

5.1 Parasitology Introduction

The following chapter describes identification procedures for four parasitic infections of fish that are commonly included in a fish health inspection. The target parasite species include three myxozoan parasites of salmonid fishes: *Myxobolus cerebralis*, *Ceratomyxa Shasta*, and *Tetracapsula bryosalmonae*; and the cestode: *Bothriocephalus acheilognathi*, which infects members of the Family Cyprinidae. [Section 2, Chapter 2 Sampling](#) describes procedures for proper sampling of fish tissues to ensure detection of any of these pathogens during a fish health inspection.

For *Myxobolus cerebralis*, presumptive identification is based on identification of the myxozoan spore stage from pepsin-trypsin digested (PTD) cartilage. Tissues from up to five fish may be pooled for screening by PTD. Identification of the spores is based on morphology. Confirmatory identification is based on identification of the spores in histological sections or on amplification of *M. cerebralis* DNA by the polymerase chain reaction.

For *Ceratomyxa shasta*, presumptive identification is based on identification of myxozoan spore or trophozoite/presporogonic stages from intestinal tissue. Identification of the myxospore stage is sufficient for confirmation of infection. Identification of the earlier stages must be confirmed by amplification of *C. shasta* DNA by the polymerase chain reaction.

For *Tetracapsula bryosalmonae*, presumptive identification is based on identification of the presporogonic stages of the parasite in Leishman-Giemsa or lectin stained imprints of kidney or spleen tissue. Infection is confirmed by identification of these stages in histological sections of kidney tissue or on amplification of *T. bryosalmonae* DNA by the polymerase chain reaction.

For the cestode, *Bothriocephalus acheilognathi*, visualization of any cestode with a pyramidal scolex results in a presumptive positive classification. Confirmation requires verification of morphological characteristics of the scolex.

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