



# THE FISHIN' INSIDER

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*PLEASE NOTE: WE AT THE COASTAL CURRENT ACCEPT NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FOLLOWING NOR CAN WE IMAGINE WHY WE AGREED TO PRINT IT.*

Word is, the Gulf Council meeting in Baton Rouge had some pretty good fireworks last week. Bill Hogarth, the head of NOAA-NMFS Fisheries, is seriously pissed at Roy Crabtree for not being able to carry out his desires. Roy is pissed at the majority of the council for not carrying his water, vis-a-vis the red snapper mess, and nobody on the staff of either the council or NMFS seems to be willing or able to figure out what to do about the Minton-Shipp letter. If ya'll recall, Dr. Vernon Minton and Dr. Bob Shipp, both sitting members on the Gulf Council, penned a piece on the methods used by the NMFS and council staff to assess red snapper populations, that was not well received. They pretty much implied that the process used by academia met the standard of scientific dishonesty and urged all involved to do nothing to the existing snapper regs until the computer models could be cleaned and fixed. They stand on solid, if inconvenient, ground. They also strongly suggested that the Gulf be split into two management areas, east and west of the Sabine. This caught Doc Hogarth by surprise and a petulant Doc Crabtree has, so far, been unable to deal with the newest mess. Word is that Bobbie Walker introduced a plan to reduce the recreational bag limit to two fish and limit the number of days fished to 130 per year. This plan was not well received and was voted down 10-5. Roy is now in some serious hot water with his boss, who, since he can retire in two years, is cozyin' up to the enviros

and the commercial gang to position hisself for a cushy lobbying job in Sodom on the Potomac. See where all this is headin'? Doc Hogarth needs a plan that satisfies the enviros' desire to turn the Gulf into a petting zoo. He also needs a plan that mollifies the commercial gang, cuz they got the big lobbyin' loot. Rumor has it that Doc Hogarth has made an emergency finding that'll reopen the Desoto Canyon to longliners, after it has been closed for the past few years. It's been sent to the Secretary of Commerce for his John Henry, or so the rumor goes, cuz they ain't talkin' to the likes of me. Jim Smarr at the Texas RFA Crabtree pretty much said they'll take the same route with the 130 day/two fish proposal. Ya'll can't blame this one on the Shrub cuz these be Slick Willy's boyz and they've got what amounts to tenure in government employee-speak. The next meeting will be in Galveston, next November. Should be a hoot.

Welllll, with the South Texas Big Game Fishing Club season drawing to a close, with something like four or five tournament days left, we got ourselves a log jam for this rag's most uncoveted Rusty Skillet Award for futility. We got four boats tied for last place in the points: Gone South, Reel Fun, Seaesta and Blue



Tough weigh-in. Charlie "Tuna" Sheldon assesses a 48-pound wahoo, one of the few fish that made it to the weigh scales last Saturday. His steed and mine are languishing up in Port A lookin' for a buyer. Don't look good.

Pursuit each have 100 points. I'd hate to think that these folks are conspiring to make life difficult for those at the Rag who'll make the final decision on the award, but, as ya can tell, I do occasionally get caught up in conspiracy theories. Last weekend was a pitiful showin', 'cept for Tula; they tagged a sail.

*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.*