

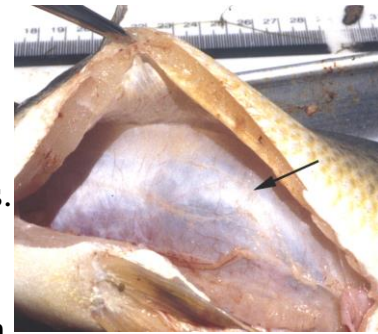
# LARGEMOUTH BASS VIRUS

(Family: Iridoviridae)

**Oneida Lake Status:**  
**Present**

- Recently discovered in Oneida Lake
- Bass kills only occur when stress is high
- Anglers can help to minimize impacts

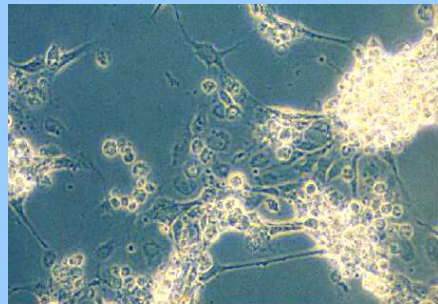
As of 2006, Largemouth Bass Virus (LMBV) has been found in fish from 15 states, and was recently found in Oneida Lake. LMBV may be spread through live-wells on fishing boats, amphibian migrations, fish stocking, or fish to fish contact. Although LMBV occurs in largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, bluegill, redbreasted sunfish, white crappie and black crappie, symptoms and death only affect adult largemouth bass. Once infected, largemouths accumulate a yellowish-brown, waxy residue in their swim bladders. No external lesions (sores) develop, but fish that are about to die are often found swimming upside-down in circles at the surface.



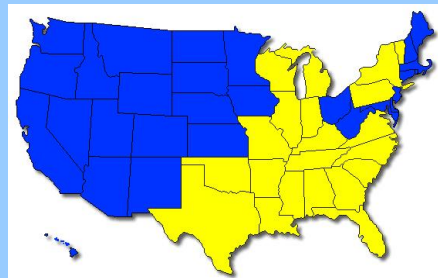
Inside an infected largemouth bass (Photo credit: J Grizzle)

Fish kills have not occurred in every lake containing the virus, as LMBV only becomes lethal when fish are subjected to stress (including handling). Infected fish that appear healthy have not been known to die from the virus. Although fishing may be poor for a short time following a fish kill, LMBV has no long-term effects on largemouth bass populations. Infected fish are safe to eat, but should be thoroughly cooked first.

LMBV cannot be eradicated in wild populations, but anglers can reduce its spread and minimize its impacts. Fish and fish parts should not be moved from one lake to another, and anglers should disinfect live-wells with a mild bleach solution followed by five minutes of rinsing. Catch-and-release should be made as stress-free as possible, and fishing tournaments should be conducted during cooler weather to reduce environmental stresses.



LMBV seen through an electron microscope



States where LMBV has been observed



LMBV only shows symptoms and causes death in largemouth bass

Prepared by:

**Alexander Sonneborn**  
Cornell Biological Field Station

Edited June 2013