

**WHAT'S HAPPENING**

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# LOCAL



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Scott Caven (aquatic invasive species coordinator with the Ashland County Land and Water Conservation Department) and Jared Neibauer (AIS technician with the department) with their display on invasive species at the Vaughn Library in Ashland. They are help to raise awareness among boaters, anglers, hikers, bikers, ATV users, and other outdoor enthusiasts about the role they play in preventing the spread of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

## PROTECTING THE LAKES

# Draining livewells and boats can stop invasive species in their tracks

### SUBMITTED ARTICLE

People may know to inspect their boats for weeds before they leave the lake, but they may not know that some of Wisconsin's worst aquatic invasive species (AIS) can spread through transported water.

Invaders like zebra mussel larvae or spiny water fleas – too small to readily see – can survive to the next lake when water is left in a livewell, bucket, bilge, motor or equipment.

"That's why AIS staff in Ashland County will be reminding anglers and boaters to drain their gear this summer before hitting the road," Scott Caven, Ashland County aquatic invasive species coordinator, said.

University of Wisconsin-Extension's AIS Communications Specialist Deborah Seiler said the campaign came about based on feedback from anglers.

"Across the state, anglers were telling us the rules on fish and water transport just aren't as clear to them. The DNR [Department of Natural Resources] and our AIS partners listened, and we're trying to help spread the word and offer a good alternative," she said.

Caven explained that once the day's catch is out of water, the fish are not considered live and can be transported safely home. Since fish need to be kept

fresh on the road, Caven suggests an alternative to livewells that is already preferred by many anglers: ice.

To help anglers out, the Ashland County Land and Water Conservation Department handed out ice packs at boat landings on June 15-16 as part of a statewide effort.

"We know some folks are used to taking their catch home in livewells," said Caven, "but ice is a legal and better way to get those fish home. It stops any bacterial growth, and then your catch isn't ingesting the fish toxins that concentrate in fouled, low-oxygen water on the way home, which some say affects the taste.

"You also don't want that water making it to a new lake," he said. "Fish diseases or very small invasive species can get around that way."

Drying a boat for five days can help kill any AIS in residual water, but Caven said a simple disinfection process can do the job for those who plan to change lakes sooner.

"You can follow the DNR's policy for when they move their boats," he suggested. "Mix up one tablespoon bleach per one gallon of water, spray it on, and keep your boat and livewell wet with that for 10 minutes. It also works for gear."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Pam Roberts (NCWMA coordinator) along with Sarah Moodie and Mikayla Jaekel (NCWMA interns) with their display on invasive species at the Vaughn Library in Ashland.

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