

VECTORS FOR THE SPREAD OF MYXOBOLUS CEREBRALIS, THE CAUSATIVE AGENT OF WHIRLING DISEASE: A RESEARCH UPDATE AND REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Kajsa Stromberg, Montana Water Center, 101 Huffinan Building, Bozeman, MT 59717,
kstromberg@montana.edu

Leah Steinbach Elwell, leahelwell@gmail.com

Whirling disease, caused by the myxozoan parasite *Myxobolus cerebralis*, has impacted fisheries in several western states and presents a great challenge to fishery managers and biologists. In the mid- 1990s, whirling disease was first implicated in dramatic trout population declines in the American west. Since then, intensive research has increased knowledge about the parasite, its complicated life cycle, and management implications of the disease. Risk analysis has emerged as a top priority for researchers and managers and knowledge about vectors for the spread of *Myxobolus cerebralis* is vital. The transfer of infected fish is thought to be the primary vector for the spread of whirling disease. Other vectors include human activities, such as boating and wading, and transfer by predatory animals. This project will review available information regarding whirling disease vectors with a focus on recent research developments and will address the management implications of this knowledge.