

Fish size rules for Section 30 health checks

Principles

Before we can give Section 30 consent for the release of fish into a mandatory site (where water flows from one body of water to another, or is in the floodplain), a sample of those fish must pass a mandatory health check. The fish examined for these health checks must be representative of the fish to be stocked. This means that there are rules for the number, size and species of fish that must be examined during a health check.

Why we have the rules

The rules are based on evidence that:

- a certain number of fish must be examined to give an acceptable chance of detecting infections of diseases and novel parasites;
- some parasites are specific to the species of fish they infect;
- some parasites are specific to the size and life stage development of fish they prefer to infect.

These rules have been designed to be as simple as possible and take into account the value of the fish, in terms of both number and cost.

Rules for health checks

Overall sample size

For a mandatory health check, we require the following:

- A minimum of 30 fish must be examined.
- For each species of fish to be moved, a minimum of 10 fish must be examined.
- For each size category of fish to be moved, a minimum of five fish must be examined.

Size categories

The size categories are based on the susceptibility of each fish species to specific parasites as well as their life stage development (for example fry and adult fish are susceptible to different health risks). For simplicity, fish species have been grouped as follows and are given in the tables on the next page.

- Pike have a small and a large size category only.
- Group 1 fish species (carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), tench, barbel and common bream only) are divided into small, medium and large size categories.
- Group 2 fish species (such as roach, rudd, trout, salmon and all other species) are divided into small and large size categories only.
- For all species (excluding pike), fry (fish less than 5 cm) are regarded as a separate size category.

Size categories for pike (*Esox lucius*)

Species	Fish size categories (fork length)			
	Small		Large	
	cm	inches	cm	inches
Pike	≤46	≤18	≥46	≥18

Size categories for other fish species

Species	Fish size categories (fork length)							
	Fry		Small		Medium		Large	
	cm	inches	cm	inches	cm	inches	cm	inches
Group 1 ¹	≤5	≤2	5-15	2-6	15-25	6-10	≥25	≥10
Group 2 ²	≤5	≤2	5-15	2-6	-	-	≥15	≥6
Special cases	Please telephone the FTS, Brampton on 01480 483802.							

¹Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), tench, barbel and common bream only.

²Including species such as roach, rudd, silver bream, trout, salmon, crucian carp, gudgeon.

Size category rules

The sizes of fish examined within a species, must meet the following rules:

1. For each species, a minimum of five fish from each size category of fish to be moved must be examined. If only one size category of fish is to be moved then fish from other size categories (excluding fry) can be examined to make the species number up to 10.
2. Once the minimum number of fish for each species and each size category to be moved is met, the remaining fish (to make up the minimum sample size of 30) can be any species and any size (excluding fry), providing they are from the same water.

Examples:

- If you intend to move small, medium and large carp, then five small carp, five medium carp and five large carp must be health-checked. The remaining 15 fish can be made up of other species and sizes (excluding fry).
- If you intend to move small and large common bream, then five small common bream and five large common bream must be health-checked. The remaining 20 fish can be made up of other species and sizes (excluding fry).
- If a health check sample consists of seven small roach, three large roach and 20 small rudd, it will pass for small rudd and small roach only. This is because at least five small roach have been examined, supported by large roach to make the species number up to 10. The large roach do not pass as fewer than five fish have been examined.
- If a health check sample consists of six medium carp, two small carp, one large carp and 21 small roach, it will only pass for small roach. This is because not enough carp (fewer than the minimum of 10) have been examined, so the species cannot pass a mandatory health check.

Ornamental and colour variants

Ornamental colour variants of fish species (for example ghost carp, koi carp, golden rudd and golden tench) are treated as separate “species”. Therefore, they are reported separately under the variant name (for example golden rudd must be listed separately from rudd).

Though we will not consent stocking of ornamental variants into mandatory waters, you can use them to make up the total number of fish required for a health check (for example, to make the sample up to 30 fish). You can’t use them to make up the minimum 10 fish required for each species.

Example:

For a sample of small common carp and small ghost carp, a minimum of 10 small common carp must be examined, with the remaining 20 fish made up of small common or ghost carp. If nine small common carp and 21 small ghost carp are examined, the small common carp will fail the health check due to insufficient numbers.

Hybrids

We won’t treat hybrids of native species as separate species for health checking, unless they are listed specifically as the type of fish being moved. If hybrids are stated on an application then you need 10 hybrids or 10 fish of each parent species examined. But, you can’t use them to make up the 10 fish required for each parent species. For example, roach/rudd hybrids cannot count towards a sample of roach. You can however use hybrids to make a sample up to 30 fish in mandatory health checks.

Example:

For a sample of small roach, small rudd and small roach/rudd hybrids, 10 small roach and 10 small rudd must be examined for these species to pass. The remaining 10 fish required for the health check can be made up of roach, rudd or roach/rudd hybrids.