

OFF THE DOCK

WITH D. A. MANN

~ You Can Call Me Ray ~

10/1/26

Drifting by marker 14 on an incoming tide in Roberts Bay standing on the forward deck, I suddenly noticed them everywhere swimming in schools of a dozen or so – Rays. Dark brown, around two feet wing tip to wingtip, and just under the surface, they literally filled my casting area. We moved a hundred yards south by #12, saw none, and started casting. Sure enough, I hooked one on the Willy. My buddy was at the helm with me on the deck and we chased him for 30 minutes before getting him alongside. I was able to hang over and remove the jig in record time. We then decided to fish the basin behind Snake Island (after my arms quit cramping) and got 4 nice Pompano. By #15, we added 2 more. When the tide started going out with a little authority, we revisited #14 and added 4 more in record time. Ironically, big Spotted Rays were jumping and splashing as we cruised around Snake on our way home.

As the weather is changing, the fishing is doing the same. Don't be surprised if you only catch small Channel Cats, Grunts, and Ladies in your favorite Pompano spots – just move. If you see schools of Rays, run. If the Jacks are chasing bait around the Mangroves, let the Ohio visitors catch them. If you strike out at the end of the day just remember, there's always Happy Hour.