

Blue Spot Disease of Northern Pike



First described in 1983 in northern pike found in several waters of central Canada and later reported in northern pike and muskellunge from Wisconsin and northern pike from Maine, northern pike from Lake Champlain have been documented with a disease called "Blue Spot." To date, little is understood about this disease.

Tom Jones - VT F&W



VERMONT FISH HEALTH FACT SHEET

Physical Description

Blue spot is best described as pale bluish white, granular skin lesions from 3 to 12 mm in diameter caused by a virus (Esocid Herpesvirus-1). The condition is clearly visible particularly on dorsal skin surfaces of infected northern pike.

Threat to Fish

In a study performed in Wisconsin, the frequency of this disease was found as high as 34 percent in northern pike and 29 percent in muskellunge. The characteristic blue spots were found on the fish for only a short time, when water temperatures were between 36° F. and 55° F. These distinctive spots disappeared shortly after the fish spawned,

when water temperatures reached 57° F. The incidence of blue spot was found to be different among lakes sampled. In general, larger older pike were found less likely to have observable lesions.

The ability of Blue Spot to kill pike and muskellunge is unknown. Currently it is believed that the disease poses little threat to populations of these species.

Vermont biologists will continue to monitor this disease and assess any potential impact it

may have to northern pike populations.

Anglers are reminded to never transfer pike or any other fish from one body of water to another. This practice is illegal in Vermont.

Threat to Humans

This disease is not known to infect humans. Thoroughly cooking fish is recommended.



Bob Dostie

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

1 National Life Drive, Montpelier VT 05620 (802) 828-1000 www.vtfishandwildlife.com