

THE IMPACT OF 'BUCKET BIOLOGY'

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LAKE GEORGE -- Last spring, a school of goldfish appeared in one of the ponds in the man-made wetlands at Charles Wood Park.

Someone apparently dumped an aquarium into the pond, and the goldfish took root, which was concerning because the ponds connect to Lake George.

Goldfish in Lake George could be a bad development, as they can grow large and hurt water quality.

So [Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District](#) and **Warren County DPW** drained the pond last fall, hoping to get the goldfish out of there, but some persevered. They tried electrofishing, but the little buggers were able to avoid the shock.

Fast forward to this spring, when some of them had grown to 8-10 inches. The next option to try to rid the pond of goldfish was introduce a predator.

So last week Jake Dunkley from Warren County Soil and Water worked with staff from **Lake George Park Commission and Warren County** to catch five largemouth bass to introduce into the pond. Within two hours they had five bass to put in the pond, and they were set free to eat some goldfish.

Don't dump aquarium fish, plants or other items in local waterbodies. The impacts can be huge, as invasive species like zebra mussels, lionfish, snakehead and hydrilla are believed to have gotten in our ecosystems from aquariums.

"There are big impacts whenever a non-native species is introduced into the environment, and we have seen it here in Warren County," explained **Jim Lieberum, Manager of Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District**. "We have had to use a lot of resources just to make sure these goldfish don't get into Lake George."

Lieberum estimated previous efforts to remove the fish cost about \$4,000 in equipment and worker time.

Invasive species like goldfish can harm native fish by damaging their habitat, feeding on them or interfering with their food sources. Researchers believe goldfish may actually be harming lake clarity by fueling algae growth with their waste in waters where they are entrenched.

Anyone who thinks that a few goldfish finding their way into Lake George wouldn't be a big deal need to read about the negative impact that [goldfish have had on a renowned lake out west, Lake Tahoe](#).