

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HUGE EXPO RETURNS TO THE PANHANDLE**

*Florida Sportsman* magazine hosts the popular Florida Sportsman Expo at the Okaloosa County Fairgrounds in Fort Walton Beach the weekend of Feb. 25-26, 2012.

The expo is like a three-ring circus for anglers, boaters and hunters, featuring continuous seminar stages, casting ponds, kids' events, a hands-on rigging table, free fly and net-casting lessons, the newest line-up of boats in all sizes, and exhibits by Florida's Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Rows and rows of booths will fill the 50,000-square-foot fairgrounds and offer show specials on tackle, gear, electronics and gadgets for outdoors enthusiasts of every age.

"It's back by popular demand," said Expo Director Doug Kelly. "The variety of things to do and see is remarkable, particularly all the exhibits and the stages set up for featured experts who deliver fast-paced seminars on inshore and offshore fishing, hunting and kayaking."

The speaker roster for the two fishing stages includes Capt. Mike Eller on "Swordfishing the Northern Gulf," Mark Nichols on "Advanced Lure Fishing," Brian Lowman on "Best Pier Fishing Techniques," Capt. Rick Ryals on "Targeting Trophy-Size Snapper & Grouper," and Capt. Larry Finch on "Beach & Bridge Strategies," whose tricked-out beach cart will assuredly get the phone cameras snapping.

Another favorite show attraction is the Riggin' it Right Academy. Anglers take turns sitting at learning stations with all supplies, tackle and baits provided for free while *Florida Sportsman* staff give hands-on

instruction on properly rigging the baits and lures that work best in the Panhandle.

A cast-net pit features lessons on how to cast a net and expert fly fishermen teach casting techniques (advanced and basic, depending on skill level) at a casting pond. Kids have their own events at a spin-cast pond with free "can't-lose" prizes by Zebco - there's even a booth that does face painting.

The hunting stage will present accomplished hunters showing the latest in gear and offering tips for more success in the woods and fields. Attendees will also see and hear rattling and turkey-calling techniques as well as two of Backwoods Camping's tricked-out camping trailers.

The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission will display exhibits of interest to boaters and hunters as well as the Florida Sportsman Grand Slam Tank, a 500-gallon mobile aquarium. In addition, *Florida Sportsman* staff writers and editors will be on hand to talk a little fishing.

"Everything's included in the admission price," noted Kelly. "It's going to be a great event that people from all portions of the Panhandle will really enjoy." Tickets at the fairground box office are \$8 for adults and kids 12 and under with parents are free. Show hours run 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 25, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 26. For more details, visit [www.FloridaSportsman.com/Expo](http://www.FloridaSportsman.com/Expo).

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