

Diseases and the environment

The nature of disease in the aquatic environment

What is a disease? Most diseases described in this guide are caused by infectious agents—viruses, bacteria, fungi or parasites. Another common cause of deaths in the aquatic environment is the environment itself: deaths can result from oxygen depletion, aquatic toxins, or changes in water temperature or salinity. However, diseases due to noninfectious causes are not covered in this guide.

A disease outbreak will not occur simply because an infectious agent is present. Rather, the cause of a disease is determined by the interaction of the host (the aquatic animal), the infectious agent and the environment.

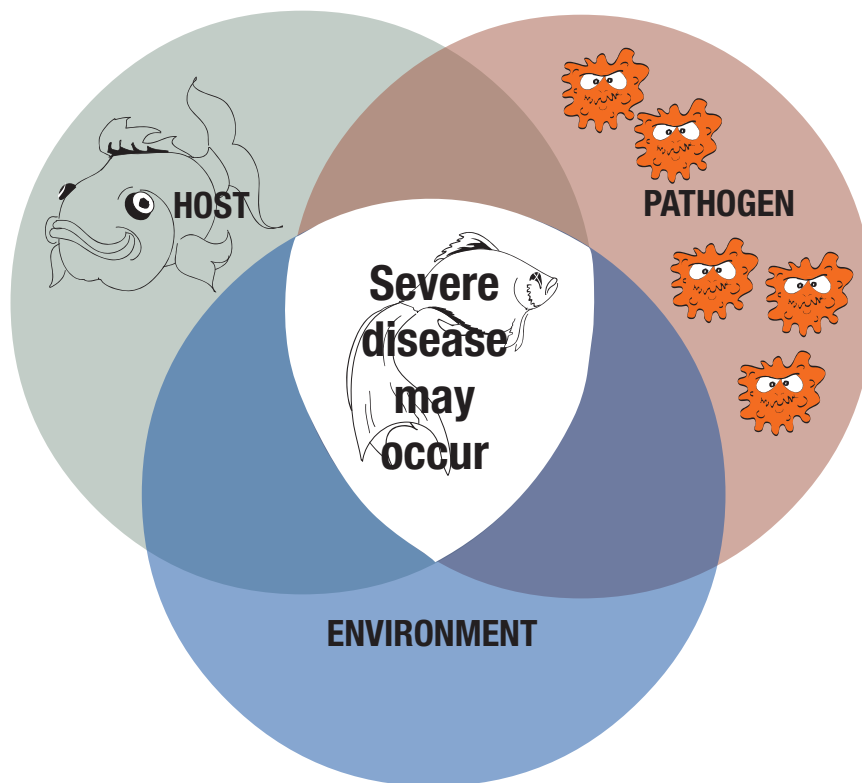


Figure 1. Relationship between host, pathogen and the environment in disease outbreaks.

Diseases of regional concern

Exotic diseases

Diseases in this field guide described as exotic are those that have never been reported in Australia.

Endemic diseases

Endemic (enzootic) diseases are those that have established in the Australian environment. They might be native to Australia or have been introduced in the past.

Sourced from AGDAFF (2008) *Aquatic Animal Diseases Significant to Australia: Identification Field Guide*. Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra.

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