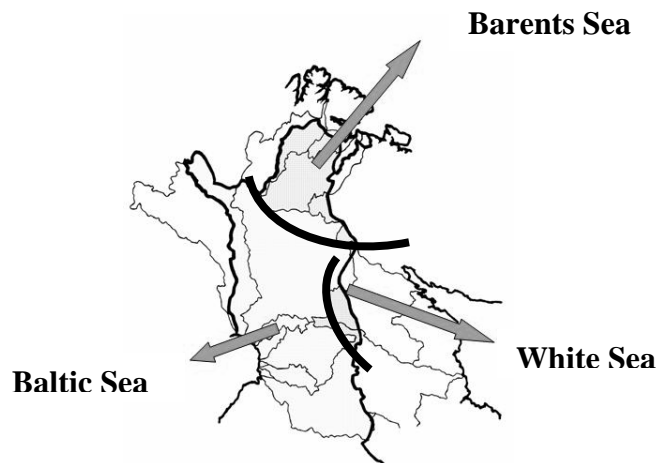


NEA(09)5

***Information Paper
(Tabled by EU- Finland)***

MEASURES CONCERNING THE CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR THE PARASITE *GYRODACTYLUS SALARIS* IN FINLAND

Gyrodactylus salaris, the infamous salmon parasite which has decimated tens of Norwegian and one White Sea salmon rivers, is a Baltic native. Presumably, most Baltic salmon populations are rather resistant, due to their origin in the same freshwater refugia, and the parasite was not drawing much attention prior to the Norwegian epidemic. The most resistant salmon populations are apparently found in the Russian Lakes Onega and Ladoga. The northernmost Baltic salmon populations are in the border river between Finland and Sweden, the River Tornio. The highest prevalence and intensity of *G. salaris* has been found in the uppermost tributaries of this water system. It is probable that there is no remarkable mortality caused by the parasite among the salmon parr in the River Tornio. *G. salaris* appears to also be fairly common at the freshwater rainbow trout farms of Finland south of the water catchment areas running into the Barents Sea.



The watersheds between the water catchment areas of the Barents Sea, White Sea and Baltic Sea are partly situated in the territory of Finland (see figure). Measures in the territory of Finland are thus of key importance in the prevention of the spread of *G. salaris* to the Atlantic salmon rivers Teno (Tana) and Näättämö (Neiden). On the basis of the Act on Animal Diseases, prevention measures were begun already in the mid-1980s. Additional restrictions have also been given on the basis of the Fishing Act. The main prevention measures applied in Finland are:

Restrictions on movement of live fish and eggs

Transfer of live farmed and wild fish as well as undisinfected eggs from other parts of Finland to the Rivers Teno, Näättämö, Paats, Transfer of live farmed and wild fish as well as undisinfected eggs from the River Paats, Uutuan and Tuuloma watercourses to the Rivers Teno and Näättämö is forbidden. The agreement concerning the River Teno between Finland and Norway applies as well.

Baitfish, etc.

It is forbidden to transfer baitfish from other parts of Finland to the River Teno, Näättämo, Paats, Uutuan and Tuuloma watercourses, as well as to transfer them between these watercourses. The use of baitfish is forbidden in angling, ice-fishing and lure fishing.

Gutting of fish originating from other watercourses is forbidden, as well as to introduce gutting waste to natural waters of the River Teno, Näättämo, Paats, Uutuan and Tuuloma watercourses.

Fishing equipment, boats, etc.

Boats, canoes, fishing equipment like reel, rod, lure, net, boots, paddling trousers transferred from other parts of Finland must be dry or disinfected before their use in these watercourses.

Contingency planning in the River Teno and Näättämo water catchment areas

The River Teno is currently the most productive of all the spawning rivers of Atlantic salmon in the world. The importance for the natural fishing industry along the Rivers Teno and Näättämo is irreplaceable for the local people, both economically and culturally. *G. salaris* parasite is the greatest single threat for the fishing in these rivers. Although Finland intends to keep *G. salaris* outside its Atlantic salmon rivers, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has allocated funding for a pilot study on the contingency planning. The project will start in the autumn 2009 with an up-to-date review of the literature concerning the prevention of the parasite. The focus will be on the information needed in the contingency planning. The work done in Finland so far for the prevention of spread of *G. salaris* will also be documented. The goal is to help the Finnish authorities in the international cooperation in the European Union and North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation NASCO and with Norway, which shares these two salmon rivers with Finland. The project will also give a better basis for the distribution of information, which is needed in the prevention of the parasite in Finland. The Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira is responsible for the project. The main stakeholder groups are widely represented in the steering group.