit the use of roe/eggs to only on a hook.

These regulations do not include wigglers, leeches or crayfish. They are **not** covered by these regulations.

6. What will the receipt say and how long will it be valid? This receipt will indicate the species purchased and amount, date, purchaser, and tell you where you can use the bait. The receipt is valid for 7 days.

7. **Where can I use purchased bait on the Prohibited Fish Species list?** The keys to remember are that: a) certified free bait can be used anywhere and provide the maximum flexibility; b) uncertified bait from Pathogen Free Management Area waters can be used anywhere in the state; c) uncertified bait from Surveillance Management Area waters can be used in Surveillance and Positive Management Areas but not in Pathogen Free Management Area waters; and d) uncertified bait from Positive Management Area waters can only be used in the Positive Management Area. The location that you can use the bait should be clearly marked on your receipt and if not, be sure to make sure it is before leaving the bait shop.

The bait shops will also receive an information package to assist anglers on the locations that bait can be used from their shop.

8. **Where can I use bait that I collect that are species on the Prohibited Species list?** The keys to remember are that: a) angler collected bait from Pathogen Free Management Area waters can be used anywhere in the state; b) angler collected bait from Surveillance Management Area waters can be used in Surveillance and Positive Management Areas but not in Pathogen Free Management Area waters; and c) angler collected bait from Positive Management Area waters can only be used in the Positive Management Area.

9. **Where is the VHS Positive Management Area?** This will periodically change so be sure to keep an eye on the Fisheries Division website (www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing). Currently, the VHS Positive Management Area includes all waters in Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River, and Lake Erie. It also includes all tributary streams up to the first fish barrier to Great Lakes fish. The key here is if Great Lakes fish can get to the stream and use it then it is part of the Positive Management Area.

Upstream fish barriers on Lake Erie tributary streams include the Raisin River dams in Monroe, and the Belleville Lake or French Landing Dam on Huron River.

Upstream fish barriers on the Detroit River tributary streams include the Ford Estate Dam in Dearborn on the Raisin River.

Upstream fish barriers on Lake Huron tributary streams include Frankenmuth Dam on the Cass River, Mott Dam on the Flint River, Chesaning Dam on the Shiawassee River, St. Louis Dam on the Pine River, Lake Isabella Dam on the Chippewa River, Sanford Dam on the Tittabawassee River, Foote Dam on the AuSable River, 9th Street Dam on the Thunder Bay River, and Cheboygan Dam on the Cheboygan River.

10. **Where is the VHS Surveillance Management Area?** This will periodically change so be sure to keep an eye on the Fisheries Division website

(www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing). Currently, the VHS Surveillance Area includes Lake Michigan and the St. Marys River along with their tributary streams up to the first fish barrier to Great Lakes fish. This Management Area also includes all inland waters above the first fish barrier to Great Lakes fish in the Lake Huron, St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, Detroit River, and Lake Erie watersheds.

Upstream fish barriers on Lake Michigan tributary streams include Calkins Bridge on the Kalamazoo River, Croton Dam on the Muskegon River, Hesperia Dam on the White River, Hart Dam on the South Branch of the Pentwater River, Hamlin Lake Dam on the Sable River, Tippy Dam on the Manistee River, Boardman Lake Dam on the Boardman River, Elk Rapids Dam on the Elk River, Petosky Dam on the Bear River, Escanaba Dam on the Escanaba River, and the Park Mill Dam on the Menominee River.

The lowest most dam on the Manistique River was partially breached and the river system is open to Great Lakes fish.

Both the St. Joseph and Grand Rivers have extensive and fully functional fishways that allow Great Lakes fish passage to much of their watersheds. The St. Joseph River does not have a Great Lakes fish barrier until the Mishawaka Dam in Indiana. The Grand River has Great Lakes fish passage until the Moores Park Dam in Lansing. Key Grand River tributaries that have Great Lakes fish access include the Rogue River to Rockford Dam, the Flat River to Lowell Dam, the Thornapple River to the Ada Dam, Prairie Creek (the entire system), Fish Creek to the Hubbardston Dam, the Maple River to the Elsie Dam, and the Red Cedar River (entire system).

11. **Where is the VHS Pathogen Free Management Area?** This will periodically change so be sure to keep an eye on the Fisheries Division website (www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing). Currently, the VHS Pathogen Free Area includes Lake Superior and all tributary streams to Lake Superior along with all inland waters of Lake Michigan and the St. Marys River above the first fish barrier to Great Lakes fish.
12. **Can I move live fish from where I catch them and what about catching and release fish such as in fishing tournaments?** Anglers can not move live fish on the Prohibited Species List from a waterbody. Anglers are welcome to take fish home that are dead as long as it is legal to do so and harvest limits are followed.

Anglers are absolutely allowed to catch and release fish. Anglers who are catching and releasing fish must release the fish back into the same water or in a connecting body of water to that water so long as those fish can freely move between the original location of capture and the location of release. There can not be a fish barrier, such as a dam without fish passage, between where the fish was caught and where it is released.

The regulation also includes the movement of live baitfish on the Prohibited Species List from one water to water. You can take live baitfish with you to fish a waterbody and can use them on a hook on that water. When you leave the water after fishing you must kill unused baitfish. We are asking anglers not to release their live baitfish upon leaving a waterbody.

The moving live fish from one waterbody to another is one of the key ways that anglers can be a significant factor in spread fish diseases which is why we are dealing with this issue in this order. The movement of live fish, either game or baitfish, by anglers was likely the reason that Budd Lake near Harrison became infected with VHS that caused a major fish kill in April 2007. We do not want to see our fisheries resources affected by major fish kills that could be avoided by good practices by our anglers.

13. What about live wells and bilge water? All live wells and bilges must be drained when you leave a waterbody. When you take your boat out of the water after a fishing trip, drain all water from your boat when it is on the boat ramp. The regulation prohibits the movement of water in bilges or live wells once off the water and on roads. The moving infected water from one waterbody to another is one of the key ways that anglers can be a significant factor in spread fish diseases which is why we are dealing with this issue in this order.