

Fishery biosecurity

Fish health and management series

In a fishery, disease can be spread by fish and other animals, people, vehicles and equipment. Anything that comes into contact with infected fish or the water they are held in, can spread disease.

By using biosecurity, you can reduce the risk of spreading disease both on and off your site, as well as within your site (such as from one pond to another). In many fisheries, the use of biosecurity may be difficult, but anything you can do will help reduce the risk of introducing fish disease.

What types of biosecurity do I need to think about?

Some biosecurity methods are not always suitable for use at every fishery, and some are easier to set up than others. But if you know what options there are, you can choose the best one for your fishery. Remember that as someone involved in managing of a fishery, or simply as a keen angler, you should be thinking about how best to protect your fish. Good biosecurity is the answer.



Stocking fish

The risks linked with introducing new fish to your fishery are high. This is because of the risk of new diseases being introduced. Breeding your own fish on site can reduce these risks, especially if your fish are breeding happily in the fishery without any intervention. But if this is not possible then quarantining your new fish in a separate pool could be an option. If you do need to buy your fish from elsewhere, always get them health checked and buy them from a reliable source. For more information on stocking fish see the 'Stocking your fishery' fact sheet in this series.

Disinfection

The key pieces of fishing equipment that need to be disinfected are waders, nets, weigh slings and un-hooking mats. However, compared to introducing new fish to your fishery, the risks of transferring diseases on fishing equipment is low. Therefore be realistic!



Some fisheries actually provide their own equipment, such as nets and un-hooking mats. This reduces the risk of anglers moving diseases onto and off the site, but obviously this can be expensive to set up and so may not be suitable for every fishery.

How to disinfect equipment

The two most common ways of disinfecting equipment are:

- Thoroughly drying equipment for a minimum of 48 hours, preferably in direct sunlight. This is the best method but is not always possible.
- Using chemical disinfectants (generally iodine-based solutions (iodophors) or Virkon® Aquatic).

Disinfecting fishing equipment isn't difficult, providing the facilities are there to do it and advice is given on how. More details on how to use chemical disinfectants on fishing tackle and equipment are available in our fact sheet on 'Disinfecting fishing tackle to control fish disease'.

Remember that for the sake of around 15 minutes (the time it takes for most disinfectants to work) you could help stop a potentially devastating disease entering a fishery.

Water source

For most fisheries, the source of water flowing into the site cannot be changed. However if you are creating a new fishery then this is something to think about. You need to try and use a water supply that does not flow through another fishery or watercourse. This can help stop the spread of disease into your fishery. It is therefore best to use water from a borehole or spring. If there are several ponds on site then it is best to separate the water supplies and outflows. This will reduce the risk of spreading disease between ponds.

Site security

By having fewer entry and exit routes to and from your fishery, you can have more control over what comes in and out. You don't necessarily need a 6ft fence around your fishery, but by having designated parking areas and places for people to disinfect their equipment you can reduce the risks of introducing diseases.

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