

Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis Virus (IHNV)

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division has detected the presence of Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis Virus (IHNV) in hatchery-raised rainbow trout. This is the first documented occurrence of IHNV in Georgia.

Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis Virus (IHNV) Identification



Steelhead fry with IHNV. Credit: USFWS (Public domain.)

FACTS

- IHNV has not been previously documented in Georgia. The disease has previously been documented in salmonids in the Pacific Northwest. The disease can affect all age classes with the most severe impact typically in juveniles.
- The disease is caused by the Salmonid Novirhabdovirus and is passed through contact with urine, mucus, and other fluids.
- All species of trout are susceptible to the disease. The virus can cause high trout mortalities in hatchery systems and in the wild. There are no therapeutic treatments to eliminate the pathogen.
- Infected fish may exhibit lethargy, whirling behavior, darkened coloration, and swelling in the head and abdomen.
- IHNV is not harmful to humans and fish may be consumed and handled without concern.

WHAT WRD IS DOING TO PREVENT SPREAD:

- Suspending trout stocking from Buford and Summerville hatcheries until their disease status is confirmed.

- Collecting wild trout samples for disease analysis from the Chattahoochee River downstream of Buford Hatchery.
- Collecting trout samples from Summerville Hatchery to be tested.

FUTURE PREVENTION STEPS:

- Identify the source(s) of the pathogen
- Conduct a risk analysis of the potential impacts of stocking current trout hatchery inventory into streams that do not support naturally reproducing populations.
- Determine the disease status of waterbodies stocked with trout in CY21 and determine the need to test wild trout populations.
- Identify disinfectant methodologies for treating hatchery water supplies and equipment.

WHAT ANGLERS CAN DO TO HELP:

- **DO** take photos and video of the fish, including close ups of its spine.
- **DO** note where it was caught (waterbody, landmarks, or GPS coordinates).
- **DO** properly clean all equipment such as boats, trailers, waders, boots, float tubes and fins of mud before leaving an area when fishing. Thoroughly dry equipment in the sun if possible before reuse. If you are traveling directly to other waters, clean your equipment with a 10 percent solution of chlorine bleach or use another set of equipment.
- **DON'T** transport live fish between bodies of water or release or dispose of them anywhere other than the location they were caught
- **E-mail** If you observe the symptoms of IHNV in fish. Notify the Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division at trout@dnr.ga.gov.

For more information on fish disease, visit: <https://georgiawildlife.com/ans#diseases>.