

INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Report 252

August 16, 1934

EXAMINATION FOR CAUSE OF DEATH IN A SMALL-MOUTH BASS

A shipment of one iced, fresh fish specimen was received on August 13, 1934 from Mr. Frank A. Hoard, District Supervisor, whose headquarters are at Traverse City, Michigan. The following letter accompanied the shipment:

"Will you please let us know what is wrong with this fish."

Identification: The specimen was a male small-mouth bass (Micropterus dolomieu) and had a total length of 19 1/4 inches and a weight of 3 pounds, 1 ounce. It appeared to be at least six years old.

Condition: The fish arrived with no ice remaining, but it appeared to still be in fair condition. Marks of external injury were entirely lacking. There was no evidence of the fish having been dynamited. The gills showed a slight increase of mucous which is often present on fishes that die during the warmer season of the year. There was likewise no evidence of toxic poisons caused by chemical or bacterial pollutions from factories or domestic sewage.

An examination of the viscera and other internal organs showed the liver, testes, and mesentary to be heavily parasitized with flukes. The liver was the most heavily parasitized of all the internal organs and was in a marked pathological condition. The thoracic region was hemorrhagic and probably was the secondary cause of death. An aberrant growth occurred on the right upper pharyngeal. The testes were moderately parasitized and were most likely non-functional.

Conclusion: The fish apparently died from too great an infestation of the so-called liver flukes. Due to these parasites, certain pathological changes took place in some of the internal organs making them partially or non-functional. The final result was a thoracic hemorrhage which killed the fish.