

Caution urged to prevent spread of fish virus

Marshfield News-Herald – April 5, 2007

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources passed emergency rules prohibiting anglers and boaters from removing live fish from before leaving Wisconsin's Great Lakes waters, the Mississippi River and those waters' tributaries up to the first dam. Boaters also must drain boats and live wells on the waters as well.

The rules go into effect Saturday.

Wisconsin officials believe Viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus is present in these waters, or soon will be because they are connected to waters where the virus has been found. VHS is **not** a threat to human health, but it caused major fish kills in 2005 and 2006 in lakes St. Clair, Erie, Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.



The rules are:

- Live bait must be purchased from a Wisconsin bait dealer, captured legally in the water where you are fishing or captured in an inland lake or stream and used in another inland lake or stream. Leeches, worms and insects are OK.
- Dead bait can only be used on Lake Michigan, used on the inland lake or stream where it was captured or preserved by means other than refrigeration or freezing — neither of which is assured of killing the virus.
- Don't take live fish off the Great Lakes or Mississippi River. There are some limited exceptions, call the DNR at 608-266-6790 for information about those situations.
- Drain your boat and live well and empty your bait bucket before you leave the landing.
- Notify the DNR if you see a fish with hemorrhages on its skin. The DNR is testing wild fish from Lake Michigan and Lake Superior this spring and will respond to fish kills.

Learn more about VHS by visiting <http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/pages/vhs.html>.