



## Summary of Regulations Regarding the Harvest and Use of Baitfish

In an effort to prevent the spread of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) in Minnesota waters, additional regulations went into effect spring 2012 that address the harvest and use of certain baitfish - emerald shiners, spottail shiners, bluntnose minnows and other popular baitfish – that are susceptible to this fish-killing disease.

Viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) is an extremely serious viral disease of fresh and saltwater fish. It has been identified in the Great Lakes of the US and Canada. The disease has a history of large scale fish kills.

The following is a summary of frozen bait use regulations:

- Anglers purchasing dead or frozen VHS susceptible or imported bait from a vendor should only purchase packages affixed with a label stating that the bait has been tested and certified VHS free.
- Anglers are required to keep the label with the bait until it is used or discarded.
- It is illegal for anyone to bring live bait into the state at any time. Non-resident anglers should buy their bait when they get to their fishing destination or ensure that their imported dead bait is affixed with the required label (see page 12 of fishing regulations for details).

The following are considerations for anglers harvesting their own minnows for use as bait:

- Anglers cannot harvest minnows from designated infested waters. Lake of the Woods and the Rainy River are designated as infested waters due to the presence of the spiny waterflea.
- On non-infested waters, or lakes with Eurasian water milfoil, anglers can harvest up to 24 dozen minnows for personal use.
- VHS susceptible species must be harvested from certified VHS free waterbodies.
- When ice fishing only (except on waters designated infested with VHS), portable bait containers do not need to be drained before leaving the waterbody.

The most current list of designated infested waters can be viewed online at [www.mndnr.gov/ais](http://www.mndnr.gov/ais).

Information about VHS is available at [www.focusonfishhealth.org](http://www.focusonfishhealth.org).

More information on bait rules and regulations can be found in the 2012 Minnesota Fishing Regulations booklet or by visiting [www.mndnr.gov/regulations](http://www.mndnr.gov/regulations).