



# The Ole Wife

Protecting our Natural Heritage and Culture

Newsletter of the St. Thomas Fishermen's Association

November 2009  
Volume 4, Issue 2

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## STFA Testifies to Congress!

Once again our "Delegate Donna" was looking out for her fishermen as she arranged for testimony from both the St. Thomas and St. Croix fishermen's associations to be given to the House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife on October 27, 2009.

STFA President, Jimmy Magner, Board Chairman Julian Magras and Chief Scientist David Olsen traveled to Washington to present testimony which outlined the many problems faced by the STFA in dealing with new regulations being pushed by the Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC).

The testimony (<http://www.stfavi.org/files/STFATestimony.pdf>) centered on the failure of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the CFMC to carry out their responsibilities for setting catch quotas without discriminating against Virgin

Islands fishermen.

The testimony covered several points:

1. No Virgin Islands data was used to determine species listed as "over fished", Once VI data became available and the CFMC decided to manage by fishing area, these determinations were never revisited.
2. Even though no Virgin Islands data were used to determine overfishing, NMFS now says that 34 years of Virgin Islands data can't be used to set ACLs.
3. The CFMC actively discriminates against VI fishermen by failing to address the fact that 89% of the area it has jurisdiction over lies in Virgin Islands waters and through non-representation by Virgin Islanders on the Council Staff, on committees and failure to rotate the Council Chairmanship.

We do not believe that NMFS can continue to ignore our issues when they reach this level.



Delegate Donna with Julian Magras, Jimmy Magner and David Olsen

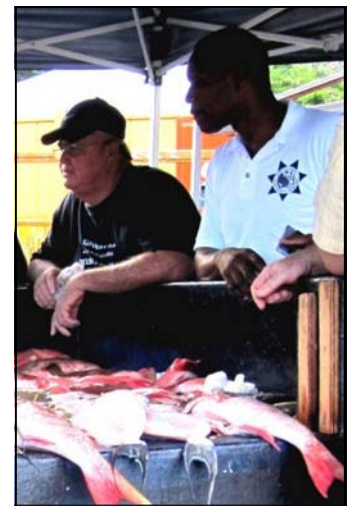
## Callwood Appointed DPNR Enforcement Director

Austin Callwood has recently been appointed as Director of DPNR's Division of Environmental Enforcement. Mr. Callwood comes to the job from an extensive career with the US Coast Guard and brings with him a much needed professionalism that has been lacking in St. Thomas in recent years.

One of the fishermen's main complaints is the lack of enforcement of regulations as they have seen other fishermen picking up the very fish that they are discarding during seasonal closures.

We look forward to seeing an increased DPNR presence at sea both for enforcement and for marine safety for our fishermen at sea.

STFA wishes him every success and offer him our support in resolving the issues in our fish-



New DPNR Enforcement Director, Austin Callwood meeting with local fisherman Wally Berry on a Saturday Market.



Teddy Bryan at the 2008 Fun Day enjoying a bowl of his own chili.

## Teddy Bryan Passes

After a long and difficult battle with cancer, Teddy Romel Bryan passed away in Houston, Texas on Oct. 18, 2009.

Teddy was one of the original members of the STFA, standing tall in efforts to preserve the fisheries and culture of St. Thomas fishing.

Together with his brother Francis, Patrick Berry and sometimes Warren Querrard, they formed the dominant seine net fishery team in St. Thomas and provided valuable information on how that uniquely St. Thomas fishery is carried out.

In addition to his participation in the Association's studies, and activities. Teddy was the STFA's chili chef at the annual cook off and for the Fun Day fund raiser events where his big and positive presence added to every aspect of the events.

## Delegate Seeks Community Designation for VI

Delegate Christiansen has petitioned the US Secretary of Commerce to designate St. Croix and St. Thomas as "fishing communities" as defined under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. (<http://www.stfavi.org/Community.html>)

Designation would require that the CFMC consider community and socio-economic impacts as well as resource considerations when developing fishery management regulations.

The Delegate's action came following final release of the long-awaited socio-economic study of St. Croix's fishing community. It had appeared that the Southeast Fisheries Science

Center (SEFSC) was going to continue to suppress this report (and the companion study of St. Thomas) despite pressure from the STFA and repeated requests at Council Meetings.

They weren't able to withstand Congressional pressure though and shortly after enquiries were made by the Delegate's office, the report began winding it's way through NMFS review and approval process. By the time it was finally provided to the Delegate it was all but advocating that St. Croix be designated as a fishing community.

The report, which can be found on the STFA website (<http://www.stfavi.org/files/CananIslandbeaFishingCommunity-Sept2009.pdf>), is the product of extensive series of interviews in 2005 by Brent Stoffle, a Socio-economist at the SEFSC who spent time on St. Croix and St. Thomas. STFA even put Brent and his team to work loading cases of beer for the 2006 Fun Day.

The study represents the value of collaboration between scientists and fishermen from a time before NMFS scientists had taken to trying to manage our resources by remote control from Miami instead of working with the fishermen and local stakeholders who have actual on-site knowledge and experience.

We hope that soon the SEFSC will realize that the **ONLY** way that they will get anything done down here will be by much-needed fence mending and investment in collaboration with Virgin Islands fishermen.

He is survived by his wife Bobbie and son Bryson (both STFA Board Members) and daughters Kellie Pressel, Stacie Bryan-Jessen, and Brittany Bryan.

Teddy was a big part of the STFA and is going to be missed. Services were held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church before interment at the Bryan family cemetery which was followed by a well-attended Celebration of Life at the Hull Bay Hideaway on Friday, October 30. **We'll miss you Teddy!**

## Rain Can't Stop the Fun Day (Not This Time Either)!

Fun Day 2009 was a day full of camaraderie, entertainment, local seafood, softball and Rain!

The STFA's Fun Day is the organization's main revenue-generating

event for the year. **On October 18, 2009 the STFA hosted its fourth annual Fun Day at the Joseph Aubain Ballpark in French-**

**town.**

Success came in spite Julian Magras's patented rain dance. Clearly, STFA needs to examine the dates again.

Weather was beautiful with Kickball for the kids and a softball tournament with teams from Betsy's Bar, Offshore

*(Continued on page 6)*

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

Aramark, Admiralty Dive Shop, Bellow's International, **Betsy's Bar**, Bolongo Bay Beach Resort, Bryan's Electrical Corp., Budget Marine, Caribbean Gifts and Things, Caribbean Packaging, **Caribbean Petroleum**, Caribbean Screen Printing, Central Air Inc., Coca Cola, Cost-U-Less, Cranston/Dottin Laboratories, Cruzan Rum Distillers, Cuzzin's Bar and Restaurant, CYOA Yacht Charters, Committee for the Betterment of Carenage, Dr. Biscoe/Pearle Vision, Dr. Martin Dukes,



## Old Wife's Tales:

### News and Rumor from Around the Bay

- Julian's wife Nulcia and daughter Andrea are in California for health reasons. Nulcia is still working on STFA projects and was a big help with the recent Fun Day.
- Jerry Berry and his family moved to North Carolina.
- Winston Ledee's daughter Silena is in Florida for school and apparently loving it.
- Ernest Quetel is back in St. Thomas after a long absence and leaving the fishing business.
- Halos to the Coast Guard and DPNR for their prompt response to the Mac-Donald's diesel spill in Frenchtown.
- Congratulations to STFA member Winston Ledee has been named as Vice Chairman of the CFMC. We



hope that this will dilute some of the anti-St. Thomas actions taken recently by the Council.

- Beulah Dalmeida-Smith has been named as Director of DPNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife.
- The 50/50 Auction at the Fun Day was a success with first prize (\$1250) being awarded to Yvette Sugphin, second prize (\$750) to Frank Magras, and third prize (\$500) to Gene Aubain.
- Congratulations to the Floor Factory team for their win in the Fun Day softball tournament.
- Julian Magras' rain dance was a complete success! Both days the "Big Game" between Frenchtown and Northside was played to no conclusion. Bragging rights will have to wait until some sort of resolution can be made.

## CFMC Bought VI Votes?

When the STFA was formed in 2004 to resist attempts by the CFMC to close Territorial fisheries, we became aware that the Territorial representatives on the Council were not advocating for their stakeholders. Viridin Brown, for example stated that instead of looking out for the interests of Virgin Islands fishermen he "needed to look out for Viridin Brown's interests".

More troubling, however, was the fact that the Director of Fish and Wildlife was not only failing to advocate, she was, in fact, the source of management measures which went against Territorial fishermen.

Later, we learned that she was being directly compensated by the Council and was not, in fact, even an employee of the Territory while supposedly serving as its representative.

Upon further investigation through the Freedom of Information Act, we were able to learn that, **between 2000 and 2005 she received**

**\$30,641.31 from the Council for her services.** We have been told that on some of the days when she drew CFMC payment, she had not taken leave from her government job and may have received double compensation. We have asked Governor deJongh to investigate this matter.

It turns out that this compensation is not even legal under the Magnuson Act which clearly states "(**96-561, 101-627, 104-297**)

(d) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES.—The voting members of each Council who are required to be appointed by the Secretary and **who are not employed by the Federal Government or any State or local government**, shall receive compensation at the daily rate for GS-15, step 7 of the General Schedule, when engaged in the actual performance of duties for such Council."

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Southeast Fisheries Science Center Discards Virgin Islands Data

Virgin Islands fishermen have been submitting landings reports and carrying out catch sampling with VI Division of Fish and Wildlife since 1974 in the belief that these data would supply fishery managers with necessary information.

NMFS' Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) has been funding and reviewing

this data throughout this entire period.

Now, without so much as an apology or an admission that they screwed up, they want to discard this data because their stock assessment "experts" can't use it with their analysis tools.

If this whole idea isn't bas-

sackwards? "I've never seen any professional discard data instead of employing different tools!" said David Olsen, STFA Chief Scientist. "This is like having the frying pan determine what is going to be cooked."

SEFSC now says that they want to redesign the data program to meet their

needs. On closer examination, the "new" program looks a lot like the old program with the same players (DFW and SEFSC) who have been responsible all along.

SEFSC is also a full participant in Council discrimination against the VI as they argue that "data uncertainty" could require up to 75% reductions

*(Continued on page 6)*

## OUR LOYAL SPONSORS

Dr. Sonia Taylor-Griffith, Erica's Total Beauty, **Floor Factory**, Forecast Consulting, Forever Flowers, Frenchman's Reef, Frenchtown Civic Organization, Frenchtown Community Organization, Frenchtown Deli, **HOVENSA**, Island Marine Outfitters, JB Machine Shop, K-Mart Lockhart Gardens, Merchant's Market, **Offshore Marine/Yamaha**, North side Sport fishing Club, Premier Wines and Spirits, PriceSmart, Radio One, Rick Berry Landscaping, Roses Too, Roy's Construction, Seaborne

*(Continued on page 4)*



### STFA Working With NOAA on Lost Trap Study



Teddy and Bryson Bryan selling net fish out at Fort Mylnar. It's not just the catching that takes time!

STFA has started a new collaboration with NOAA's biogeography program to see if methods can be developed to locate lost traps.

Fishermen are providing information about where they are fishing as well as GPS coordinates for lost traps. This information will be used to target a boat-based study where electronic technology and towed cameras will be used to see if lost traps can be located.

Fishermen will be provided with coordinates of any found traps.

Another aspect of the study will be to see what grows on traps and how they age once lost. In this part which also involves the UVI, traps will be placed in the water and left to "age". NOAA and UVI Scientists will observe the "fouling" algae and animals which grow on them as well as how the traps themselves deteriorate.

STFA is also working with one of our few friends among the NMFS scientific core, Ron Hill, to finally come up with trap vents to release bycatch. Last year's proposal was turned down (we feel because of our open criticism of NMFS).

We find it strange that when we undertake to take conservation and management actions ourselves such as the trap vents and limits on traps for members, NMFS not only doesn't support us, but actually gets in the way. It seems that they think that they have a monopoly on caring for the resource and the fishery. They're wrong!

### STFA's Pre Bastille Day Dance

Cruzan, Cooool Sessions and the STFA-a recipe for success! STFA's July 10 PreBastille Day dance was a smashing success with a great time had by all

attendees celebrating the upcoming holiday with a typical Frenchie celebration of bonhomie and "let the good times role!

Music was provided by the STFA "House Band" Cool Sessions who continue to support the STFA in good times and rainy times.

As normal, Julian, Rocky and Margarita manned the food concession while Catherine, Linda and the Bar crew had a hard time keeping up with the demand.



### CFMC Deep Water Snapper Closures Started October 1

**During the STFA's MARFIN by catch study and the trap vent pilot study when CFMC seasonal enclosures when into affect , regulated species appeared in the study forms, indicating that STFA fishermen are following the requirements.**

As part of STFA's negotiations with the CFMC in January 2005, the STFA agreed that CFMC species closures could be "Harmonized" with Territorial regulations. DPNR had deliberately withheld information that the CFMC was going to permanently close the Lang Bank, Hind Bank and Mutton Snapper spawning area to all bottom tended gear.

The CFMC requirements are:

1. Close the U.S. EEZ to all fishing for species in Grouper Unit 4 (including

the red, misty, black, tiger, yellowfin, and yellow-edge grouper) from **February 1 through April 30.**

2. Close the U.S. EEZ to all fishing for species in Snapper Unit 1 (including the black, blackfin, vermilion, and silk snapper) from **October 1 through December 31.**

3. Close the U.S. EEZ to all fishing for mutton snapper and lane snapper

from **April 1 through July 31.**

4. Prohibit the filleting of fish in federal waters of the U.S. Caribbean. Require that fish captured or possessed in federal waters be landed with heads and fins intact.

Interestingly, the week that the deep water snapper closure began, these species began showing up in the MARFIN by catch study forms and in 2008-09 in the CFMC/STFA trap vent study, indicating local fishermen are following the requirements.

*(French Heritage Dance and 2009Fun Day Contributors-Continued from page 3)*

Airlines, Sonia Griffith, St. Thomas Radiology Assoc. LLC, Stone's Cold Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, VIP Awards and Engraving, West Indies Design, West Indies Corporation, WICO and any sponsor which we may have inadvertently omitted. Also a special thanks to all who volunteered throughout the day including Eddie Bryan, Lisa Berry, Linda Evans, Nulcia Magras, Annette

*(Continued on page 6)*



## North Side Kingfish Tournament

Big fish and lots of them is what anglers – and the crowds that came to watch and have fun at the Coors Light and Snapple party – enjoyed at the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Bastille Day Kingfish Tournament, held July 12 at Hull Bay Hideaway. When the official weigh-in was complete, it was Josh Slayton of St. John, who reeled in the Largest Kingfish, a record-setting 58.78-pounder about the 33-foot custom sport fisher, World Class Anglers. For his efforts, Slayton pocketed \$2000 in cash for his Largest Kingfish, sponsored by NEMWIL, managed in the USVI by Red Hook Agencies, Inc. The Second Largest Kingfish prize went to 14-year-old junior angler, Robert A. Greaux, Jr., who caught a 56.66-pounder aboard C-Hawk. Greaux won \$750 in cash.



*Josh Slayton and his 59 lb North side tournament record setting Kingfish along with the crew from World Class Angler*

After weigh-in, the fun continued onshore at Hull Bay Hideaway with a Coors Light and Snapple party, both sponsored by Coors Light, distributed by Bellows International Ltd. Island Cool Session Brass entertained throughout the afternoon. Later, crowds gathered inside Hull Bay Hideaway for the Awards Ceremony at 8 p.m., where the Spectrum Band entertained.

Nearly \$12,000 was awarded this year in cash and prizes.

Each year, the North side Sport fishing Club makes donations to community organizations and individuals. This year's beneficiaries – The Joseph Sibilly School, St. Thomas Rescue, the American Red Cross, Kidscope and the Family Resource Center. The Club also awards college scholarships.

The tournament was run this year by a new generation of organizers: Catherine Bryan, Gene Brin, Jr., Danny and Jessica LaPlace, and Carlyn and Wesley Ledee.

The Annual Bastille Day Kingfish Tournament is one of the most popular French Heritage Week activities, a week observed this year from July 8-July 14.

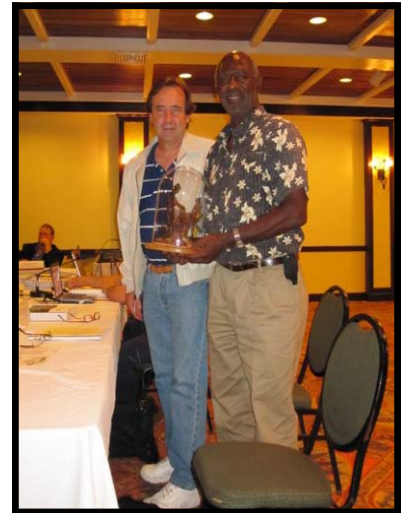
## Viridin Brown Retires-Finally!

After more than 30 years of carrying the torch for Federal mismanagement of Virgin Islands fishery resources, the "Kissing Senator" Viridin Brown finally retired from the CFMC.

Viridin got his start in fishery management in the late 70s when he was Commissioner of Conservation and Cultural Affairs (now DPNR). At that time local fishermen, concerned with continuing declines in the Nassau Grouper spawning aggregation fishery wrote to request a five year enforced closure. They were ignored and the fishery disappeared in the following years and is used by conservationists as an example of fishermen destroying a resource.

Move forward 30 years to the 2005 CFMC meeting on the SFA where the Council was proposing to close large areas of the shelf (and St. Thomas fish-

*(Continued on page 7)*



*Viridin Brown and CFMC Chairman-for-life Eugenio Piniero glad handing each other on Viridin's retirement.*

## Enviros Trying to List More Corals as Endangered

Environmentalists at the Arizona-based Center for Biological Diversity are trying to list 8 more species of Virgin Islands corals as endangered. According to them, these species have shown a 30% decline over the past 30 years.

Reasons for the declines include hurricanes, storms, pollution, sedimentation from coastal development and (according to them) chronic

overfishing.

Most of the listed species are found in shallow waters although several are found all the way out to the shelf edge.

All of this comes following last year's listing of elkhorn and staghorn corals as threatened species. Although the first round of regulations for those species did not im-

pact fishermen, the rules leave a lot of wiggle room for later restrictions on fishing activity.

There is no end to the threats faced by the real endangered species-Virgin Islands Fishermen it seems!



(Fun Day-Continued from page 2)

Marine/Yamaha, Caribbean Petroleum and Floor Factory.

The first day went well until the “Big Game” when the heavens opened. Both North side and Frenchtown were so determined to play that they relined the field and played on in the rain. You could really see the fun in their faces as they laughed at themselves.

The second day (November 1) was filled with games, music by Cool Sessions Brass (until the rain came again) and good old seafood.

The highlight and highly anticipated portion of the day was the follow up “Rivalry Game” which got rained out on Day 1. This being the infamous square off between the North side and Frenchtown softball players. While the game is taken very seriously, mainly for bragging rights, it was a fun game. North side was up 16-8 but Frenchtown had two on and one out when the heavens opened again and the game was called.

Thanks in large part to contributions from local sponsors (below), the Fun Day continues to be a major event on the St. Thomas calendar.

(SEFSC-Continued from page 3)

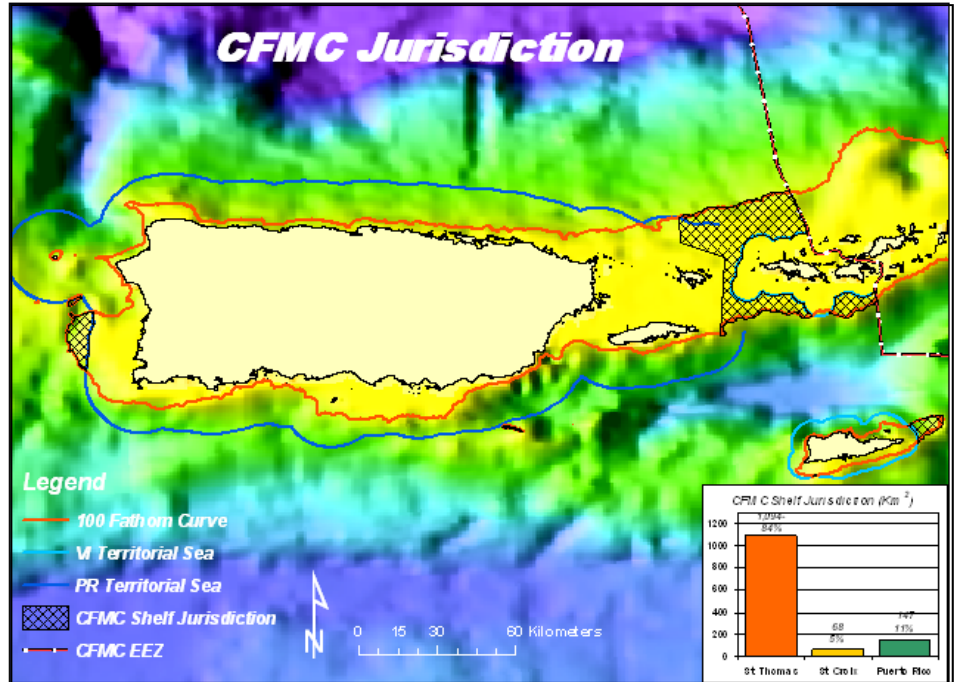
in landings. There is no mention of similar reduction in Puerto Rico where up to 50% of the fishermen don't even report their landings while nearly 100% of Virgin Islands fishermen do report. Puerto Rico makes no claim as regards these unreporting fishermen other than to estimate their numbers.

This is a very peculiar position for SEFSC to take but one which reinforces the STFA claim that the entire Council process unfairly (and illegally) discriminates against our fishermen.

STFA's position is that until the new quotas are determined, we won't agree to anything. SEFSC needs to man up, admit their mistakes and use VI data!

(French Heritage Dance and 2009 Fun Day Contributors-Continued from page 4)

Olsen, Jessica and Darryl Bryan, Candie Brewer, Margarita, Julien, Greg, Warren and Teresa, Ricky Laplace, Rosie Brin, Sean, DeeDee and all those for some reason we may have forgotten to acknowledge. We would also like to thank Orlando Peters for his excellent photographs at Fun Day which can be found on the back page.



### CFMC Discriminates Against Virgin Islands

The STFA maintains that the entire Council process is discriminatory and its **impacts are disproportionately felt by Virgin Islands fishermen.**

National Standard 4 of the Magnusan Act states that Councils cannot discriminate against “States” within their jurisdiction.

On a simple geographic basis (see map above) 89% of the shelf area under CFMC jurisdiction lies in the Virgin Islands fishery area. Eighty four percent is in the St. Thomas/St. John fishery area and five percent in St. Croix. This disparity results from the fact that Puerto Rico has a 9 mile Territorial Sea while the Virgin Islands have a 3 mile limit. In management terms this means that any management measure proposed by the Council will impact Virgin Island fishermen fishing areas by a factor of nearly 9 to 1. This is clearly discriminatory.

Additionally, throughout its 35 year history, the CFMC has only employed 2 Virgin Islanders as staff. Thus, the many discussions and interactions which lead to Council action are not even witnessed by Virgin Islanders as they occur within the CFMC

office in San Juan.

This past year, the CFMC has increased the number of hearings and meetings held in Puerto Rico, exhausting STFA funding for attendance. This not only affects the STFA but CFMC-related meetings have filled nearly 600 hotel room nights in Puerto Rico and only 150 in the Virgin Islands.

The Council Chairmanship has also been held by Puerto Rican Eugenio Piniero since 2003. Piniero has also used his position to place himself on numerous committees which could have been filled by Virgin Islanders, further restricting Virgin Islands participation in the Council process.

The CFMC, then, is largely a Puerto Rican entity that makes rules which mainly affect Virgin Islands fishermen. This is simply not right!

The time has come to begin to talk about moving the CFMC to the Virgin Islands where most of the impacts from its decisions take place!!!





**DFW Fish Attractant Device Locations  
(As of 10/6/09)**

FAD	LOCATION	DEPTH (FT)	DIRECTION FROM LAND (Nm)	FAD TYPE
E	18° 11.051'N, 64° 55.871'W	1465	<b>St. Thomas</b> 9 nm south of Charlotte Amalie Harbor	Submerged Double Buoy
F	18° 35.367'N, 65° 03.386'W	1360	<b>St. Thomas</b> 9.8 nm north of Cricket Rock	Surface
B	17° 51.722'N 64° 30.873'W	3400	<b>St. Croix</b> 7 nm NE of East Point	Surface
K	18° 36.406'N, 64° 58.438'W	235	<b>St. Thomas</b> 13 nm NNW of Little Hans Lollick	Submerged
S	17° 49.093'N 65° 01.315'W	1980	<b>St. Croix</b> 8.5 nm NW of Butler Bay	Surface
U	17° 44.04'N 64° 54.55'W	2000	<b>St. Croix</b> 2 nm west of Sprat Hole (US Navy underwater buoy)	Submerged
H	18°38.346'N 64° 58.772'W	1610	<b>St. Thomas</b> 14.5 nm north of Outer Brass Island (1 mile west of BVI boundary)	Surface
L	18° 09.260'N 64° 50.167'W	2501	<b>St. Thomas</b> 12 nm SE of Charlotte Amalie	Surface
T11	18° 33.215'N 65° 13.383'W	240	<b>St. Thomas</b> 14 nm NW of Savanna Island	Surface
T17	18° 33.410'N 65° 08.869'W	250	<b>St. Thomas</b> 12 nm NW of Cockroach Island	Submerged
T18	18° 33.920'N 65° 12.532'W	1250	<b>St. Thomas</b> 15 nm NW of Savanna Island	Surface

**STFA Scores at Chili Cook Off!**

The annual Chili Cook Off was a big score for the STFA. Jimmy Magner's "Bucket of Chum Chile" (made with Lobster) was a highlight of the day all chili was sold out well before the day was done. Linda Evan's gigantic olewife made it easy to find the STFA booth.

It was a fun day for all, marred only by the absence of Teddy Bryan, his classic chili and sense of humor.



Crowds gather around the STFA's signature tent during the annual Chilli Cook-Off.

STFA members and friends were big winners in the Tug-of-War with Jimmy, Julian, Shawn, Greg, Danny, Andy and Ed pulling for the win in an exhausting series of elimination "pull offs"!



**DFW Trying New FAD Design**

The Division of Fish and Wildlife has developed a new design for its fish attractant (below) devices (FADs). The earlier versions were made from big steel balls that required barges and heavy equipment to deploy. The new design can be emplaced from the Division's 31 ft boat. It's hoped that the savings can be used to increase the number of these attractants and provide additional opportunities for local fishermen.



FADs are being considered for regulation under NMFS Highly Migratory Species Program.

(Viridin Brown Continued from page 5) ing). STFA Chairman Julian Magras said to Viridin "You need to look out for the interests of Virgin Islands fishermen!" Viridin's reply (not unexpectedly) was "I need to look out for Viridin Brown's interests." Viridin was always happy to spy on local meetings and carry the mail to NMFS-he won't be missed!

(CFMC Buys Votes Continued from page 3)

It is our position, that anyone representing the government should not be independently compensated and that votes cast by such people are invalid. This would cast doubt over the legitimacy of CFMC

actions (including "overfishing" determinations) over much of the last decade.

We asked Governor deJongh to initiate an investigation of this matter of double compensation and to clearly state that the Territorial CFMC representative should be compensated Territo-

rial liaison funds and not directly by the Council during these meetings to insure that government representatives will be voting to represent the people of the Virgin Islands and not just for NMFS or their own interests!

St. Thomas Fishermen's Association  
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### STFA Membership Dues

**Attention** all members and interested parties: The STFA needs funds to remain an active lobbying power and protect local fishermen

### Membership Dues

**\$50**

In order for your membership status to remain current please make your contributions.