

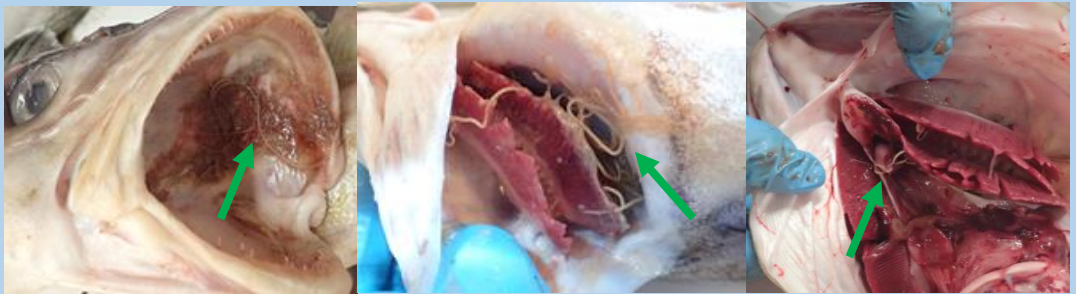
Evisceration, beheading or extirpation of gills can remove the parasite *Hysterothylacium* from whitefish

- The nematode *Hysterothylacium aduncum* – *Hystero* in short – is a very common parasite of fish from Northeast (NE) Atlantic waters, especially in gadoid fishes such as cod, haddock and saithe. *Hystero* can be up to 10 cm long and is easy to spot.
- *Hystero* is considered non-pathogenic to humans, however, it can cause significant economic losses to the whitefish industry due to its repellent effect if present in or on the fish or in the transport boxes.
- NE Arctic cod, saithe and haddock captured in West-Finmark were inspected for *Hystero* in winter, early spring and late spring of 2019.

RESULTS

- The parasite occurs mainly in the stomach and intestines of fishes but not in the fillets.
- Parasites may be unnaturally present in the head cavities, i.e. mouth, gills and throat. They are transferred there from ejected stomachs/food during fishing and before evisceration takes place.

Where *Hystero* often occurs in the fish



Infection details

- *Hystero* is more abundant during winter and early spring than in late spring.
- Fish become strongly infected when preying on spawning capelin in West-Finmark.

Fish	Period	Prevalence (range) *	Abundance (range) **
Cod	Winter/early spring	97% - 100%	29 - 239
	Late spring	81%	9
Saithe	Early spring	100%	46
	Late spring	97%	12
Haddock	Early spring	80%	16
	Late spring	27%	1

* Percentage of infected fishes in the sample. ** Average number of parasites per fish.

Recommendations

Hystero can largely be removed if fishes are eviscerated, beheaded and flushed carefully before packing for transport.

Alternatively, in head-on fish, apart from evisceration and flushing, thorough cleaning of the mouth and throat along with complete removal of the gills, may resolve the problem, as well.