



# THE FISHIN' INSIDER

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Don "Big Daddy" Crawford passed on aways back. I hope he and his buddies have saved us a seat at the table that they're scarfin' down at. Back in the mid-90's this end of the coast had a cold snap from hell. It killed a butt-load of fish and the populous took advantage of the shootin' fish-in-a-barrel fishery. His rotund majesty was sittin' around a picnic table passin' around a bottle of single malt scotch when he posed a question to all those at the table. "Why can't we protect these fish at a time of severe stress, like right now?". That day we had gorilla trout being taken with dip nets off the old Queen Isabella bulkhead and elsewhere. Dead and semi-dead snook were litterin' the Sea Ranch Marina and it seemed like everybody and their brother were haulin' off multiple coolers of the critters that were either dead or soon to be that way. I had to look at the gent and say that's the law, right or wrong. I related what I'd seen down a Dirty Al's when Tennessee Mike showed up and used a dip net to fill two large coolers with dead snook. When the wardens showed up he split, back of the car sparkin' as the rear end, bad springs and all bottomed out on the bumps of the county's newly paved road. They ended up being sold as all you can eat flounder and damn were they good, but I digress.

Big Daddy didn't seem to mind, the fish were dead and what the hell the lower product costs were good for the local profit margin if ya know what I mean. Besides, the gamy wardens were gonna dip net the fish anyway so as not to entice local entrepreneurs and dump the fish in a landfill. It's the law ya see, no public fish fry.

Sooo, Don started workin' the system the way LBJ probably did in his better days, before he ever thought of becomin' Prez, just dinero and talkin' to certain members of the Lege which only surpasses what's her names ol' cat house in La Grange as a power house. His concept was simple as in the Texas motto, "If ya don't like the weather right now, wait a minute cuz it'll change". What Big Daddy wanted to do was to grant the chief foot soldier on the ground the authority to close the sector of their responsibility when mama nature gave us two legged creatures an unfair advantage. This was met by a great deal of resistance but hell, the idea had legs cuz as usual it made sense.

Last week the Lege had a public hearing in Corpus, the only one that'll be held on the issue that's wended its way through the process. Virtually all those that stepped to the line endorsed a change in the code. The chairman of Parks & Wildlife now has the gorilla on his back if Lege concurs. If requested they'll have the statutory authority to close the fishery to protect the critters from us and mama nature.

Damn how I miss that rotund ol' coot. Probably not as much as the kiddo's in Port Misrebelle cuz he used to overfill a Santa suit, ply his semi-elves with outrageously good spirits so they could assemble a semi-truck full of goodies, and then descend on the poor part and hand them off to the kiddo's. He never asked to be thanked or anything, he just enjoyed doin' it and so did the elves. But here's to ya Big Daddy, from the finned critters. Thanks.

***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.***