

OFF THE DOCK

WITH D. A. MANN

~ Riding the Roller-Coaster ~

1/25/26

January. If you have a great fishing day during this month, then you should go to church on Sunday and put a little extra in the plate when it comes your way. The “ups and downs” of this month have been challenging to say the least. The cold temps, the winds, and the extremely low tides have led to fewer fishing days. I can count the decent opportunities on one hand; and, the *good* fishing days on a few fingers. Twice I returned after only a couple hours when the wind picked up expectantly or the temperature dropped; twice I couldn’t get off my lift; and twice I got skunked.

The one common element that I noticed was the location of the Pompano when I was able to stay on the water. Blackburn Bay was a waste of time. So was Roberts Bay. When the water temperature fell into the upper 50’s to low 60’s, the bite also fell – to nothing. The Bays only had the occasional Ladyfish. No Jacks, no Grunts, no anything. My instincts told me to find some better incoming current for it might bring warmer water. No place better than the Jetties and the surrounding areas for that scenario. I started at the mouth of the Jetties and let the drift take me north past marker 5 to just shy of #6. Bingo! One big boy on ice. I moved slightly east on the next drift and wound up at #4a. Bingo again! Keeping with this pattern, I again moved east closer to Snake Island. Now the current wanted to take me towards the channel that leads back into Lyon’s Bay, just opposite of my first drift. I added another one.

I'm on a roll here. I watched the flow for a couple minutes and noticed that if I started just off the north side of Snake, the incoming tide would carry me between the markers and in the direction of Dona Bay. #4 went on ice and I released 2 that were less than 13". No need to keep them when the big boys are hitting. I backed up into the middle of the open basin where the tide would carry me between #'s 16 and 17 going into Roberts Bay; same thing – 1 more on ice and released 2. I limited-out by the time I passed #15 and the boat traffic was becoming a pain in the butt. The following week was almost identical; but, I only iced 4 and released 4. In between the successes, I got skunked twice trying it on an outgoing or a slow moving incoming.

I'm looking at the forecast for the last week of the month and it doesn't look good. If anything, it's worse. I might be able to salvage Friday if I'm lucky. Five days working the "Honey Do List" may drive me to suicide. I think that I'd rather be on the water freezing my ass off and waiting for my nuts to drop.