

# The VOICE

[ june 2002 issue 16 ]

## RESEARCH ON NEON TETRA DISEASE

French scientists published a paper on neon tetra disease in the May 2002 edition of the "Journal of Fish Diseases". Their research followed "Serious and repeated mortality recently experienced in imported neon tetras." It is worth remembering that research takes up to, and over a year from its completion until it is published.

On the basis of the clinical signs, the mortalities were thought to be due to *Pleistophora*. On further investigation *Pleistophora* was only found in a few fish; the mortalities were caused mainly by *Flavobacterium columnare*. The muscle was the main target of the bacteria. Externally signs were fading skin colour and white areas of necrosis (cell death).

The bacteria isolated were different from European and American strains of the bacteria, but similar to Asian strains, and was very virulent to ornamental strains. The abstract we have seen then states that the implication for health control measures for both imported and domestic fish is the subject of discussion. We will pass on more details as they become available. ■

## POND TROUBLE?

### FENCING

The British Medical Journal reviewed the statistics on drowning in children. In an editorial item it calls for measures to prevent drownings which it calls the "final frontier of injury prevention". Elsewhere it does point out that in 1998 almost half a million drownings of all sorts occurred, of which 57% were among children under 14. It reviewed a whole raft of measures such as the legal requirement to fence pools in Australia. It then concludes "Adequate fencing of pools will be achieved only if fencing is required by law and

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## CONTROLS ON CORALS RELAXED

As you will all be aware, the EU Scientific Review group has for sometime held a negative opinion on the import of some coral species from Indonesia. It has now reversed several of these to positive opinions thus trade may resume in the following:

- Euphyllia ancora
- Euphyllia glabrescens
- Hydophora exesa
- Hydophora microconos
- Trachyphyllia (Wellsophyllia) geoffroyi

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/cites/agenda\\_summaries/23rd\\_summary\\_srg.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/cites/agenda_summaries/23rd_summary_srg.pdf)

All other suspensions of coral imports from Indonesia remain in place.

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/cites/srg\\_negative\\_opinions.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/cites/srg_negative_opinions.pdf)

- Blastomussa merletti
- Cynarina lacrymalis
- Euphyllia sps. excluding those above
- Plerogyra sps.
- Pleurogyra simplex and
- Montipora caliculata from Tonga

Please note that valid export permits and imports (for instance in the EU) will be required as normal.

We understand this decision was made after receipt of the 2002 export quota's from Indonesia. ■



(right) A tomato plant stunted and malformed by infection with yellow leaf curl carried by *B. tabaci*

## IMPORT CONTROLS ON PLANTS TO BE CHANGED

Controls on plant imports are to be strengthened in response to finding the Tobacco Whitefly (*Bemisia tabaci*) "often on aquarium plants from Singapore". The Tobacco Whitefly can carry viral diseases that could cause tens of millions of £'s worth of damage to crops such as the tomato. It is also frequently found on imported cut flowers.

All plants must be inspected in the country of origin and a phytosanitary certificate issued by the relevant authority. Plant Health and Seeds inspectors can then carry out further inspections at import. It is recognised that if these inspections were all carried out at the airport there would be significant delays. To avoid this certainty, approved importers will be permitted to move

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## DISEASE PROBLEM SURROUNDS CHINESE KOI

We received information in the office during mid-June that the Chinese Authorities insisted that all koi producers submit samples of their fish so they may be tested for KHV. This requirement follows problems associated with a koi show in southern China in March.

We also hear that there have been instances of a disease that looks very much like KHV in a number of European countries. However those samples tested for the virus are not giving positive results.

Also we have heard reports of a mixture of disease problems in the UK. Please could you let us know of any problems you have experienced, or heard of on a confidential basis, to enable us to get a clearer picture of what is happening. A coldwater fish health questionnaire is enclosed.

There is further information concerning the problem in China on the web. This information must not be regarded as absolute fact but merely observations.

The organisers of the 9th Singapore Koi Show, held in April, were reported in the Straits Times (a leading newspaper in Singapore)

as barring koi from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia and Thailand. The reason given was as “precautions being taken after a viral outbreak in Guangzhou, China, which wiped out about 400 koi, worth about \$2 million, that were taking part in a show in the city last month.”

It was reported that “Japan was given the green light as the country did not take part in the Guangzhou event, and because it does not import from fish from China.” Elsewhere on the web there are reports that substantial numbers of Japanese fish are exported for on-growing to China. We are unable to confirm that there are strict controls on the import of fish to Japan.

The fish affected showed the following signs:

- white spots on the skin
- red veins on the skin
- black gills
- 90% mortalities of the onset of the disease

With the exception of the black gills, the signs match those of KHV, however we know nothing of the temperature the fish were at. Without at least that information it would be very, very, premature for that conclusion to be drawn as it is in the Straits Times article.

A worrying aspect is that the Guangzhou area is a very rapidly growing source of fish. One company, which claims to produce 50 million koi per year, in that area exports to America, Germany, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

What seems certain is that a severe outbreak of an, as yet, unknown disease appears to have occurred in Southern China earlier this year. Given all the uncertainties we would draw attention to “suggested actions” in the KHV document we circulated in December. Though we must emphasise that there is no confirmation that the cause of these problems was indeed KHV, the actions would provide more or less protection from any disease problem. ■

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*Bemisia Tabaci - the tobacco whitefly*

consignments to suitable inland destinations where inspections can be carried out. Where consignments are broken down approved importers will be required to provide customer lists, and to ensure plants are made available for inspection at their destination.

From now on importers who are not approved will have their consignments automatically held by Customs at the port or airport of entry, until an inspection can be carried out. This will be monitored via importers VAT number.

Further details can be obtained from your local Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate office or from the office. ■

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regulations are enforced. Furthermore, research findings must be translated to comparable sites, be it ornamental ponds in United Kingdom or..."

### LICENSING

In their response to the consultation on the Import of Live Fish Act, the Environment Agency suggested that no fish species subject of a general licence should be permitted in garden ponds on flood plains. Given flooding experienced in the last couple of years, if any such suggestion were accepted it could pose problems for the industry. However as it appears that the EA are having considerable difficulties enforcing the fisheries laws as they stand; one would have to wonder if they could cope with the administrative burden of any scheme to bring such a suggestion into action. ■

### PROGRESS OF THE MARINE AQUARIUM COUNCIL

MAC has produced a new booklet entitled "... from reef to retail" outlining their aims and methods. Limited numbers are available from the office. Please contact us if you wish to be sent a copy. ■

### STUDY OF PARASITES ON IMPORTED FISH CONCLUDES ORNAMENTALS LOW RISK

CEFAS has undertaken a study, one aim of which was to "Investigate and assess the threat of the introduction of exotic pathogens via the importation of coldwater ornamental fish". The study concluded "By far the most parasite species were detected in fish that were believed to have been collected from wild sources. In contrast, farm bred fish such as koi carp showed very few parasite species to be present. No parasite species known to be specific pathogens to native fish were detected, and it was concluded that the actual risk of introduction and establishment of new species of fish parasites was relatively small. However surveillance should continue in order to maintain awareness of potential parasite pathogens being imported via imports of coldwater ornamental fish." ■