

Field Test

FREEDOM HAWK

Freedom 12 Kayak

Kayak fishing is really taking off in Ireland. It's a very exciting and enjoyable way to get afloat and fish. **Bodo Funke** samples a recent innovation, stand-up kayak fishing.



Regular readers might know that I quite like kayak fishing and I have tested a few different models here on previous occasions. To be honest, I didn't quite know what to expect when the opportunity to test a 'stand up' kayak came along, even though I had seen the adverts of the Freedom Hawk in this magazine over the past few months. Anyhow eager as always to test something new, I arranged to meet up with Mike Shanks and have a closer look at the Freedom 12.

For convenience and easy transport on his roof rack, Mike had disassembled the two outrigger pontoons. But it only took a remarkably short time to put them back on. I think I can safely say that on a roof rack on anything larger than his small Peugeot there would be no need to disassemble the yak at all.

The kayak was now ready to go and so was I. We promptly launched it in the chosen lake. First, I wanted to try its manoeuvrability as a normal kayak while sitting down, before making any attempt to stand up in it. This went pretty well. The high back seat is fairly comfortable by any kayaking standards and the multi-position foot braces allow the support needed for paddling any length of time. After a few minutes of

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paddling around, it was time to try the outrigger mechanism, which is engaged by moving a simple lever, on either side of the kayak. Once the two stabilisers folded out, the whole kayak became noticeably much more stable on the water and I had no problem standing up. There is also a collapsible casting brace for additional stand-up support, which folds down neatly when not in use.

With the outriggers folded out and the brace to hold on to, it is absolutely no problem to stand up and it is quite apparent that the kayak delivers on its promise to enable stand up fishing, which is clearly what the Freedom Hawk is primarily designed for.

I think fly-fishing would be one of the first applications that would spring to my mind, where standing up would be a significant advantage. Of course jerk-bait fishing would be another method where this is also the case and I am sure there will be plenty of other fishing situations where this would be just the right vessel.

Useful features of the Freedom Hawk 12 include two flush mount rod holders, cup holders, watertight storage compartments, a push pole recess and even a mount for an electric trolling motor, which is an optional add-on from an extensive list of accessories.

DETAILS AT A GLANCE

Price:	€1000
Available from:	Contact Freedom Hawk Kayaks directly using the information below
Tel:	00 44 (0) 1403 73906
Email:	info@freedomhawkkayaks.co.uk
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