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Parasites of freshwater fishes

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ABSTRACT

Like humans and other animals, fish suffer from diseases and parasites. Usually this is at some cost to the fish. If the cost is sufficiently high, then the impacts can be characterized as a disease. However disease in fish is not understood well. What is known about fish disease often relates to aquaria fish, and more recently, to fish. Disease is a prime agent affecting fish mortality, especially when fish are young. Fish can limit the impacts of pathogens and parasites with behavioural or biochemical means, and such fish have reproductive advantages. Interacting factors result in low grade infection becoming fatal diseases. In particular, things that cause stress, such as natural droughts or pollution or predators, can precipitate outbreak of disease. Disease can also be particularly problematic when pathogens and parasites carried by introduced species affect native species. An introduced species may find invading easier if potential predators and competitors have been decimated by disease.