



THE FISHIN' INSIDER

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Round two of this season's Ol' Farts Surf Fishing Tournament will be fished today if it's Friday the 13th when you read this stuff. If the amazin' Victor's minions get the rag out early, which has been the case of late, you can go by Dirty Al's at the Sea Ranch and register or get more information. The cost to enter is five bucks a head and unlike years past, you'll have to register at Dirty Al's cuz Don ain't settin' up camp at the beach access anymore. The only rules are no Boca Chicka fishing and the payout is for the largest whiting and the largest pompano announced at the fish fry from hell following the tournament.

The hearing set for January 23rd at the Four Points By Sheraton in Brownsville by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and the federal fisheries managers is beginning to look like it might be of importance to the recreational red snapper fishery. On

the table are plans to reduce the total allowable catch from 9.12 million pounds down to three to five million pounds, a draconian measure that is not warranted in the northwestern Gulf of Mexico. Especially now that the shrimpers are all but out of business due to high fuel costs and the dumping of foreign farmed mud shrimp on the U.S. market.

About the only bright spot I can see is that the federal fisheries bureaucrats now seem interested in considering the possibility of managing snapper on a regional basis rather than the Gulf wide debacle they've done for the last couple of decades. The result has been this winter closure in federal waters that has kicked the charter/headboat bidness in the teeth at least in Texas where snapper are abundant. The fact that they're even whispering this idea after being beatin' about the head and shoulders for years over this may well be a sign that

intelligent life does in fact exist in Florida where they're based. Also being whispered is the possibility of individual fish quotas or IFQ's for headboats. It appears they're gonna do this for commercial boats to end the derby style season. Were they to do this with headboats we could see a return of snapper fishing in Texas during the winter months.

Mind you all these draconian new brain farts have been hatched with no consideration being given to the havoc created by the 2004 and 2005 storm seasons that pretty much destroyed the Gulf fishing fleet and infrastructure from Beaumont to Key West. With eight major spinners hitting in two years mama nature has done what the bureaucrats and PETA were unable to do, curtail fishing as a living in most of the U.S. Gulf. See ya'll at Cobble Heads Bar after you've givin' them a piece of your mind.

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.