

Fishing Tip – “Docks...Inshore Fish Magnets” *by Frank Przybylski*

If there is one pattern that inshore anglers can count on it has to be dock fishing. Dock fishing produces plenty of action year round whether it is for winter-time sheep head, or late evening dock light fishing during the summer for speckled trout and snook. Docks truly are fish magnets.

If you think about it, docks really are their own little eco-systems... simple forms of marine life such as barnacles, invertebrates and even oysters call docks home and attract various types of forage (crabs, minnows, pinfish) that game fish eat because of the easy feeding opportunity they present.

When are docks in play you ask? Almost always is the answer, especially when water temperatures are too cold or too hot on the flats. Or when there seems to be more angling pressure such as on weekends and holidays, or during local tournaments because docks are often overlooked by these anglers. The key is making a commitment to fishing dock structure and finding many of these fish magnets that produce when traditional shallow water fishing is a little slow. Dock fishing is not for everyone, it will take several trips of trial and error to find docks that produce... don't give up after 15 or so docks. Keep a log of which docks produce. Mark the productive docks on a map or on your chart plotter for future reference... if you fish enough docks, trust me, you won't be able to remember all of their locations. Hmmm. Maybe it's just an age thing for me?

Tackle options really vary when it comes to dock fishing... heavier is better when fishing docks for redfish and snook. **“Don't take a knife to a gun fight”**. You will need gear strong enough to get these fish away from the structure under and around a dock. Lighter tackle is much better suited for trout and sheep head. But again it is the angler's choice.

Practice skipping baits (like a D.O.A. shrimp) to get back under the dock... You want to keep you rod tip low and off to the side so the bait has a shallow angle of descent as it hits the water. It's kind of like skipping stones across the surface of a pond when you were a kid. This technique also works very well for getting under mangrove trees. Add this cast to your arsenal and you will increase you catch.