

INCIDENCE OF OPERCULAR ULCER DISEASE IN
LABEO ROHITA (HAM.)

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Ulcer disease causes heavy mortality in Japan to carps, coloured carps and gold fish and it is ranked as one of the major epidemics (Kawatsu et al 1979). It is also reported from the northeastern United States and Canada, where it was found to affect the salmonid fishes (Sarig 1979, Bullock et al 1971), whereas in India the ulcer disease is not very common (Gopalakrishnan 1963). In all these cases ulcers were reported to erode the body surface, fins or mouth (Ronald et al 1980). So far, no record is available on the occurrence of ulcer on the opercular region.

In a private carp culture tank at Agartala in Tripura, the incidence of ulcer disease in rohu, *Labeo rohita*, was 30%. In some of the diseased fish the

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symptom was in a different location, namely the operculum. A few of the diseased specimens were brought to the laboratory and maintained in plastic pools. They died within four hours. The average weight and length of fish was 320 g and 30 cm, respectively. The infection after its initiation in the opercular region was found to spread throughout the opercular tissues penetrating to the gills (Fig. 1). It was interesting to note while the open sore was on the right oper-

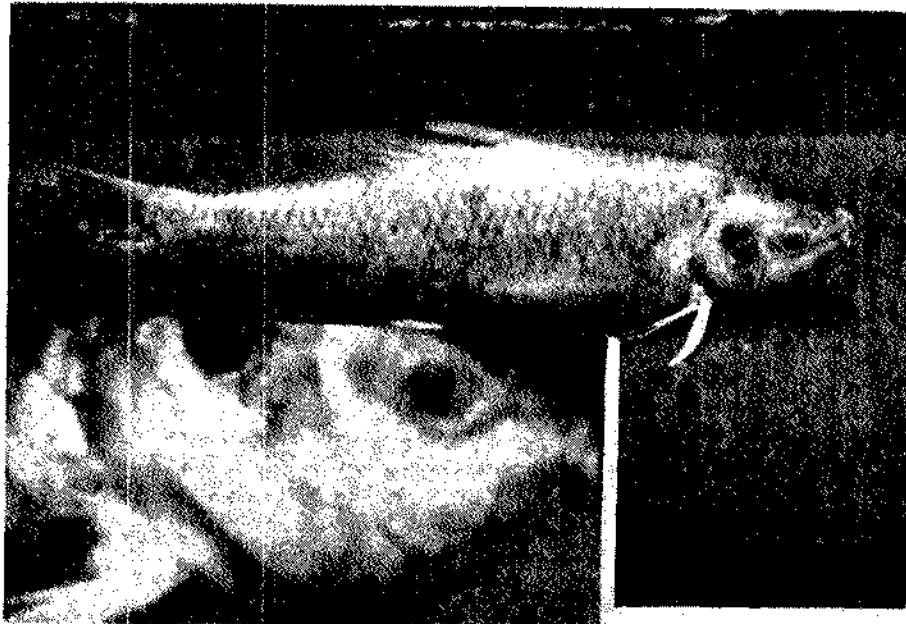


FIG. 1. *Labeo rohita* affected with ulcer disease (inset shows the affected right opercular region enlarged).

culum, the left opercular epidermic portion of the same fish showed white patch and slight ulcerations in its midst (fig. 2), indicating the slow spread of the disease to the left opercular portion. There were no open sores in any other part of the body. The white sporangiofic epidermic hyperplasia on the opercular surface which sloughs, producing shallow ulcer with a white rim, confirmed that the causative bacterium is *Haemophilus piscium* (Ronald et al 1980). This is the first case of ulcer disease recorded from Tripura and from the northeastern Region. As the disease is considered to be a major epidemic, its occurrence should be viewed seriously, as this may spread to the other parts of the region.

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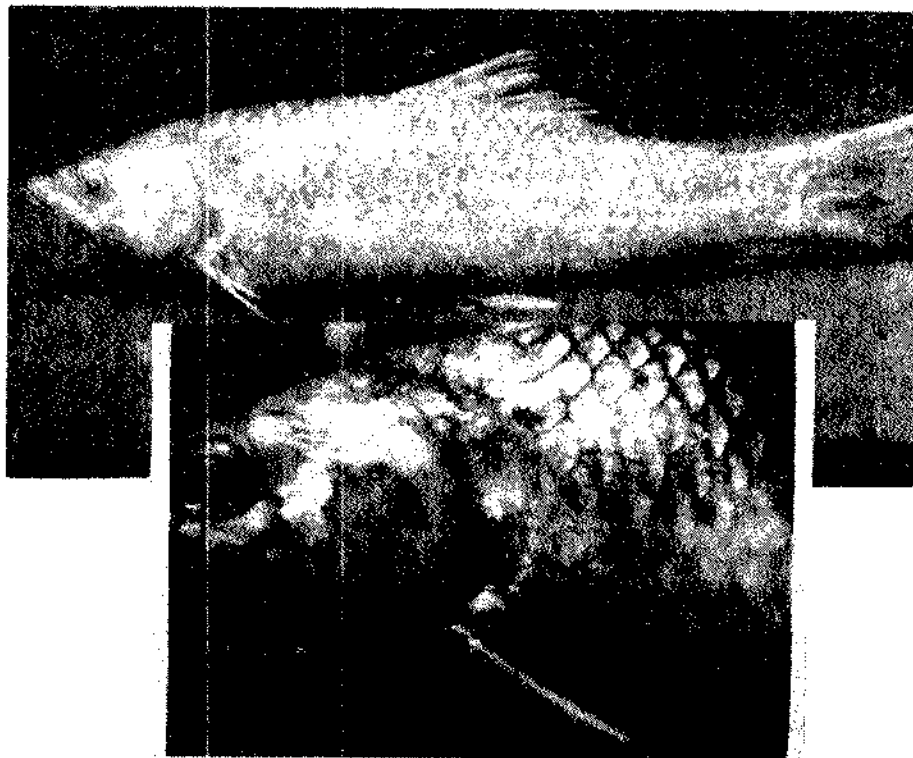


FIG. 2. The same fish as shown in Fig. 1, showing white patches on the left opercular portion (the inset: opercular region enlarged to show slight ulceration in the midst of the white patch).

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