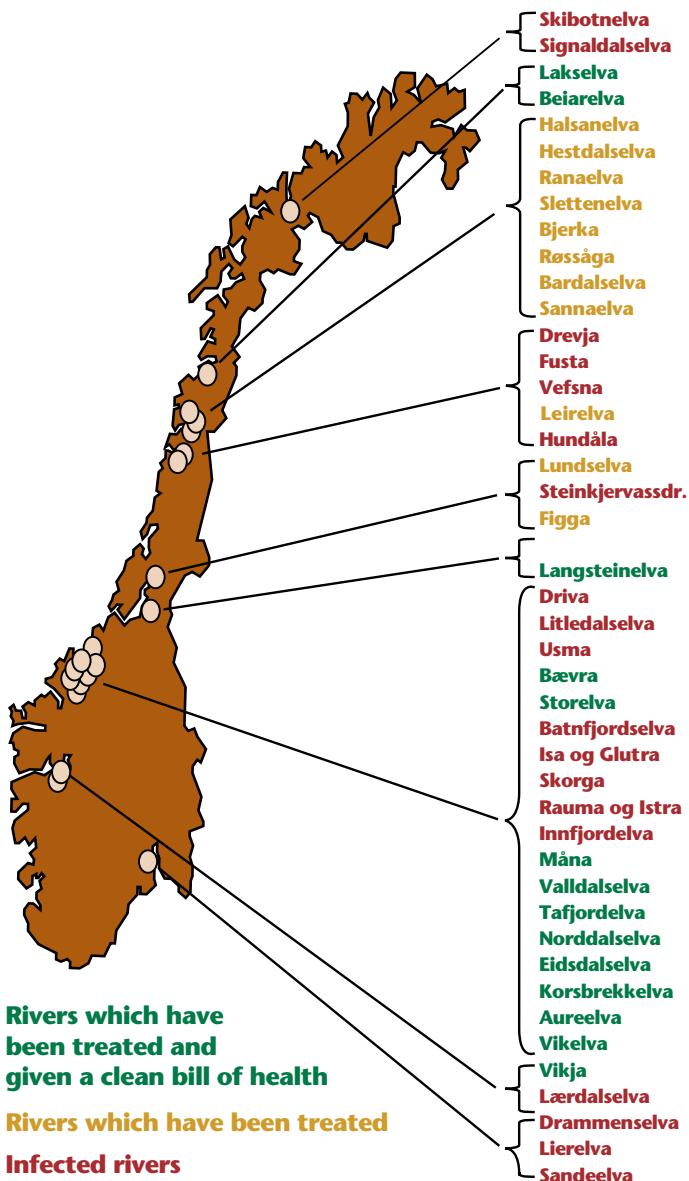


## Status of *Gyrodactylus* *salaris* in Norwegian watercourses at 1st of June 2008



# What is Gyrodactylus *salaris*?

**G. *salaris*** is a tiny creature measuring less than half a millimetre in length. It uses its tiny claws to attach itself to the skin of young salmon, which it then eats. **G. *salaris*** breeds prolifically and a young salmon may be host to up to 10,000 individual specimens before it dies. The parasite is often referred to as the «salmon killer» or simply, «Gyro».

## Why should this concern me?

The effects of this illness are so serious for the salmon that it can disappear completely from the infected rivers. If we don't do something, fishing for wild salmon in Norway could be consigned to the history books. For this reason it is very important that everyone who is out and about around rivers and fresh water knows what to do. We all have to do our bit to ensure that this parasite does not spread to other rivers.

## Where does *G. salaris* come from?

It is believed that *G. salaris* is widespread in rivers which flow into the Baltic Sea from Finland and Russia and possibly also Eastern Sweden. It seems that the Baltic salmon can withstand the parasite better than our own. In Norway, the parasite was first discovered in 1975 after grower stock was imported from Sweden. This underlines how careful we must be in moving and setting out fish.

## Can salmon become resistant?

The Norwegian salmon has very little resistance to the parasite. It is uncertain how long it will take to develop resistance which is high enough that the parasite does not threaten our salmon stocks. Experience from Norwegian watercourses which are infected by «Gyro» is that the parasite leads to almost total extinction of salmon.

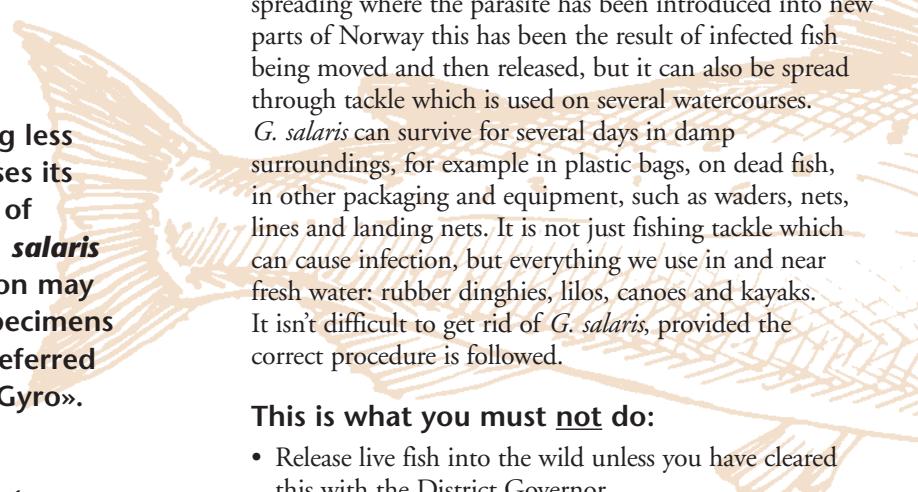
## How does the parasite spread?

The parasite can be spread by fish, tackle, nets and water from infected watercourses and water systems. In most spreading where the parasite has been introduced into new parts of Norway this has been the result of infected fish being moved and then released, but it can also be spread through tackle which is used on several watercourses.

*G. salaris* can survive for several days in damp surroundings, for example in plastic bags, on dead fish, in other packaging and equipment, such as waders, nets, lines and landing nets. It is not just fishing tackle which can cause infection, but everything we use in and near fresh water: rubber dinghies, lilos, canoes and kayaks. It isn't difficult to get rid of *G. salaris*, provided the correct procedure is followed.

## This is what you must not do:

- Release live fish into the wild unless you have cleared this with the District Governor
- Wash and gut fish anywhere other than where you caught them.
- Take tackle from one watercourse to another without disinfecting it.
- Throw water out into another watercourse than the one it was fetched from.



## Take care of the following before you move equipment between river systems:

Visit a disinfection station and have the equipment disinfected, or

Disinfect with for example Virkon-S. Virkon-S can be purchased from Felleskjøpet in powder form and is dissolved in water to make a 1% solution. The solution is sprayed on the equipment and rinsed off after approximately 15 minutes. Experience shows that this does not harm fishing equipment. Follow instructions on package or contact Mattilsynet for more information, or

Ensure that all the equipment is completely dry before it is moved to the next river system. This applies to fishing equipment, landing nets, boats, boots and other equipment that has been in contact with the water, or

Deep-freeze everything for at least a day.

If you have fished or paddled in foreign or infected Norwegian river systems, it is mandatory to clean and disinfect your equipment before you use it again.

**REMEMBER:** any movement of water and fish between watercourses involves a danger of infection.



**Do NOT** wash and gut fish anywhere other than where you caught them.

**Do NOT** throw water away in a different watercourse from the one it was fetched from.