OFF THE DOCK

WITH D. A. MANN

~ Preschool Fishing ~

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Wetting a hook in the kiddie pool can get really old. I have a friend who fishes frequently and is always interested in what I caught, where I caught it, and what I was using when I caught it. He wants to know everything from the colors of the jigs to size of the weights to what the tide was doing. He's what I call a "fish counter". He'll text me that he caught twenty-nine Speckled Trout and had only two keepers. Personally, I don't have the patience for that approach. Just yesterday I saw him on the water and he cruised by saying that he caught eighteen Trout, kept two, and was searching for some Pompano. He wanted to know how I was doing. It pained me, but I had to tell him the truth. I caught three of the biggest Pompano of my career and had three top slot Trout on ice after releasing three at the bottom of the slot. His jaw dropped. He's an early riser and had been out for four hours. I got out two hours later. It's time to think about how you are spending your time.

So this morning, I had to call him and straighten him out. "You're fishing at the preschool; you need to find the post-graduate campus. If all you are catching are the babies, then move!" To ease his burden, I gave him a few "Big Boy" spots for Trout and some general info on where the Pompano run. I also explained that ¼ ounce jig heads with a white or lime green paddle-tail are good for Trout and a 3/8 ounce yellow jig with a pink teaser is the hot combo for Pompano. The water is very brackish; when it clears up, all the above mentioned colors will change.

Now, for the Big Boy Trout spots in Blackburn Bay:

1) Right off the dock in front of the Japanese Gardens west of marker 21.

2) 100 yards straight out in front of the blue-green house on the east side just south of marker 21.

3) South of marker 20 on the west side from the yellow house north to the Mangroves 30 feet off the docks.

As for the Pompano, they are not yet schooling; so, you'll need to drift a larger area. You'll get one here and one there. Best spot to drift is the basin east of Snake. Be prepared to make a lot of casts.

I am not a fish counter; lucky for you. If I was, I would have told you about the 27 Grunts, the 6 Ladyfish, the 4 Channel Cats, the 2 Jacks, and the Sea Robin.

OK kids, it's time to go back to school.