

Environment Agency

Category 2 and Novel Parasite/ Diseases Review Technical Group (Cat 2 Review Group)

Terms of Reference

1.0 Introduction

Category 2 or Novel Parasites and Diseases are those which are considered by the Environment Agency to:

- Have a significant disease potential when introduced into waters where the diseases or parasites do not already exist; or,
- Be novel, non-indigenous diseases or parasites of unknown pathogenicity and distribution.

The spread of Category 2 or Novel parasites and diseases is controlled by the Environment Agency under the legislative procedures for section 30 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries act 1975. This control prevents the introduction of any fish found to be infected with a Cat 2 or novel parasite or disease into any water where a significant risk of infecting the wider environment exists. The only exception to this would be where the disease or parasite (other than novel) is already known to be present in the receiving water. Where the risk to other fisheries and the environment is minimal, it is considered appropriate for the owner/ manager of the fishery to take responsibility for any decisions concerning such introductions. However, the Agency would also strongly advise against any introduction of fish infected with a Cat 2 parasite or disease or without a valid health check.

2.0 Purpose

The Purpose of the Cat 2 Review Group is to review the current understanding and literature available on each of the listed parasites and diseases. The group will make recommendations to the Agency Policy and Process Manager for Fish Movements as to whether a parasite or disease should remain on the list, be removed from the list and/or require further study.

2.0 Outputs

Specifically the group will:

- Consider the evidence for each of the listed Category 2 or Novel parasites and diseases and make an assessment that either:
 - I. There is enough evidence that the parasite/ disease DOES pose a significant threat to fisheries and their environment in England and Wales and therefore it should remain on the list with no further study required.
 - II. There is enough evidence that the parasite/ disease DOES NOT pose a significant threat to fisheries and their environment in England and Wales and therefore it should be removed from the list with no further study required.
 - III. There is insufficient evidence that the parasite/ disease DOES NOT pose a significant threat to fisheries and their environment in England and Wales and therefore it should remain on the list until further studies are carried out that determine whether there is a significant threat.
- Collate the further study requirements for each of the listed parasites or diseases and prioritise them according to the perceived level of threat, the impact on industry, the likely cost of further study and their known distribution in England and Wales.

The group will agree methodologies for carrying out these assessments and the Environment Agency Scientists will provide and present the evidence required by the group. The Agency will prepare and distribute papers for consideration no later than 2 weeks prior to the meeting.

4.0 Scope

The group will only consider those parasites and diseases placed on the Category 2 and Novel list by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency has the final decision on whether a parasite or disease goes on or comes off the list. The role of the group will be to make recommendations on the list membership based on their scientific expertise and understanding. The papers, findings and minutes of the meetings will remain the intellectual property of the Environment Agency.

5.0 Group Membership

The Group shall be made up of Environment Agency fish health experts, an expert from CEFAS, experts from academia and an Independent Fish Health Consultant. On an as needs bases the group

will also be supported by the Fisheries Statistics and GIS team or any other experts from within or outside of the Environment Agency. Membership on the group will be by invitation of the Environment Agency, who will cover the costs of the independent experts. The group will be chaired and administrated respectively by the Policy and Process Manager for Fish Movements and the National Fisheries Laboratory Manager (or delegates).

6.0 Meetings

For at least the first year, the group will meet every six months. Thereafter the group will meet at annually. *Ad hoc* meetings may be called as and when the need arises, eg the publication of new evidence or the recording of a new parasite or disease in England and Wales. The meetings will ordinarily be held at the National Fisheries Laboratory in Brampton.

7.0 Transparency

The minutes of the meetings will be agreed and produced within two weeks after the meeting. These will made available to interested parties, including, trade associations, individual fish suppliers, academics and the public through publication on www.efishbusiness.co.uk.