

Inshore Fishing Report

We've had some frustrating days this fall, with high winds almost continuously, with a predilection for weekends . While this may shut down offshore trips, the inshore fishing has been fine. Baitfish have been plentiful. The tides have been brisk and the lowest of the year so far. Trout have been available and fairly consistent, and are being caught in 2-8 feet of water, with the best fishing being over grass with patches of sand, or near cuts or potholes, and on a falling tide. When the wind is not excessive, topwater plugs have been successful, but when the wind is up and there's a chop, you'll miss a lot of fish. We've had success using DOA shrimp under the large Equalizers with about 18" of fluorocarbon leader, and jigs with FishBites have been productive. The most consistent fishing has been with live pinfish; Brian Holt likes to use a Kahle hook fished under an Equalizer. Redfish are plentiful, and will be throughout the winter, but will be close to shore or in creeks. The standard gold spoons, topwater plugs or jigs will work fine. We've had more luck recently on a rising tide up until full. Live bait around grassy points and downstream of oyster bars should work well.

When fishing the deeper flats keep one rod rigged with a wire leader; schools of Spanish have been terrorizing glass minnows inshore; watch for diving birds and head in their direction. Mackerel fishing will probably improve even more as the larger bait pods move closer to shore.

As the cold snaps approach, trout will move into creeks, and possibly into the Suwannee and Steinhatchee Rivers. Throwing standard 52M mirrolures into the channel from the south side of the last red markers at Steinhatchee. and working back slowly to the boat is a good way to find fish, but a freelined live shrimp with a split shot may be more productive. If you don't pick up fish fairly quickly, they probably aren't in the river; of course, if they are you'll probably notice the thousands of boats that will be there ahead of you.

This month's tides are quite variable. On the 10 th the morning tides will be moderate with not much current. On the 17 th there is a severe 9AM low tide and a strong high at 3:30. This would be a good day to work in very carefully on the low and fish bars and creek mouths as the current picks up. The 24 th mirrors the 17 th ; fish the 9AM high for redfish, and the low at 3:30 should provide good current. Most importantly, root for the wind to die down a bit and for the temperatures to remain moderate for as long as possible.