

FEATURE ARTICLE

DIAMOND CLASSIC WAS FUN FOR ALL!

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WON ON THE SPOT FEATURE BY BILL KARR/WON Staff Writer



MARTINEZ

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Attendance

at the 3rd Annual Diamond Classic catch and release sturgeon derby held on Jan. 24 was 264 anglers, up from 216 last year, and 187 the first year. And judging by its success, it will continue to climb.

"The derby itself went very well, and I am very happy with the job my weighmasters did," said event organizer Capt. Steve Talmadge of Flash Fishing, "I believe that every one of the 18 legal slot-size fish were released in great shape to fight another day."



AMANDA HARRISON, with her dad Jim, fought an estimated 6-foot sturgeon to the side of the boat where it jumped and broke off. She was fishing aboard the Right Hook. WON PHOTO BY BILL KARR



Entry fee for the derby was \$25, and with 264 entrants the total was \$6,600, which all went back to the anglers. The 18 anglers who caught and released legal sturgeon were entered into a drawing for the winnings.

"Most of the fish were hooked from the Benica Bridge to Big cut with a few in the sloughs and a couple at Ozol," Talmadge said. "The top baits were the shrimps and shrimp combos. I am very proud of this derby because of the concepts and the quality of anglers that participate. I am also very happy to get the kids involved this year and plan to put more of my focus next year into the kids category. I personally want to thank everyone involved for making this years event a great success!"

The event was held at the Martinez Marina, and manager Craig Paulsen and staff were great supporters, as well as the bait shop folk. In talking to the attendees, everyone had a great time and enjoyed the catch-and-release aspect.

Winners of the derby were determined by putting tickets for all legal and measured sturgeon into a drawing, and it was a 100-percent payback. First place winner of \$2310 was Gary Chaffee of Fairfield aboard the Producer with partner Zachary Medinas of Concord, catching a 60-inch sturgeon using eel in Montezuma Slough.

Second place and a check for \$1650 went to Jim Robinson of Pittsburg aboard the Predator with a 48-inch fish on ghost shrimp



FIRST PLACE was won by Gary Chaffee of Fairfield for his 60-inch sturgeon caught aboard the Producer with partner Zack Medinas of Concord on eel in Montezuma Slough.

from the Big Cut, third place check for \$1320 went to John Wacht of Martinez for a 64-inch fish at Buoy 4 on pileworms. Check for \$330 each went to Jim Harrison of El Sobrante, James Pan of Richmond, Johny O'Bryan of Martinez and Ken Keyes of Martinez.

Sponsors of the event were Martinez Bait & Tackle, Martinez Marina, Big O Tires, Ace Hardware, Les Schwab, Hayward Fishing Supplies, Stickem Sportfishing, West Marine , Tom Cose Fishing, Predator Sportfishing, Reel Lentless Sport Fishing, Flash Fishing, Fish Hookers, Right Hook, Smalley's , West America Bank, Industrial Lumber, Eagle Marine, Coastside Fishing Club, Art Gonzales, Vic's Custom Rods, North River Boats, Avet Reels, Jeremy Kangas and Western Outdoor News.



CAPT. STEVE Talmadge addresses the crowd at the awards ceremony in front of the Harbormaster's office at Martinez Marina. WON PHOTO BY BILL KARR





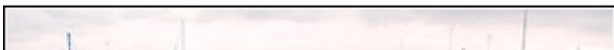
CHASE BOATS responded to calls of "fish on" to tape the sturgeon so they could be released as rapidly as possible. Here Tim Burton of North River Boats loads up the 25-foot Almar Sounder they used during the event. The boat was built as a tow boat, and is available at North River Marine. **WON PHOTO BY BILL KARR**



GETTING KIDS involved was important to Capt. Steve Talmadge, and he saw that every youngster there won something, and first ticket draw was awarded a \$500 rod and reel set. **WON PHOTO BY BILL KARR**



HAPPY WINNERS of the Diamon Classic were Gary Chaffee of Fairfield, first, Jim Robinson of Pittsburg, second, John Wacht of Martinez, third, and fourth through seventh, Jim Harrison of El Sobrante, James Pan of Richmond, Johney O'Bryan of Martinez and Ken Keyes of Martinez. Capt. Steve Talmadge of Flash Fishing awarded the checks. **WON PHOTO BY BILL KARR**





LAUNCH RAMPS at Martinez Marina were crowded in the morning during the initial launch, but everything went orderly and without incident. WON PHOTO BY BILL KARR

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