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'Viva La Vida' wins 49th Annual Islamorada Sailfish Tournament

Rough seas and windy conditions didn't stop great sailfish action in the 49th Annual Islamorada Sailfish Tournament. 157 Sailfish were released out of the 199 called in hook-ups over the three-day event and more than \$83,000 was paid out to the winners. Captain Nick Ewald led anglers Eric Darville of Cutler Bay, FL fishing with Travis Upchurch and Jimmy Fickling of Islamorada to the winner's circle. With the help of mate Clyde Upchurch, the team released a total of 14 sailfish over the three-day event. Captain "Wild" Bill Wichrowski of the fishing vessel **Cape Caution** from the Discovery Channel television show, 'Deadliest Catch,' handed over the beautiful glass trophies created by Sandstorm Art Studio and a well-deserved check to the **Viva La Vida** team at the awards ceremony.

Captain Paul Ross of the charter boat **Relentless** battled fish for fish with the **Viva La Vida** with both boats releasing 9 sailfish on the first day. Captain Alex Adler on his famed **Kalex** would do his best to keep up with "the boys," releasing 7 sails. Day two blew in as rough as day one with winds 20-25 gusting upwards of 30 kts. Captain Brian Cone moved up on the leaders, releasing 5 fish on day two bringing his total to 7 releases. **Viva La Vida** swapped fish one for one again with the **Relentless**, but at the end of the day **Relentless** was in the lead with 13 fish.

On the final day, Captain Augie Wampler's **Predator** lived up to its name as the team hunted down the competition. Closing in on them was



High Point Angler (l-r) Wild Bill Withrowski, Eric Darville, Tournament Director Dianne Harbaugh.

last year's winner, **Bodacious**. While the two were passing the remaining 21 teams, **Viva La Vida** released a sailfish, propelling them into 1st place ahead of the **Relentless**. At 1:22 p.m. angler Shay Danzig aboard the **Bodacious** hooked up to a Sailfish. If this fish was released it would put them ahead of the **Predator**. Captain Augie called the committee boat at 1:27 p.m. as he, too, was hooked up. It was a release for angler Don Gaytos of Medford, NJ aboard the **Predator**, before the release on the **Bodacious** that secured their third place win.

Relentless anglers Fenton Langston from Ocean Reef, fishing with Jimmy and Debbie David of Hollywood FL, and Jimmy Hendrix from Islamorada, took home second place honors. Captain Paul Ross with the help of mate Mike Walter released 9 fish the first day and 4 fish on the second day. The **Relentless** took home 2nd place trophies with a total of 13 releases.

Captain Augie Wampler's **Predator** anglers Jeff Moore (Jacksonville, FL), Mike Cook (Broomall, PA), Don Gaytos (Medford, NJ) and Ross Demarzo (Islamorada, FL) with the help of mate Tim Arse, released 3 sails on the first day, 2 the second day and 5 on the final day. The team took home third place honors with a total of 10 releases.

The prestigious Bill Hirni Memorial Trophy and a stunning lighted glass trophy went to High Point Angler Eric Darville aboard the **Viva La Vida** with a total of 7 releases on time. Angler Debbie David won the Top Lady Angler Award with her 3releases aboard the **Relentless**. Junior angler and last year's High Point Angler Shawn MacMullin Jr., fishing with his father aboard the **Prime Time**, took home the top junior angler award with 3 sailfish releases.

Most Tagged Fish went to the **Catchalottafish**. Captain James Chappell and mates Marc Toledo and Brian Jamison tagged 3 of the 7 sailfish they released for anglers Lee Robertson (Chattanooga, TN), Brad Perra (Rock Springs, GA), Mike Sisto (Key Largo, FL) and Steve Pere (Sarasota, FL).



1st place **Viva La Vida** (l-r) Travis Upchurch Wild Bill Wichrowski, Clyde Upchurch, Eric Darville, Capt. Nick Ewald, Jimmy Fickling.



2nd Place **Relentless** (L-R) Dianne Harbaugh, Jimmy Hendrix, Fenton Langston, Wild Bill Wichrowski, Mike Walter, Paul Ross. (Front row l-r) Grayden, Paul and Konnor Ross.



3rd Place Team **Predator** with Wild Bill Wichrowski.

The Islamorada Sailfish Tournament is the first leg of the Florida Keys Gold Cup Sailfish Championship. **Viva La Vida** is currently in the lead with 14 fish. Second place in the Gold Cup is **Relentless** with 13 releases and third is the **Bodacious** with 10. The next leg of the series is the Cheeca Lodge Presidential Sailfish Tournament January 17-19. The champions will be crowned at the Islamorada Fishing Club's Sailfish Tournament on the January 24, 2013.

More information on the Islamorada Sailfish Tournament can be found on the web site www.islamoradasailfishtournament.com