OCCURRENCE OF GAS BUBBLE DISEASE IN LABORATORY-MAINTAINED COBIA JUVENILES

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In marine finfish culture, one of the major factors affecting profitability is the occurrence of disease. Gas bubble disease (GBD) is usually associated with the supersaturation of nitrogen or oxygen in the water. We describe here a case of occurrence of GBD in cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*) juveniles that were maintained in the laboratory during a 42 day-long feeding trial. Groups of ten juveniles (initial size: 12 g and 14 cm) were maintained in 500 L circular fiberglass tanks equipped with supplemental aeration in a flow-through system (250 L/h). Fish were fed experimental diets with different lipid sources in two daily meals. Due to an unexpected power cut, water flow and supplemental aeration resumed overnight, causing the death of most fish. Surviving individuals were euthanized and autopsies were performed. Water quality variables (temperature, salinity, pH, dissolved oxygen, ammonia and nitrite) remained within recommended levels for cobia culture. Gross lesions were observed in the form of swollen gills, congestion in the spleen and the presence of air bubbles in the fins and body surface. This disease can cause irreversible economic losses to fish farmers.