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We urge anyone intending to come fish in the Faroe Islands to wash and disinfect their fishing rods and any other gear or equipment they will use before travelling to the Faroe Islands

The fish disease Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis (IHN) was very recently detected in Denmark, Finland and elsewhere. On June 2nd Denmark's IHN-free status was temporarily suspended.

In Denmark restriction zones have been declared around all rivers in direct contact with infected aquaculture establishments (for further information visit the website of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration). In addition, special regulations for anglers in the area have been issued.

It remains unclear how the aquaculture establishments were infected and how long the restrictions will stay in place.

About Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis (IHN)

IHN is a very serious viral disease, which first and foremost infects salmon species. Among these, trout (*Salmo trutta*) and Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) are particularly susceptible. Mortality is often high, but depends on factors such as water temperature and the age of fish. Juveniles can suffer a mortality rate of 100%. Both clinically symptomatic fish and healthy carriers can spread the IHN virus.

Symptoms of IHN include unusual swimming patterns, protruding eyeballs, darkened skin, pale gills, lesions at the base of the fins and a swollen belly. The belly can be fluid filled and the vital organs pale.

The IHN virus spreads, for example, through water contaminated with the virus and when infected roe or fish are transported. In addition, there is a risk of spreading the virus via rods and other gear that has been in contact with infected fish or water. It is possible to inactivate the IHN virus by adequate disinfection and drying.

IHN is not a zoonosis, meaning that humans cannot get sick from this virus.

Prevention and inspection

This disease has never been detected in the Faroe Islands. Given that salmon is farmed in the Faroe Islands and wild trout swim in Faroese water bodies, strict precautions are vital to ensure that the virus is not carried to the Faroe Islands.



The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority inspects all live fish and roe imports to the Faroe Islands. At present there is no import of trout and/or trout roe, and there is therefore very little risk of the virus being imported to the Faroe Islands.

The greatest risk of IHN transmission to the Faroe Islands is therefore posed by gear, which can easily be transported between countries including, but not limited to, fishing rods, rubber boots etc.

If travellers wash and disinfect all fishing rods and other gear before entering the Faroe Islands to fish, then we can prevent the spread of this virus to the Faroe Islands.

We therefore urge anyone intending to come fish in the Faroe Islands to wash and disinfect their fishing rods and any other gear or equipment they will use before travelling to the Faroe Islands.

Washing and disinfecting

This is how you wash and disinfect fishing gear, rods and any other equipment:

1. Rinse and wash rods and other gear thoroughly using tap water.
2. Disinfect rods and other gear following the instructions on the disinfection agent.
3. Allow the rod and other gear to dry.

References

For further information visit the websites of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration and the Norwegian Veterinary Institute:

Links to the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration:

https://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/Leksikon/Sider/Restriktioner_i_forbindelse_med_fiskesygdommen_IHN.aspx

<https://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/Leksikon/Sider/Fiskesygdom-IHN-%E2%80%93-aktuel-situation.aspx>

Links to Norwegian Veterinary Institute:

<https://www.vetinst.no/nyheter/infeksios-hematopoetisk-nekrose-pavist-i-danmark-og-finland>

<https://www.vetinst.no/sykdom-og-agens/infeksi%C3%B8s-hematopoetisk-nekrose-ihn>