

News Release

Aquatic invasive species laws require boaters to ‘Pick it or Ticket’

(Released July 1, 2010)

“Pick it or Ticket.” That’s what will happen if people don’t do their part to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species, according to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

DNR conservation officers and watercraft inspectors will step-up enforcement of invasive species law over the Fourth of July weekend. They will also be out educating boaters about a new law that goes into effect July 1 requiring boaters to now remove the plug and drain water before leaving any lake and river in Minnesota.

“Our lakes and rivers are too important to take for granted,” explained Larry Kramka, DNR assistant commissioner. “Boaters need to be accountable and personally responsible to prevent the further spread of aquatic invasives.”

The water draining law is intended to help prevent the spread of fish diseases such as VHS, and invasive species such as zebra mussels and spiny waterfleas that cannot be seen when free floating in the water in early life stages.

Boaters are required by law to:

- Remove aquatic plants and zebra mussels from boats and trailers.
- Drain all water, including pulling the drain plug, open water draining devices, and draining bilges and live wells.
- Drain bait buckets when exiting lakes that have been designated as infested
- with spiny water flea or zebra mussels. Anglers can keep unused bait when leaving infested waters if they replace the water with tap or spring water.

The increased enforcement efforts over the holiday weekend will include an increased presence at public water accesses at infested waters where officers will look closely for violators of existing laws who could face fines from \$50 up to \$1,000.

Minnesota’s water resources are threatened by numerous aquatic invasive species such as the zebra mussels, Eurasian water milfoil and spiny waterfleas. These species could be easily spread within the state if citizens, businesses and visitors don’t take the necessary steps to contain them.

The zebra mussel populations currently in Lake Mille Lacs, Alexandria chain of lakes, (Le Homme Dieu, Carlos, and Geneva), Pelican Lake in Otter Tail County, Prior Lake in Scott County and Rice Lake near Brainerd are a particular concern as they can be key sources for zebra mussel spread.

For more information about which lakes are infested with aquatic invasive species, visit http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/invasives/infested_waters.pdf

For general information about invasives - go to:
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/index.html>