

CEFAS investigations and enforcement strategy

The primary role of the CEFAS Fish Health Inspectorate is to enforce fish health regulations in England and Wales, in order to prevent and control the spread of serious fish diseases.

The CEFAS investigation and enforcement strategy is based on preventing and detecting offences by means of an intelligence-led, inter-agency, targeted approach and involves:

- Intelligence-gathering,
- Prioritising threat levels
- Targeted operations and investigations against suspected offenders
- Inter-agency co-operation with police, HM Customs, Environment Agency, State Veterinary Service and others
- Joint operations and enquiries
- Routine sampling of imports
- Contact chasing and disease investigations
- Close liaison with and advice to other EU authorities
- Close co-operation with angling organisations in UK and EU
- Monitoring fish movements/Live Fish Movements database
- Open press policy/informing the public/seeking its help
- Presentations to outside bodies



All aimed at preventing serious fish disease and protecting UK fish stocks.

Illegal imports and illegal movements of live fish



Angling, especially for carp, is a very popular, multi-billion pound sport in the UK. Fishery owners are willing to pay large sums of money for large carp, Wels Catfish and other species to attract anglers to fish their waters. Many British nationals have bought or rented lakes in France and an ever-growing number of anglers travel from the UK to fish these and other waters in Europe.

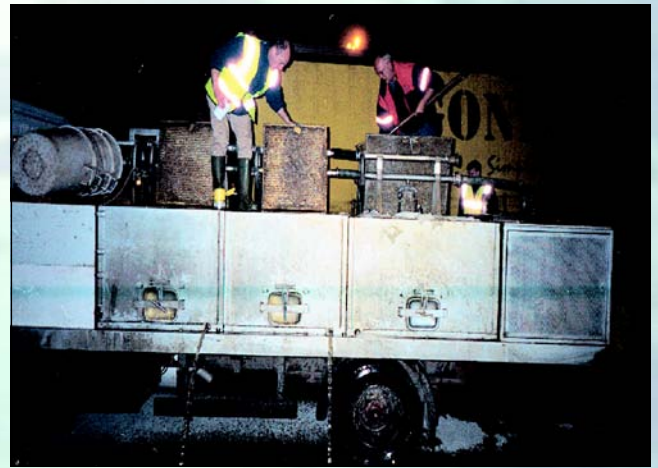
As a consequence the market for large carp is causing a significant increase in the number of movements of these animals across Europe, some of which are being illegally imported into the UK.

Illegal trade is a high priority for the CEFAS inspectorate in its attempts to prevent the spread of disease.

A recent illegal consignment of 1.8 tonnes of carp, purchased cheaply in Belgium, was found to be clinically infected with Spring Viraemia of Carp Virus (SVC) of a strain found previously only in Moldova.



SVC virus



Illegal import - 1.0 tonne of roach and bream from Belgium 2000



Illegal import - 1.8 tonnes of diseased carp from Belgium 2002



Illegal import - 1.2 tonnes of Koi and goldfish from Italy 2001

An illegal consignment of 1.2 tonnes of live ornamental fish (Koi and goldfish) from Italy was also intercepted by CEFAS inspectors. To prevent the spread of SVC these species, which can be moved freely in mainland Europe, are subject to strict conditions before they may be legally imported into the UK. The eFishBusiness site (<http://www.efishbusiness.com>) carries inclusive information on the controls that apply.

CEFAS will be pleased to provide further information and advice to other agencies with concerns over illegal movements of live fish.

CEFAS is pleased to receive any information relating to imports of live fish into Great Britain. All information will be treated in strict confidence. Tel 01305 206681 (24 hour answerphone).