



ORNAMENTAL AQUATIC TRADE ASSOCIATION
LTD

"The voice of the ornamental fish industry"

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Prevention advice on new chytrid fungus found in newts

A new species of fungus deadly to European newts has been discovered by scientists and has received wide coverage in the national press.

History

Since the mid-1990s a fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd or Chytrid for short) has been implicated in worldwide extinctions of amphibian populations. Various sources of the problem have been suggested, including the international trade in *Xenopus* toads for human pregnancy testing. Bd affects a wide range of amphibian species, across all Orders (frogs & toads, newts & salamanders, caecilians).

What's new

A new species of chytrid fungus, *B. salamandrivorans* (Bs) has been discovered killing salamander populations in Belgium and The Netherlands. A paper indicates the source may be imported ornamental amphibians from Asia. How they transmitted the Bs to native populations must remain speculative but it could be by release of specimens to the wild or even by washing terrarium outside in gardens visited by newts and salamanders.

Bs does not affect all amphibians: just newts and salamanders. So far, it has only been found in three species of imported amphibian from three countries – all in Asia. Unlike Bd, Bs is intolerant of temperatures above 25°C.

What you can do

Make sure all Asiatic newts and salamanders (not European or those from the USA) imported to the UK are held at 25°C for 10 days prior to sale to the public. (Although do bear in mind that this might not be 100% effective against Bs and will be totally ineffective against Bd and other pathogens, such as ranaviruses.)

Additionally always remind customers that it is illegal to release pets to wild – not least because it is cruel.

Water and other materials from terrariums should be treated with disinfectant and should not be disposed of in the garden or the countryside.

This is written jointly by OATA and REPTA