

OFF THE DOCK

WITH D. A. MANN

~ Big Boy Bonanza ~

They're back. They're hitting hard. And, they're so much fun. I went out yesterday with a neighbor who has turned into a lucky charm. He used to be a pain-in-the-ass; but, as of recently, has become quite the fisherman. Before the hurricanes of last year, we used to fish twice a week, alternating boats. The hurricanes changed everything from the fishing landscape to actually being able to get out on the water. Our routine disappeared for six months. Neither of us lived in the condos for they were under "rebuild" construction. He had moved to Atlanta to live with his son and I was in an apartment only fishing once a week.

Last week, our routine resumed and we caught five Pompano (16 to 18") in Blackburn Bay between markers 17 and 21. Nothing else was biting except for some small Grunts hitting our Silly Willies. This week, you couldn't buy a fish in Blackburn so we moved to Snake Island and Roberts Bay. The tide was topping-out when we arrived and before it went slack, we had twin Pompanos (18" to-the-split) on ice – big boys. When the tide started moving out, the brackish water was pulled into the Intracoastal. I was fishing the "line" when my drag started screaming. It stopped ten minutes later when he was in the net; a 20" (to-the-split) Permit went on ice. It had been almost a year since I had caught one. My good luck charm landed a 24" Permit (the largest one I've ever seen inshore) an hour later and we called it a day as the storms were rolling in.

The Big Boys are roaming the Bays.