

For Immediate Release

Contact: Chris Arechaederra: [chrisa@ccacalifornia.org](mailto:chrisa@ccacalifornia.org)

## CCA CALIFORNIA LAUNCHES “HELP THE KELP” CAMPAIGN, SUPPORTING TEAM EFFORT AGAINST INVASIVE *SARGASSUM HONERI*

Success Against This Invasive Species Means Spreading the Word, Not the Weed

The Coastal Conservation Association of California (CCA CAL) recently launched an ongoing campaign to help raise awareness and educate the fishing, diving and boating public about a growing threat to our state’s native kelp — an invasive seaweed species known as *Sargassum horneri*. Many involved in this effort are calling this quickly spreading threat by its nickname “Devil Weed.”

This CCA CAL campaign — forged around the need to “Help The Kelp!” — was kicked off during the recent Pacific Coast Sportfishing shows in Orange County and San Diego. Here, CCA CAL representatives shared information on this rapidly spreading invasive seaweed and how it is negatively impacting our native kelp beds and kelp-related ecosystems along Southern California’s coast and islands. This team effort included visual booth displays and interactive elements (including samples of *Sargassum horneri* encased in clear resin), distributing literature to event attendees, and making short presentations before many of the shows’ popular fishing seminars.

“This is an important issue that boaters and anglers need to be aware of,” said Doug Lasko, president of CCA CAL. An invasive species brought here from Japan and Korea through shipping, *Sargassum horneri* has been spreading throughout Southern California waters for more than 20 years. It displaces our native kelp and since it thrives during warm water cycles, its spread has been accelerating. “Our goal is to educate, inform and motivate anglers, divers, and boaters. This means recognizing *Sargassum horneri* when you encounter it, not contributing to the spread by moving or disturbing it and reporting when and where you encounter it through established websites. Through these actions, we can be an important part of the solution,” added Lasko.

CCA CAL will be actively involved in this effort throughout the year, providing literature and information in print and online, promoting awareness during chapter and statewide events, making presentations at fishing club meetings across Southern California, and more. “This wasn’t a one-time deal for the PCS shows,” said Luke Burson, chair of the CCA CAL Habitat Committee. “We will continue supporting the organizations and marine scientists who are working on this problem by spreading the word and educating people about how they can help,” added Burson.

Here are some general guidelines boaters, anglers and sport divers can follow:

DO:

- Learn how to identify Devil Weed in its various life stages
- Report where you find it through **MarineInvasives.org**
- Avoid fishing and/or anchoring in infested areas you encounter
- Remove Devil Weed fragments from anchor, lines, gear, and deck before moving your boat and save for later disposal
- Clean your hull thoroughly after returning to harbor or putting on the trailer
- Visit [ccacalifornia.org](http://ccacalifornia.org) to stay educated, informed and up to date

DON’T:

- Return any fragments of Devil Weed you find or bring up to the water
- Disturb or try to remove Devil Weed when encountered underwater – this only contributes to spread
- Assume this is a lost battle — we can make a difference

For more information about his effort and to join the effort to Help Our Kelp, visit [ccacalifornia.org](http://ccacalifornia.org).

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