



# Washington County Planning and Parks Department

---

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Dated 05/22/17

Contact: Bradley Steckart, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator  
Washington County Planning and Parks Department  
email: [bradley.steckart@co.washington.wi.us](mailto:bradley.steckart@co.washington.wi.us) phone: 262.335.4806

### **Draining Livewells Can Stop Invasive Species and Protect Wisconsin's Waters**

MADISON – Water left in livewells, bait buckets, and bilges is a vehicle for the spread of aquatic invasive species between lakes. That is why draining all equipment before leaving a boat launch is required in Wisconsin – a requirement that will be underscored at the upcoming statewide Drain Campaign.

The annual campaign will take place the weekend of June 9-11. Volunteers will be talking with anglers and boaters at landings around the state and, in some cases, handing out free icepacks as a substitute to keeping fish in water.

“Ice is a great alternative to keep your fish fresh on the ride home,” says Bob Wakeman, the statewide Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, adding that ice is already preferred by many anglers, since it stops bacterial growth and helps to protect the flavor of your catch.

New to the Drain Campaign this year is a coordinated way for anglers to help share its message. For those who use social media, they can help spread the word about the importance of draining livewells and other equipment by posting photos and messages using the hashtag #JustDrainIt.

Wisconsin law prohibits the transport of invasive species because they have negative impacts on our aquatic ecosystems and our economy. Draining your water and using ice instead is the best way to comply with the law and help keep our lakes and fisheries healthy.

“Anglers are passionate about protecting their lakes and know the right thing to do is to remove invasive species and drain water from their boats,” says Wakeman.

The following steps are required by law to prevent aquatic invasive species.

- INSPECT boats, trailers and equipment.
- REMOVE all attached aquatic plants and animals.
- DRAIN all water from boats, vehicles, and equipment, including livewells and buckets containing fish.
- NEVER MOVE plants or live fish away from a waterbody.
- DISPOSE of unwanted bait in the trash
- BUY minnows from a Wisconsin bait dealer. Use leftover minnows only when fishing with them on the same body of water or on other waters as long as no lake or river water or other fish have been added to their container.

To learn more about invasive species and their impacts to Wisconsin's waters and economy, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/invasives>.

Follow us @WashCoParks on Facebook and Twitter.