

# Baitwell Filter

## Staff Report

Cam Watts brought his invention to the boat show at Port Charlotte and drew a crowd. It was a filter to keep the overflow in a baitwell from clogging up. If you are fishing with live bait you know that when you throw a net full of bait into the well you also dump in the 'bycatch' of cast netting; turtle grass, snot grass, weeds, scales and dead fish all go in the well. Some anglers empty their net on the deck and sort it out before putting the bait in the well. Other's just empty the net directly into the well and take as much grass and other junk out of the well, but you never get it all before heading off to fish, so the drain gets clogged. It has been a fact of life up to



The filter fits over the baitwell standpipe

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now.

Enter Cam Watts, an inventor from Iowa with a home on Boca Grande. "I've been working on this for two years," Cam told us last week, adding "the dimensions are important."



The device is a perforated clear plastic tube with a locking collar to attach to your livewell standpipe. The tube must be trimmed to length with a hand saw so it comes out 3/4-inch above the top of the standpipe. To demonstrate his invention Cam had a fish tank with a standpipe and a 850 GPH pump set up for pictures at the show. Once the tank was 'running' he added handsfull of turtle grass and then 'snot grass'. After 10 minutes there was no change in the water. The drain kept draining. We asked Cam how much of the perforated tube could be covered and still allow it to drain the livewell with an 850 GPH pump filling it. It can be 2/3 covered, was what we found.

The device attaches to the standpipe with a flush allen head screw that won't snag a cast net. A thumb screw is also provided. For livewells where extreme rigidity of the standpipe is required a suction cup mounted base is available. A glue down collar may be on the design board soon. Cam manufactures these filter tubes at his shop in Iowa and plans to distribute them through local outlets like the Bait Box at Sanibel and Fishin' Franks in Port Charlotte. The device will sell for under \$30. Fishin Frank has one now if you want to look at it in person. The produce website [www.baitwellfilter.com](http://www.baitwellfilter.com) has a video of the filter working.