

# **OFF THE DOCK**

**WITH D. A. MANN**

**~ Tell Me Why ~**

**9/1/26**

Last Friday, my fishing buddy and I arrived in Roberts Bay on the incoming tide before 8:30. We were iced-down and rigged-up anxious to get lines in the water. Not surprisingly, four other boats had apparently read last week's report online (at [ReelQualitySRQ.com](http://ReelQualitySRQ.com)) and were positioned around the Intracoastal. In the last several reports, I explained that it's best to *drift* the channel for the Pompano are in the deepest water due to the cooler temperatures. In addition, I mentioned what tides are best, what color jig is producing the most hits, and how to *slow retrieve* for the best results. In other words, I've done everything but hook the fish and hand you the rod.

So, tell me why three of the four boats were outside the channel fishing the slopes? Two of them had trolling motors in anchor mode. Only one was even close to the sweet spots I had mentioned. I noticed one drifting by the mangroves of Bird Island chasing Jacks (grunting Pompano) who were chasing bait. The boat closest to us asked if putting a shrimp on his Willy would help. I actually flagged another boat into the middle of the channel and showed how to work his jig. No amount of advice was going to help. For the next two hours, they watched us net ten big Pompano – that's one every twelve minutes. Collectively, they caught none. If you are not catching anything but catfish, why would you sit in the same spot for two hours?? Tell me.

We kept our distance from the group for the next hour catching and releasing three more as the tide was going slack. We could have

limited-out; but, we just didn't need twelve fish. Boat traffic had picked up and it was time to relocate to Snake Island and fish the outgoing tide. As we turned to leave, all the fishermen had disappeared but a single boat with an older couple who we recognized from being on the water. She was the fisherman of the duo and as we passed by, she wanted to know if we would sell her some Pompano for they had none. Personally, I don't sell fish for its bad JuJu; but, I passed her our net with four nice ones as we drifted side-by-side. It turns out that they fish to feed their neighborhood. She handed me back the net and was so happy to have them in her cooler. We fished the Snake Island basin for the next couple hours adding seven more to the grand total releasing all but three. My friend and I also feed our community every Friday and we decided that we only needed nine to fill the orders. With those on ice, we headed in after 3pm.

It was a good day;

And,

I can tell you *why*.