



THE FISHIN' INSIDER

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The bay is runnin' blood as in redfish. This is one of the damndest runs that the ol' timers have seen in years. It's the kinda run that'll perplex the "experts" NOAA has sent afield. Much like the snapper catch round these parts have caused some of the chairwarmers to scratch their private parts and deny that it's happening. Academia has moments like these, and they don't deal with them well but the fact is that herd huntin' is kickass.

Ever since the bean counters started taggin' bull reds and lookin' for tag returns they've been uneasy with their methods. They can't imagine nor can their models, how in the hell they can tag so many fish with almost no return and have such an exploding population of small fish, those between 18 and 36 inches long. Yeah, these are small fish when you factor in the life cycle of the critter. Reds aren't considered really big until they reach around four-foot long and those are the fish the managers are lookin' for. They ain't gonna find many if any in the bays. Those fish are in the surf and the deeper waters offshore where they're easy prey for trawls and other apex predators with fins and gills. That may be why a few years ago some folks at NOAA/NMFS proposed some

draconian regulations on the recreational fishery. Those suggestions never made it past the suggestion stage and we're lucky for that cuz they would've shut down the fishery based on misguided perceptions of the health of the stock. Much the same with white marlin where the stock data is more screwed up than the red snapper data, if you can imagine that.



Herd Huntin' at Gass Well Flats these days.

I found it interesting that Captain Charlie Barton's enormous come back to win the Redfish Rodeo on the second day, 33+ pounds for a total of 52+ for the two-day tournament, avoided the redfish herds until the end on the last day. They got their reds at the end but they also got a 27 and a 28-inch trout which accounted for a third of the last day's total. I believe ya call that tournament savvy. Let the crowd pound the herds until they're wore out. The reds were easy. The money fish were the trout. He and brother Jack are headed to the Oh Boy! Oberto Redfish Cup finals at Lake Charles in Coonass Land. This is a change in location from Titusville, Florida which had some storm problems. They'll fish for the big bucks Thursday through Saturday. And how bout them highballs at the awards pachanga? I spect that \$6.75 a highball may have set a record for this Tourist Trap. Hope the help came away with better than \$ 2.15 an hour.

We welcome your fishin' photos. Drop them by 2600 Padre Boulevard on the Island, or mail them to I.B. Hooked, c/o Coastal Current Weekly, P.O.Box 2429, South Padre Island, Texas 78597. Be sure to include the name of the angler, weight and type of fish, where caught, and name of boat if applicable. Photos with SASE will be returned.