

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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TROUT IN NATIONAL HATCHERY IN NEVADA ARE  
ORDERED DESTROYED TO CURB WHIRLING DISEASE

The Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife announced today that it is destroying all 750,000 fish at its Lahontan National Fish Hatchery in Nevada because of the discovery there of "whirling disease," which is crippling and sometimes fatal to trout and salmon.

"We are taking this action because stocking these diseased cutthroat and rainbow trout might contribute to spread of the disease," said Assistant Secretary Leslie L. Glasgow, who heads Interior's programs for fish, wildlife, parks, and marine resources. He emphasized that the disease does not infect humans and other mammals.

"While the fish at Lahontan are destined for planting in water systems confined to the State of Nevada, the question of stocking or not stocking diseased fish is a moral issue. You either condone environmental degradation or you do not. When viewed from this standpoint, it becomes clear that the Federal Government cannot stock diseased fish anywhere or anytime," Assistant Secretary Glasgow said.

The disease was so named because it often causes whirling spasms. It was discovered in the United States in the late 1950's. The reason for its spread from Europe is unknown.

In ensuing years, the disease has spread to nine States, appearing in Federal, State and commercial hatcheries. Only one other Federal facility has been affected--Lamar Hatchery in Pennsylvania in 1958.

Strict inspection and disease control programs will eliminate or greatly reduce serious fish diseases, fishery biologists believe.

Lahontan's facilities are being completely disinfected. The hatchery is being resupplied with healthy eggs from disease free brood stock. "High quality fish production will be restored at Lahontan," Dr. Glasgow promised.

The Lahontan Hatchery is scheduled to produce the Lahontan cutthroat trout this spring, a fish found by Nevada's Game and Fish Commission to be uniquely suited to the alkaline waters of Nevada such as Pyramid Lake and Walker Lake.

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