

# Help Stop the Spread of VHS

## What is VHS:

Viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) virus is a serious pathogen of fresh and saltwater fish that is causing an emerging disease in the Great Lakes region. The virus affects fish of all size and age ranges; however, **it DOES NOT pose any threat to human health**. The virus is shed in the urine, feces, and sexual fluids of fish and transmission can occur through the water or by contact.

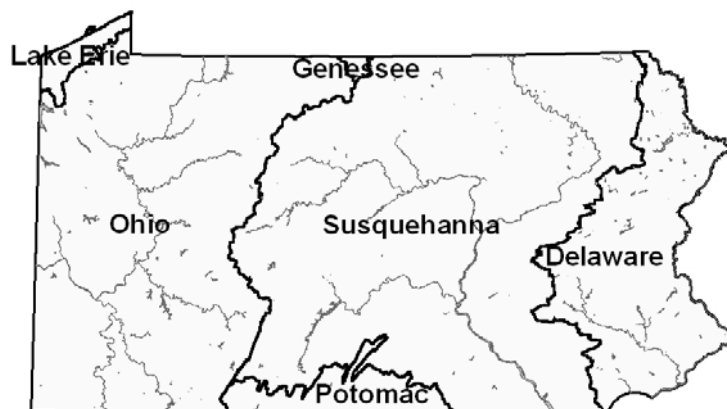
VHS can cause hemorrhaging of fish tissue, including internal organs, and the death of infected fish. Mortality is greatest in colder water 37 - 54°F. Once a fish is infected with VHS, there is no known cure. However, not all infected fish develop the disease, **but they can carry and spread the disease to other fish**.

Nearly 50 species are known to be susceptible to VHS and within the Great Lakes basin VHS has been confirmed in the following species: muskellunge, northern pike, yellow perch, walleye, smallmouth bass, sheepshead, gizzard shad, and round goby.

## What Can You Do to Help:

Bait bucket transfers are considered a major source of infections. **DO NOT transport, move, or use any live fish outside of the Lake Erie watershed if caught or purchased in the Lake Erie watershed**. This includes moving bait fish as well as the practice of relocating wild fish for private pond stocking.

Freezing bait does not kill the virus, **DO NOT use frozen baitfish outside of the watershed from which it was purchased or caught**.



## For More Information:

Contact Pennsylvania Sea Grant at (814) 217-9017 or the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Lake Erie Office at (814) 474-1515, or visit <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/aqua/>.



<http://www.fish.state.pa.us/mpag1.htm>



<http://seagrants.psu.edu/>