

Nederland angler catches tagged red worth about \$50,000

By **ROBERT SLOAN**
THE ENTERPRISE

Deborah Alston of Nederland was talking to her daughter on a cell phone when she felt a jolt on the end of her fishing line Saturday afternoon. She set the hook on what turned out to be the first tagged red caught by a registered angler in the CCA/Star tournament.

That particular red won her a pickup truck, boat, motor and trailer worth about \$50,000.

"I was fishing along the bulkhead of our canal home at Crystal Beach about 2:30 Saturday afternoon," said Alston, who grew up in Beaumont, but now lives in Nederland. "I had fished a couple of hours that morning, then went in to clean the house. I love fishing and do it every chance I get."

She bought some live shrimp from the nearby Blue Water Bait Camp and set up to fish a few hours.

"I fish all the time and told my

husband, Jimmie, that I couldn't catch a tagged red if I didn't fish," she said. "I was free-lining a live shrimp on a No. 3 circle hook. I had attached a BB-sized split shot to the line."

It didn't take long for Alston to get a bite. And when she set the hook, the red — about 26 inches long — took off.

"I had a phone in one hand and the rod in the other when the fish took off," said Alston.

Needless to say, she ended that conversation like right now and took care of the business at hand.

"It made several good runs and when it rolled on the surface I could tell it was a red," said Alston. "That's when I thought that maybe it was a tagged red. That's about the time I saw my neighbors across the canal. I yelled for them to come over and help me with the net. I managed to get it up to the bulkhead, and when it rolled over I could see the tag. I yelled at Mike Didio across the

canal, and he came over to help me net the red."

They put the fish in a cooler and headed to Stingaree Marina, an official STAR tourney site. The tag was cleaned, and sure enough, it was the real deal.

According to Gina Rice with the Coastal Conservation Association STAR tourney, they released 60 tagged reds along the Texas coast prior to the start of the contest May 26. So far, seven of those reds have been caught. Five were caught by anglers not registered in the tourney. Alston is the first registered angler to catch a tagged red this year.

The first five registered anglers that catch a tagged red and pass a polygraph test win a boat, motor, trailer and truck package. The STAR tourney runs through Sept. 3.

For information, log on to www.ccatexas.org.

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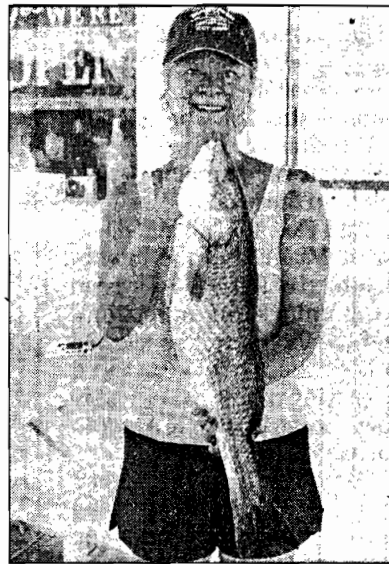


Photo provided by Deborah Alston

Deborah Alston of Nederland caught this red in a canal off East Galveston Bay on Saturday. The red is worth a boat, motor, trailer and truck package worth an estimated \$50,000.