

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO DR. ROY CRABTREE ABOUT INJUSTICE**

**Roy,**

**According to Sedar 15 and now Sedar 24 the average size of a red snapper in the South Atlantic is only around 6 pounds today. That is down from 14 pounds in 1955. According to all science available that is what happens to overfished species. Cod averaged 25 pounds in the early 1900's and now they average 7-8 pounds or less. With red snapper the opposite trend is happening, according to the computer all of the large red snapper are gone have been for some time, yet the average size of fish being caught doubled from 1955 to 2009 before the closure. This is physical evidence that everyone can see that is real, not created by a computer.**

**You can't fish a stock down to a 6 pound average in the computer and then have real landings at a ten pound average. It is not possible. In fact, if there were really only 511,000 red snapper left, any person, regardless of experience would not be able to even catch a legal fish in an area of 40,000 square miles out to 300 feet of water. Remember, in 1992 there were 11,000,000 cod left on Georges Bank, an area of 12,000 square miles and even the most experienced cod fishermen could not find any. Twenty times the fish in 1/4 the area, and they could not catch one. In three tagging trips so far the numbers are off the chart with an average weight somewhere around 10-12 pounds. The first three trips were inside of 120 feet of water and not in the area of highest abundance and not during the best time of year for red snapper, water is still a bit cold inshore.**

**Please do the right thing and open this fishery by emergency rule so that the few businesses that are left can survive. This is a crisis created because of lack of data and people not asking the right questions about the data begin used. The SOUTH ATLANTIC red snapper has been in a healthy state of rebuilding since 1992 and very soon will be fully rebuilt, if it is not already.**

**Please step in and do the right thing.**

**Thank you,**

**D. Nelson**