

OFF THE DOCK

WITH D. A. MANN

~ Road Trip ~

3/3/26

Time to hit the road and visit some old haunts. I fished Sarasota Bay and the surrounding areas for over 30 years. Granted, the waters and the sandbars have changed; but, the basic *feel* of the landscape has not. Forget all the construction, high-rises, and the traffic; the general lay of the land and the water is the same. The fishing will need to be rediscovered; but any intuitive fisherman can do that task quickly. To my surprise, we brought in a wide variety of fish that I've not seen inshore south of Stickney Point through Venice in months.

We were counting on some Pompano in Big Pass but got nothing; so, we put our sights on Trout finding them around Otter Key. Moving under the fixed bridge to the flats by Bird Key Park, we caught more Trout, Mangrove Snapper, Pinfish, Grunts, Whiting, Spanish Macs, Ladyfish, Channel Cats, Flounder, and small Black Grouper. Amazing. Other than the Trout, I had not seen any variety since before the cold snaps of late.

On the return leg home, we stopped several times just to test the waters. All of the above mentioned fish were on the short side and we had nothing on ice. Our first stop changed that. More Spanish Macs and they were schooling so thick that we each lost several rigs for they were slicing through our braid. With two beauties on ice, we added a large Whiting and headed for the dock. True, only 3 fish to clean; but, the day felt rewarding with what we discovered had returned to the local scene. Tomorrow, I will find the parents of these children.

