

“LIVE WELL LEAK”



Plastic liner live well

One of the more frustrating problems with many of the newer fishing boats is that **water from the live well** often **spills over into the bilge** area under the floor and we are not aware of it. This was brought to my attention recently **after a fishing trip on Lake Michigan** where we put fish in the live well. At the end of the trip **the boat was dry yet seemed quite heavy** when pushing it into the garage, but nothing occurred to me at the time. The **next day moisture was noticed in one of the compartments**, so I **opened the drain plug** to see if there was any water in the boat. To my surprise, **I drained out 30 gallons of water**, which will **weigh about 250 pounds**, the equivalent of one or two more passengers! This is **no small matter for a 14-foot boat** and 25 horsepower motor, and certainly does not help conserve gasoline.

Upon examination of the live well, it was discovered **there was a ¼ inch to ½ inch gap at the top of the plastic liner that was the live well**. When the lid was closed, **splashing water could easily go over this lip and into the bilge area** of the boat. **Rough water, splashing fish, continuous running of the pump, and high-speed running could all contribute to water**

getting in the bilge this way. **Sealing this lip off** to the outside live well frame **should reduce or eliminate the problem**. A **black closed-cell pipe insulation foam** was selected **for the sealing**. It could be easily **cut with scissors into strips** and **forced into the gap snugly with a blunt tool**. Also, the **drain stem is often too long**, keeping the live well full to near the top and causing more splashing. Most **live wells nowadays are plenty deep**, and **cutting an inch or so off the top** to reduce the water level **causes no problems**. It is always a good idea to **check** and make sure the **live well pump does not pump water faster than the drain can handle**. Usually there is a **volume control at the spray nozzle**.

It is **illegal to transport live fish in the live well**. In some states (not Michigan at present) it is required that the bilge plug be removed and the boat drained immediately after taking the boat out of the water. **To prevent spread of invasive species**, we need to **be aware of all state regulations**. It only makes sense to keep the boat and live well dry when not on the water.

Chase F Klinesteker CSI



Tools needed to seal off the live well