

# **OFF THE DOCK**

**WITH D. A. MANN**

## **~ The Pompano Puzzle ~**

**9/25/25**

If you should be so fortunate (notice that I didn't say *lucky*) to catch a Pompano, don't get all excited and pat yourself on the back praising your genius as a fisherman for it could easily be the only one you get all day. They are not schooling yet; but, they are thinking about it. A week ago, working my way north from #15 in Roberts Bay, I caught one right out of the gate – first cast, second pop of the old Willy. I drifted it again all the way to the entrance to Dona Bay on the outgoing tide and landed a bigger one. Several more similar drifts produce nothing so I moved to #6 just north of the Jetties with the tide now coming in and hooked a monster. I fought him all the way to #7, had him by the boat touching the net and lost him. Biggest one I have ever seen inshore. Shit. It happens. Shit happens. And, yes, I have come awake in the middle of the night thinking about it.

Putting my crying towel aside, I did not have another strike the remainder of the day. My sweet spots in Blackburn at #'s 17 and 21 produced only Ladies and Grunts. A fishing Bud told me that he caught one by #14 in the slow zone. I backtracked and drifted it several times. The Puffers were out in force and I left the area. That same Bud texted me the very next day that he and a friend caught 5 in that general area. They are a little late coming back to school; but, better late than never. Three years ago, that stretch from #14 through #16 was thick with Pompano, fishermen, and commercial guys drifting together.

It's time to put the puzzle back together.