

Pic: Jackie from St James City with a quality snook caught while oyster bar fishing.

Cycle of cold fronts

Wind and a full day of rain associated with yet another cold front repeated what seems to be our new weather pattern.  Nasty weather created more cancelled charters as a few days where just too nasty to leave the dock. This pattern of weekly cold fronts has begun at least a month earlier than most years. Northwest winds really put a damper on fishing as they funnel down the sound making it rougher than any other wind direction.

Pre front fishing was on fire with the low water creek fishing giving clients lots of snook, a few quality redfish and even a few trout to complete the SLAM. This cold will only improve the bite in the way back places as our water temperature continues to dip. When fishing the many creek systems, the sound offers one thing remains consistent the lower the tide the better the action. Low water makes these fish fall out of the mangroves and into the channels. Wind generated minus low water is as good as it gets back in the creeks.

During higher tides I concentrated efforts on oyster bars catching snook after snook. Though most of these fish are in the 20–25-inch range at times we caught fish on almost every cast. Sand holes around the bars were stacked up with fish. When I fish this shallow water, I have clients make a long cast then slowly retrieve the live bait, lifting the rod and making it flutter. With so much grass in these area’s the bait will hang on the bottom if you don’t use this method. Another option is to fish your shiners a few feet under a float.

After the passing of a front finding clean water after days of strong winds is a little bit of a challenge. Sheltered mangrove creeks and the leeward side of the sound don’t get stirred up as badly as areas around the passes. As good as the bite was in and around the passes before the wind it quickly grinds to a halt once it gets churned up. After a few tide cycles this water will quickly clean up in just a few days.  Expect this pattern of cold fronts all winter long.

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