

OFF THE DOCK

WITH D. A. MANN

~ Floundering in the Pass ~

10/17/25

Every now and then I just need a change of scenery. It can be a trip to Big Pass for some Pompano; a drift over the flats by the Ringling Museum for some monster Trout; some bull Reds up Philippi Creek; or, some Spanish Mackerel off the beach. Most recently, it was Midnight Pass. I wanted to see what was lurking on the new sand bottom that stretched from the Pass to the Intracoastal as that area was evolving.

Before Mother Nature opened her back up, it was a fairly consistent gamble that there would be Trout on the grass flats and Pompano in the channel. Now, there is no grass and the channel is filling in with sand off the beach; the Pompano are running scared. For the last couple months, it has been a haven for fat Sail Cats and horny Ladyfish. Being the ever-changing Pass that it has become, the Sail Cats and the Ladies have moved on to be replaced by two virgins to the area – large silver Whiting and Flounder over 14 inches. I was hooking up on one or the other on every cast. The Whiting were fighting like Reds and the Flounders were like pulling in a boot full of water. Both of these species love the sand. Fish it on an incoming tide using a pink Silly Willy setting your drift to take you across the channel and back into the Pass; or, vice-versa. I guarantee that you'll be surprised. What won't surprise you are the sightseers.

Try not to get run over.