Fish Health Specialist

Duties and Responsibilities:

Position manages all aspects of a comprehensive fish health program and includes:

- Inspecting, diagnosing, and prescribing treatments for fish in both state hatcheries and outlying rearing ponds.
- Investigating the distribution and patterns of diseases and disease outbreaks in wild fish, reptiles and amphibian populations.
- Serving as the Department's technical member of the Fish Health Committee that advises on matters of fish health for the interstate and international waters.
- Developing close work relationships with Wildlife Division staff that work on similar issues in wildlife.
- Assisting with fish health issues in private aquaculture and the bait industry.
- Conducting fish health research and investigations with other fish health professionals
- Provides certification services necessary for fish health management.
- Program budget, assure that adequate equipment and supplies are available to completed needed fish health assessments; hire and supervise a technician and temporary employees.

Oversee the development of fish health plans for all state fish production facilities to ensure appropriate biosecurity measures are in place and implemented, appropriate Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans are prepared for all facilities, and disinfection and depopulation procedures are in place.

Provide diagnostic services for state fish production facilities and feral fish populations as required to include:

- Overseeing and ensuring quality control of lab work for isolation and identification of pathogenic organisms including parasites, fungi, bacteria, and viruses.
- Evaluating and interpreting laboratory results and providing fish health recommendations to the Division based on these results.
- Conducting site visits as needed to properly assess fish health problem(s) and approprite actions.
- Performing necropsies, preparing tissues for analysis and conducting analytical tests to determine the cause of mortalities, and recommending necessary treatment or disease control methods.

Perform and/or cooperate in various research projects to develop an understanding of fish disease progression and ecology to include:

- Designing and carry out specific research projects as needed.
- Working with other fish health professionals to carry out other research projects; and to developing epidemological analyses and studies to fully understand disease emergence and progression in cultured and wild fish.

- Prepare and write reports on findings for publicaton in scientific journals and state reports.

Fully develop and oversee a statistically valid wild fish disease survey to provide needed baseline information for State Fish Health Committee Model Program diseases as well other diseases and pathogens that are emerging or potential threats.

- Ensuring the appropriate study and data collection design.
- Investigate disease problems in natural waters
- Performing needed necropsies, tissue preparation and overseeing analytical tests to determine cause(s) of problems.

Develop a working relationship with the state department of agriculture to oversee Division requirements for the stocking of public waters by private entities and to ensure that pathogens are appropriately controlled in the private aquaculture industry of the state.

Stay abreast with state and federal authorities and mandates provided by the Endangered Species Act, Sustainable Fisheries Act, Clean Water Act, and National Environmental Protection Act.

Minimum Qualifications:

This position requires a Masters degree with emphasis on fishery biology, fish culture, or fish disease, a DVM, or a combination of these degrees . Two years of experience in a fish health or animal diagnostic lab are preferred. Knowledge of aquatic life support systems (construction, maintenance, monitoring) preferred.

Selection Criteria:

- Knowledge of fish disease management principles and methodologies, pathology and diagnostic principles and methodologies, epidemiology principles and methodologies, invasive species detection and control management principles and methodologies.
- Extent of experience working with wild fish monitoring and sampling schemes to determine trends and emerging fish health issues in wild fish populations.
- Demonstrated ability to work as a technical member of a Fish Health Committee to advise on matters of fish health for state or federal waters.
- Relevance of experience in facilitating collaborations amongst individuals from multiple organizations, government bodies, NGOs, Universities, and national programs related to fish disease and invasive species eradication programs.
- Quality of both oral and written communication skills on technical issues.
- Demonstrated ability to develop/design proposals, manage projects, track budgets, monitor progress, review and approve final reports at the completion of projects.
- Demonstrated ability to be an effective decision maker and negotiator, proficient in conflict resolution.