

# Speak Out Against Fish as Prizes

The decision to bring home a companion animal is a serious responsibility that requires planning and long-term care. It should not depend on how well you can toss a ping pong ball into a bowl. Goldfish are living, feeling creatures who deserve proper care, just like any other animal. Fish should not be prizes.

## Animal Welfare Concerns:

- Animals given as prizes are often treated as disposable by vendors and recipients.
- Many recipients lack the knowledge or preparation needed for proper care.
- The fish often suffer from abuse, neglect, disease, and stress-related death.

## Environmental Concerns:

- Goldfish won as prizes are frequently discarded into local waters, where they disrupt ecosystems, outcompete native species, and spread disease.
- The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service warns against releasing pet fish into the wild, and it is illegal in some states.

## Laws:

- Giving away live animals as prizes is illegal in Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Vermont, and parts of West Virginia.
- In Maryland, it is unlawful to give away live animals as prizes without approval from the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Berkeley, California banned the practice in 2017.



## What You Can Do:

- Look up state or local laws to see if the practice is prohibited.
- Document conditions at the booth, including with photos or video.
- Contact the event organizers to share your concerns and suggest alternate prizes such as stuffed animals.
- Contact the event sponsors to express your disapproval.
- Post on social media to raise awareness.
- Start a petition or an open letter.
- Contact your local humane society to request they check on the conditions in which the fish are being kept.
- Contact Betta World For Bettas and Fish Feel for resources and advocacy.

