

STATE OF COLORADO

Bill Ritter, Jr., Governor
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

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*For Wildlife-
For People*

January, 2008

TO: All applicants for CDOW Aquatic Species Importation Licenses and Colorado Department of Agriculture Aquaculture Permits

FROM: Peter Walker, State Fish Pathologist

SUBJECT: Important changes in regulations pertaining to a new strain of fish virus

Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS), caused by Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia Virus (VHSV) has been known for decades as a serious disease threat to cultured trout in northern Europe. More recently it has been discovered to infect many marine fishes on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of North America. In late 2005 VHSV was isolated from fish in the Great Lakes, indicating that the virus had moved inland into fresh water. In the two years since that discovery, the virus has caused massive losses in many freshwater fish species at large in the Great Lakes. Scientists have confirmed that the virus has mutated to adapt to a broad range of host species in a new environment.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has declared VHS in the Great Lakes an epidemic and quarantined all 8 states and 2 provinces bordering the Great Lakes. Shipments of live fish to other states, except for certified disease-free fish from licensed fish culture facilities, are not allowed.

Here in Colorado, the Colorado Wildlife Commission has enacted changes in fish health regulations to better protect the state's resources and aquaculture industry from this new threat. The substantive changes in the regulation are as follows. See <http://wildlife.state.co.us/NR/rdonlyres/4D6FFAC6-64EB-4516-A5E9-AE91B7392A95/0/Ch00.pdf> for the entire set of regulations in Chapter 0.

All in-state fish production or holding facilities, which sell or stock live fish, and all out of state facilities importing live fish into Colorado must be certified free of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia Virus (VHSV).

Testing for Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia Virus (VHSV) shall be conducted by the protocols and procedures of:

- 1. The Blue Book: USFWS and AFS-FHS (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and American Fisheries Society-Fish Health Section). 2005. Standard procedures or aquatic animal health inspections. In AFS-FHS. FHS Blue Book: Suggested procedures for the detection and identification of certain finfish and shellfish pathogens, 2005 edition. AFS-FHS, Bethesda, Maryland, or**

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, Harris D. Sherman, Executive Director
WILDLIFE COMMISSION, Tom Burke, Chair • Claire O'Neal, Vice Chair • Robert Bray, Secretary
Members, Dennis Buechler • Brad Coors • Jeffrey Crawford • Tim Glenn • Roy McAnally • Richard Ray
Ex Officio Members, Harris Sherman and John Stulp

2. The Manual of diagnostics for aquatic animals. 2006. of the OIE – World Organisation for Animal Health, 12 rue de Prony 75017 Paris, France.

CDOW contacts for further information.

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Reminder: Annual reports of all fish brought into the state and their destination are required at the end of each calendar year. Annual reporting of fish reared “in-state” is also required. Both importation and in-state distribution can be reported on the same form. Issuance of importation licenses and stocking authorizations is contingent on receipt of these reports.