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FISH DIVISION

October 27, 1930

Report No. 37

PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS ON "LYMPHOCEPTIS/<sup>DISEASE</sup> OF  
YELLOW PICKEREL

On October 25th we were informed by Mr. Westerman that the diseased yellow pickerel (Stizostedion vitreum) of Saginaw Bay were appearing in unusual numbers of late. Some lifts showed as high as 40% of these fish, so repulsively marked with sores as to make them unsalable.

Some specimens were sent on ice by Officer A. B. Asman on October 24th and were received in very good shape the following day. Mr. Asman requested a report on the disease, as he and fishermen "are anxious to know what is wrong with them and the cause".

The disease in question is especially prevalent in the yellow pickerel (wall-eye or pike-perch), in Lake Erie, Lake St. Claire and Saginaw Bay. It is referred to in our reports on diseased fish in Lake St. Claire (Report No. 8). It has been identified with the fish disease called "<sup>lympho</sup>dermo-cystis" in Europe.

No one, either in America or in Europe, has, so far as we know, found the cause of the disease. The symptoms are large cream-colored wart-like excrescences on the fins and on the body. The growths often show a grape-like structure of component cysts. But on opening the cysts, one finds no worms or even microscopic animals. On the body the outgrowths affect only the most external skin-layer (the epidermis), because they

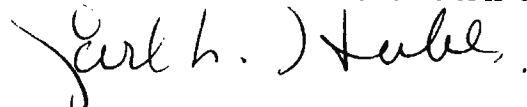
can be picked off to leave the scales and surrounding tissues apparently normal.

A preliminary examination of these diseased yellow pickerel, by Fish Pathologist Wendell H. Krull, showed the presence in the cysts of countless numbers of the coccus type of bacteria. It seems very probable that the bacteria are the cause of the disease, and that the disease is contagious. The study of the disease is being continued, and it is hoped that its definite nature and cause can be ascertained with certainty.

Owing to the probable contagious nature of the disease, the affected fish should be brought ashore and buried or otherwise disposed of, so that the disease organisms may not affect other individuals.

After a few days, we will have need of a few more specimens of the diseased yellow pickerel, and we are hereby asking Mr. Asman to forward these to us.

INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH



Carl L. Hubbs  
Director

CC to A. B. Asman