

QUICK FACTS WHIRLING DISEASE & STOCKED WATERBODIES

WHAT IS WHIRLING DISEASE?

- Whirling disease affects salmonids like trout and whitefish. Whirling disease does not affect humans and fish are safe to eat.
- Whirling disease can spread to stocked ponds by infected water, soil, fish or fish parts, and by equipment used in water such as fishing, or paddling equipment. Before moving between waterbodies be sure to CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF WHIRLING DISEASE IN STOCKED TROUT PONDS?

- A pond infected with whirling disease can spread the disease into natural waterbodies via connections to creeks or streams.
- Even if you routinely drain and refill your pond, or your pond has no fish for several years, whirling disease can still persist in the environment.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Stocking larger fish reduces the risk of fish dying from whirling disease, however fish of all sizes can be carriers of the whirling disease parasite
- Never move live or dead fish or fish parts from your stocked waterbody to another waterbody
- Dispose of dead fish or fish parts in the local solid waste garbage system.
- Consider using dedicated equipment for your stocked waterbody.
- If you cannot use dedicated equipment remember to:
 - **CLEAN:** Remove all mud, sand, and plant material from all gear that contacted water before you leave the shore.
 - If possible, use hot water to clean equipment (as close to 90° C as possible).
 - **DRAIN:** Before leaving the shore drain or sponge out all standing water
 - **DRY:** Let equipment dry in sunlight for a minimum of 24 hours before using it in new waters

QUICK FACTS

Whirling disease was first detected in August 2016 in Johnson Lake, Alberta in Banff National Park.

Whirling disease is from Europe and was observed in the northeastern United States in the 1950s. By the 1990s it was found across the western US, including Montana.

There is currently no treatment for whirling disease; containment and prevention are the best response.

The parasite has two hosts; a fish and a freshwater worm. Fish may become infected by encountering the life stage of the parasite released from the worm. Once inside the fish, the parasite affects the cartilage, leading to skeletal deformities of the spine or skull. This causes the fish to whirl in a tail-chasing behavior and/or display a blackened tail.

The government has implemented a three-point Whirling Disease Action Plan that focuses on determining where the disease is and using education and mitigation to prevent it from spreading. Find out where whirling disease has been detected in Alberta waters at aep.alberta.ca

WHAT IF I SUSPECT MY FISH HAVE WHIRLING DISEASE?

- If you suspect a case of whirling disease, call 1(855) 366-BOAT (2628) and please include the following information:
 - GPS coordinates
 - Approximate number of fish in your pond
 - Fish species
 - How the fish look or act
 - A photograph, if possible



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT WHIRLING DISEASE, CALL:

1-855-336-BOAT (2628)

ISBN 978-1-4601-3995-0 (Print)

ISBN 978-1-4601-3996-7 (PDF)

Printed: May 2018

Search for Whirling Disease on aep.alberta.ca

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Government