

OFF THE DOCK

WITH D. A. MANN

~ The Swirlies ~

9/8/26

More commonly known as the “Eddies”, these rotating swirls of current attract a plethora (I love that word) of species. If you are an observant fisherman, you can detect the different patterns on the water’s surface that are caused by wind, tides and current. Some of these patterns present themselves in circular fashions that can be as small as your boat or as large as your casting circumference. Within these areas, you can drift with little movement; and, the retrieval of your jig encounters very little resistance. If your drift takes you to the perimeter of this swirl, the current picks up dramatically and you are at the mercy of either the wind, the tide, or both.

Fish love current. They love, even more, the rapid change of current and the direction of the flow. So, fish the swirls when you find them. Notice the surrounding conditions that led to that result. It could be when the depth changes rapidly, where channels converge, or the tide flow speeding up as it navigates narrow passages and then emerges into a basin of broader dimensions.

Now, let’s talk specifics: marker 4A by Snake Island. Whether the tide is coming or going, it splits in three different directions. The bulk will be pulled north on an incoming up the Intracoastal. A smaller pull will take some into Lyon’s Bay around the east side of Rattlesnake Island with and a stronger amount going around the north side of Snake Island towards Dona and Roberts Bays. 4A is the epicenter. Depending on the wind, it will gently gyrate in all directions swinging your boat in

lazy circles around this Eddy. A fourth conduit takes the water flow around the south side of Snake but blends with the northerly flow immediately and is not a determining factor in the overall pattern. If it is outgoing, everything is just opposite. So, be patient, re-position yourself as necessary, and wait for it to explode. I've personally caught Pompano, Permit, Reds, Rays, small Cobia, Bonnetheads, Barracuda, Blues, Flounder, Ladyfish, Sail Cats, Whiting, Spanish Mackerel and Jacks. You just never know what's coming and going through the Jetties (and beyond) on the tides which are headed unknowingly to the Eddies.

Look for the swirls if you decide to go the basin on the east side of Snake. They are literally everywhere; especially, on an outgoing tide. Once you are confident at recognizing them, you'll notice more around Bird Island behind marker #16, on the south side of #15 in Roberts, and by the second Shoal sign on the way to marker #14 on the east side. If those don't spark your interest, fish the Intracoastal directly in front of the Venice Yacht Club entrance channel.

If you are adventuresome, fish the east side of the Intracoastal from #6 through #10 on the east side headed towards Pop's. Drift the center of the channel; but, cast over by the Mangroves. If you go towards Blackburn Bay, the Eddies are around marker #15 on the west side; and they continue just past the small Mangrove Island that smells of bird shit. If you continue north, you'll see a large pool on the west side after you pass under the swing bridge. Continue on to Midnight Pass and they are directly out in front – watch for the color change and fish where it splits like a mustache on the west edge of the Intracoastal.

So, there you have it. The secret to my success. Now you know why you have been catching zippo while I'm a stone's throw away netting fish. If you don't see the Eddie's, then, see your ophthalmologist. If you don't catch fish, then, go to Walt's Fish Market.

But, if you see the magic and reap the benefits, don't let it go to your head. Fishing is only complicated if you make it so, Grasshopper.