

North-East Atlantic Commission

NEA(05)6

*Risk of Transmission of Gyrodactylus Salaris in the
North-East Atlantic Commission Area*

(Tabled by the European Union)

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EC Directive 91/67/EEC includes the parasite *Gyrodactylus salaris* (Gs) in List III of Annex I to the Directive. Commission Decision 2004/453/EC granted Ireland and the UK additional guarantees (control of imports) in view of the island status of these Member States and the fact that Gs is not present.

As a List III notifiable disease, Member States are required to draw up plans to deal with an outbreak, and submit these to the EC for approval. Measures have been introduced or are being introduced throughout Member States to ensure compliance with this requirement. Monitoring of fish farms and wild stocks is routinely undertaken to test for Gs as well as other diseases and parasites.

For example, in Finland, revised decrees and new legislation relating to the movement of fish, including the use of live fish as bait, gutting of fish and treatment of fishing equipment, have been introduced to assist in preventing the spread of the parasite. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture has funded research into preventing the spread of the parasite to northern Finland. Publicity material has been widely disseminated, including mailshots to houses in potentially vulnerable areas.

In Ireland and the UK, emphasis is placed on prevention of the introduction of Gs, with the production of publicity material, and the use of workshops hosted by Government and fisheries management organisations to scope the problem and investigate potential approaches to deal with it. Contingency plans to identify new regulatory powers to deal with any outbreak, and to develop the appropriate logistical requirements, have been or are being developed in Ireland and the UK. In UK (Scotland), it is intended that when the plans have been approved, they will be “tested” to assess their effectiveness.

In Sweden, all west coast salmon rivers now have two barriers to salmon migration in place. Stocking with salmonids in rivers free from Gs is only permitted upstream of the second barrier, and the fish must have been obtained from a farm declared free of Gs. An information pamphlet regarding Gs was produced in 2004 and widely distributed in appropriate areas.

NASCO has a very important role to play in the drive to prevent the spread of Gs in the North-East Atlantic Commission area. NASCO is in an excellent position to assist with raising public awareness of the potential effects of any further spread of the organism, and can play a central role in facilitating the exchange of information, especially on preventative measures, between Contracting Parties.