

Denmark looks to attract NEXT GENERATION

A Danish scheme called Fishing Zealand, an ambitious project to develop sustainable fishing tourism and improve the water environment in Denmark's Zealand region, is looking to tackle the problem of too few children fishing.



“Children are our future” is a generic term that is true across all industries and is certainly true when it comes to the fishing-tackle market. In order for the tackle industry to thrive and develop further, the growth layer represented by young fishermen needs to be cultivated. The children are the future of the tackle industry, and investing in initiatives and activities that help get children into fishing is basically the equivalent of investing in the future of your business.

Today's young generation is a complex selection of children that get bombarded with media input, cultural and recreational activity offers and growing demands and expectations. Their parents are busy tending to their careers and coping with their own hectic world, where time

is a super-scarce resource – and the pursuit of even the simplest of recreational activities, such as fishing, is too often neglected.

Fish Zealand project manager Gordon Peter Henriksen is well aware of the problem and has decided to do something about it.

“There are so many captivating experiences to be had as a fisherman,” said Gordon. “Fishing is a super-healthy activity that not only provides children with purpose, meaning and self-confidence, but also presents them with a social platform – one that will potentially infuse in them a sense of community and belonging. Fishing also generates a unique and direct contact to the natural world. It heightens their environmental consciousness, which is pivotal when it comes to our future on this planet.”

Gordon knows a great deal about communication, social media and working with youth groups. He has organised fishing events for children, contributed to campaigns to get children fishing, and most recently he's had great success with a new TV show – Fiskemissionen (The Fishing Mission) on Danish youth channel DR Ultra (www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1SB0ELLEQ).

He's extremely passionate about fishing and hopes that by using communication platforms familiar to today's generation he'll be able to pass his passion on to new generations.

“I know that there's something inherently paradoxical about using the television media to pull children away from the television itself,” continued Gordon. “But it works and I believe that it's a

very effective way of engaging children and showing them that great experiences await them in nature – if they're willing to leave the TV and iPad behind.”

The concept of the television show is quite simply based on taking young children out fishing – but not on any ordinary fishing trips. No, Gordon takes two children with him on specific fishing missions – for instance, to catch garfish for world-famous chefs or pike for biological research, and the children get to fish on everything from Viking ships to pedal boats. The reactions of the children, when the fish are caught and the missions are completed, make great television and make the viewers want to experience it themselves. It also generates a positive and cool image around fishing in general.

“The Fishing Mission is a

break from the stereotypical fisherman, who wears rubber boots and a sweater, smokes his pipe and scratches his beard while watching a float for hours in complete boredom,” says Gordon. “We say: ‘No, fishing can be cool, hip, young, full of action, adrenaline packed and all about street cred and high fives!’”

The Fishing Mission TV show is airing in Denmark right now, with great success, and it's Gordon's hope that the show will get exported to other countries, too. He encourages everyone to take children fishing, to get them started with this wonderful, meaningful hobby at an early age and to experiment with ways of getting them hooked. The message is hereby passed on to the fishing-tackle industry. The children are the future of fishing, so be sure to invest in them.

www.fishingzealand.dk