Recycled Fish | National Invasive Species Awareness Week Kickoff Events

Although National Invasive Species Awareness week doesn’t officially kick off until February 26, 2012 the “pre-party” is in Shreveport, Louisiana at the BASSMASTER Classic.

Fishing fans at the Bassmaster Classic Expo presented by DICK’S Sporting Goods will pound out their fight against aquatic invasive species in an exciting new interactive exhibit: Whac-A-Mussel inside the DICK’S Sporting Goods footprint. The game plays just like the arcade classic Whac-A-Mole, but zebra mussels pop up the holes and people “mash the mussels” to demonstrate their disdain for the mollusk invaders. At the same time, anglers learn lessons about how they can Inspect – Clean – Dry to stop the spread of not just invasive mussels, but all sorts of aquatic nuisance species.

There’s more on the line than fun and education. Just for playing they’ll score prizes like Grabber Hand Warmers or Mardi Gras inspired beads. The top adult player will win a pair of Patagonia’s new aluminum bar Rock Grip Wading Boots, designed to help stem the spread of invasive species while providing excellent traction in challenging wading conditions. The top youth player will win a Recycled Fish shirt signed by dozens of professional anglers and fishing legends.

“Invasive species education is critical,” said Teeg Stouffer, Recycled Fish Executive Director. “But it can be kind of dry and boring. Just say the words ‘Invasive Species Education’ to people and watch their eyes glaze over. This is a learning tool that is fun, dynamic, engaging and interactive – it cuts through the clutter. We’re excited to introduce Whac-A-Mussel at the BASSMASTER Classic!”

Whac-A-Mussel is made possible through the partnership support of DICK’S Sporting Goods, The Mississippi River Basin Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species and Fishhound with Recycled Fish and Clean Angling.

The fight against invaders doesn’t stop with the game, however.

Recycled Fish is also launching its new 1 Million Stewards program at this year’s Classic. After playing the game,
visitors can take the Sportsman’s Stewardship Pledge and receive a special Stewardship Kit. The kit includes a shoreline cleanup bag, a booklet on how to live as a steward every day, and a special insert that specifically addresses fighting invasive species through the sport of fishing.

To extend the impact beyond the visitors at the BASSMASTER Classic, Fishhound (www.fishhound.com) will launch a new column featuring a 10-week educational series authored by Teeg Stouffer from Recycled Fish.

“Look forward to crazy stories about some of the most interesting people and fisheries in America,” said Stouffer. “Each one will land back at how we fight invasive species, but these are the kinds of stories that will get read and shared.”

For more on Recycled Fish and their work to engage, educate and equip anglers to be stewards of our waters, visit www.RecycledFish.org.

National Invasive Species Awareness Week is February 26 – March 3, 2012. To learn more about the event go to www.nisaw.org

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