

THE FISHIN' INSIDER

by I.B. Hooked

Member Outdoor Writers Association of America and
The Texas Outdoor Writers Association

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Well, I guess we're back to the fishery management scene. The National Marine Fisheries Service, (aka NOAA Fisheries), just sent out a smoke signal announcing their preferred alternatives for the recreational billfish fishery. It ain't as bad as I thought it would be, but it does have "Florida" written all over it, along with some social clubs that ought to know better after they got rolled by Nelson Biederman and John Breaux a ways back.

I'll start out with the easy stuff like the new tournament registration requirements. Not a whole lot new here, but they plan to codify-that is, turn it into law-that all offshore tournaments now must be registered with NMFS if they're gonna be interacting with highly migratory species. They must register with the HMS Management Division and have in their possession a confirmation number issued by them bureaucrats. The penalty for not doing so has yet to be announced, but I suspect keel haulin' is not out of the question.

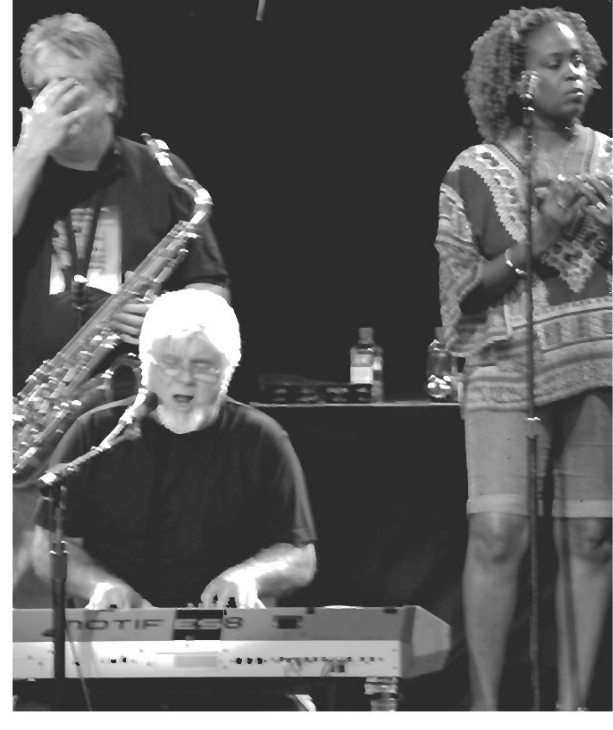
The next li'l ditty conforms to the International Coalition for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, the United Nations of the Atlantic Ocean fishery. This will codify the total allowable catch for recreationally caught blue and white marlin off the coast of the United States at 250 fish per calendar year. Now, why in the hell we got tagged with this, I'll never understand.

You'll have to ask our emissaries to ICCAT. If they won't talk, Fido Castro is a member and so is Charles Taylor, who, I believe, now resides in Nigeria. Maybe they can explain this action cuz we be the only signatory that it applies to. This li'l ditty takes effect Jan. 1, 2007, soooo it looks like the 2007 tournament season could get interesting right about now.

Last, but not least, we got the circle hook issue. Beginning in 2007, all tournament anglers with HMS permits will be required to use circle hooks when fishing with live baits or dead baits. This includes those of ya'll trollin' at high speed, skippin' ballyhoo either naked or with skirts, or behind a lure head. Ain't sure if this also applies to strip baits and neither were they, but I bet it won't. This makes sense if your tryin' to feed big marlin around a rig or some other structure, but boy, your gonna lose a lot of fish if your trollin' at the speeds we troll around these parts.

Once again, Poco was no bueno for the local fleet. The big daddy of the Gulf Coast marlin hunts, Poco Bueno was fished out of Port O'Connor last weekend, and the Thirty Knots and No Smoke Casino out of Blowninjector, Louisiana had a rumored handle well north of 600K. They've been real stingy with information, as per usual, but the big winner was Hot Rod out of Rockport that hung up a 538-pound blue marlin. Heard tell that the fish beat out a 490, which

would make for a hell of a payday on a 65/35 split. Almost makes ya wanna own a mistress.



Micheal McDonald lets her rip at the Verizon Wireless Ampitheater in San Antonio last weekend. He opened for Steely Dan, which was kick ass, especially when he joined his former band mates on their set.

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.