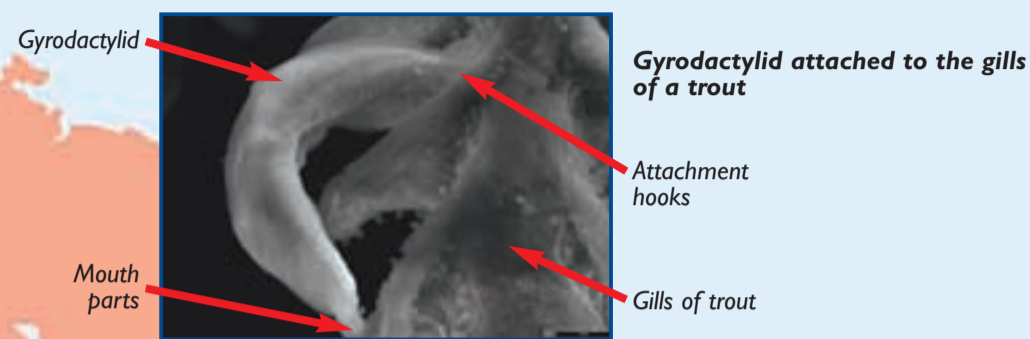


Gyrodactylus salaris is a viviparous, monogean freshwater parasite of salmon that naturally infects the Baltic strain of Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) without causing clinical disease. In the Atlantic strain of Atlantic salmon *G. salaris* is a serious parasite of pre-smolt stocks, and since its introduction into Norway it has decimated wild stocks in 40 Norwegian rivers. Eradication of the parasite is only achieved through destruction of all fish in an infected river. *G. salaris* presents a greater threat to our wild salmon stocks than any other exotic aquatic disease. It is able to survive on some salmonid species, e.g. rainbow trout (RBT) without causing clinical signs, and can survive on some non-salmonids species, e.g. eels, for up to seven days.

***G. salaris* is endemic** in western Sweden, northern Finland and northern Russia, and has infected 40 Norwegian rivers. The parasite has also been found in Denmark and Germany. Reports of *G. salaris* in Spain and Portugal require further verification.



All potential pathways of entry need to be rigorously assessed to ensure that appropriate and effective policies are in place to minimise the risk of introduction. This initial qualitative risk analysis was undertaken to identify the priorities for future research.

Endemic countries in Europe –

Possible pathways of introduction

United Kingdom –



? ?

- *G. salaris* is more likely to be introduced into the wild, compared with the farmed aquatic environment.
- *G. salaris* is killed by full strength salinity and thus imported salmon carcasses and well-boats travelling from Norway are not a serious threat.

Discussion & Conclusions

- RBT carcasses are imported from Denmark but entry into the aquatic environment is highly unlikely.
- *G. salaris* survives off the host for only 5-7 days under damp, cool conditions, therefore routes of mechanical transmission are probably not important.
- live eels are imported for processing from countries with *G. salaris*; the parasite or infected eels may escape when the water in which they are transported is changed, at point of sale or processing.

- the import of live eels is probably the most likely route of introduction.
- this pathway requires further investigation in a quantitative analysis to ensure the appropriate policies to minimise the risk of *G. salaris* introduction are in place.

Acknowledgements

The assistance of colleagues in CEFAS is gratefully acknowledged. The pictures of the well boat and RBT are reproduced with the permission of Aas Mek. Verksted A.S. and Trafalgar Fisheries, respectively. This work was funded by DEFRA.

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