



THE FISHIN' INSIDER

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Yeah, another one bites the dust and the new one kicks off this weekend. Since this is bein' written what seems like two years prior to the publishin' date neither the gurus in Brownsville nor Sister Ezmerelda the weather witch of Boca Chika with her crystal rock for a ball have a clue what the weather's gonna be like. She's been on the move cuz the Border Patrol, INS, Customs and all the other various arms of Uncle Sugar have been after her cuz of a crap game with officers of them agencies where she won their clothes in the dunes. But weather be damned, the Whiting Street Polar Bear Gang will invade Boomerang Billy's this Saturday to become part of the food chain in the Gulf of Mexico. Heard tell there's gonna be some bubbly, a ton of beer and other spirits to help exorcise the demons from 2004 and the night before. Don't know what the twins are cookin' up but it's generally wicked and decadent with a l'il debauchery thrown in for spice. See ya there.

Gotta missive from Kenny Hinman of the National Coalition for Marine Conservation, one of the more thoughtful outfits I've run across. These boyz are lookin' at the problem from hell for us offshore recreational fisherfolks; the white marlin thing again, and the possible listing of said critter under the Endangered Species Act in 2007 when further reviews are in. The scenario they're lookin' at is realistic. Always back the enviros tried and failed to get the critters listed under the ESA. The reason they failed was because there was grossly insufficient data to make a call on the Atlantic population. By 2007 that probably won't be the case cuz the checks have been cut to do the studies. The ESA only effects American citizens and companies and has real teeth. The international community like the UN and EU pay lip service. This fall the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas will hold a meet and discuss billfish populations and since 90+ percent of the critters are taken by incidental catch on longlines, they'll probably dodge the issue unless somebody lights a fire under their collective tails. The NCMC reasoning is that when these studies are in, NOAA/NMFS will be forced by the enviros to list either whites or blues or both under the ESA. The consequence is that Pandora's Box gets opened on the management side, like a shut down of the fishery in the U.S. Economic Zone even though it's a 99% tag and release fishery on the recreational side. We're talkin' potentially no more trollin' for the critters or

anything that runs with'um.

Here's what they're beggin ya'll to do. Send a fax or a letter to Dr. William Hogarth at NOAA after you've semi-educated yourselves on the subject. I'd provide ya'll with every address I have on the gent but that'd be way too easy, like a form letter. I know ya'll are busier than a one legged person at an ass kickin' contest right now, but if your passion is offshore fishin' and its future off our shores, then please go to their web site at National Coalition for Marine Conservation and hit the links and position papers to educate yourselves cuz the fall ICCAT meeting is gonna be of paramount importance. Then let the bureaucrats have your thoughts in spades. They won't want to listen but they won't have a choice cuz your written comments are a matter of record once received.

Last but not least, next week there will probably be howls of outrage when the Board of Alderidiots take up a sponsorship proposal, 275 grand to get the Sandspit's logo on a team in the NASCAR Craftman's Truck Series for next year. That's a lot of dinero and I suspect the howls from those that would prefer the dinero be used for sidewalks and whatnot will be passionate. Again I hope ya'll will educate yourselves before ya'll start screamin' like some folks did years ago on another event. Back in the mid-90's we used to have offshore power boat races. One weekend a year all hell broke loose and the bidness folks and worker bees got fat. One year Mama Nature got in the way and they couldn't race and the non-profit outfit that under-wrote the event didn't have event cancellation insurance. They went hat in hand to the town and asked that the fifty grand the town kicked in as prize money be used to pay some of the considerable upfront costs associated with the event since the town had already reaped the windfall from the bed taxes that were paid. This is tax dinero that can only be spent to promote the Sandspit though under a deal with Mad Dog Maddox some of it was used to keep the beaches clean. The Board of Alderidiots succumbed to the ignorant and said no, we're keepin' it. They did stage one more race, sucked it up and paid off the collective note and said never again. To this day they remain true to their word. This deal is serious good exposure nationally to the right demographic. If ya want more information about the South Texas Grand Prix Association, just ask the mayor. Happy 2005.

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.