

## **Don't Risk It!**

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is seeking your assistance in controlling the spread of VHSV (viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus).

We are initiating an educational campaign, informing anglers of the significant threat to our valuable fisheries from this disease, and how they can help limit the spread of VHSV in Pennsylvania.

## **What is VHSV?**

VHS virus is a serious pathogen of fresh and saltwater fish that is causing an emerging disease in the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada. VHS virus affects many species of fish of all sizes and age ranges.

Nearly 50 species of fish are known to be susceptible to VHS

VHS has been found in the Great Lakes watershed (Lake St. Claire, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, St Lawrence River) and has infected **muskellunge, northern pike, yellow perch, walleye, smallmouth bass, sheepshead, gizzard shad, and round goby** around the Great Lakes Basin.

VHS can cause hemorrhaging of fish tissue, including internal organs, and can result in the death of infected fish.

Once a fish is infected with VHS, there is no known cure.

Not all infected fish develop the disease, but they can carry and spread the disease to other fish through urine, milt and eggs.

Fish mortality is greatest in colder water, 37 – 54 degrees F.

The mortality rate for infected fish varies between 20% and 80%, but juvenile fish are generally more susceptible than adults; mortality can reach 100% in fry.

It does not pose any threat to human health.

## **What can you do to help?**

Bait bucket transfers are considered a major source of inoculations. Do not transport/move/use any **live fish** outside of the watershed they were caught or purchased. This includes moving both bait fish as well as the practice of relocating of wild fish for private pond stocking.

Freezing bait does not kill the virus, DO NOT use frozen baitfish outside of the watershed from which it was purchased or caught. If you want to save unused bait for future fishing trips, preserve the bait by “salting” it.

**Thank you for your support in this effort.**