

FISHING PROSPECTS FOR JANUARY

Winter and cold weather are here, cold by southwest Florida standards that is. The key in January will be water temperature. As the water temperature drops snook, tarpon, and redfish will disappear or stop feeding. Other fish such as seatrout, pompano, and sheepshead will become more active. The colder temperatures should cause the water to clear up and that will make for great sight fishing. An early start will not be necessary, in fact working dark bottom areas on a sunny afternoon may be quite rewarding.

The bait fish will disappear as the water temperature drops. This will cause the fish to switch to feeding on shrimp and crabs. Therefore fly patterns imitating crustaceans will out produce baitfish patterns. Try small clousers or one of the many shrimp or crab patterns.

Besides the water temperature tides will also have a significant influence on the fishing. Fishing should be better during the spring tides at mid month and at month end.

For the latest information on license requirements, open seasons, sizes and possession limits check the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission website for at www.myfwc.com.

SNOOK

In our area (Everglades National Park, Gulf of Mexico, and Monroe County) the snook season is closed until March 1. Catch and release of snook is permitted so minimize the handling of any snook caught and return them to the water as quickly as possible.

If the water temperature drops into the 60s the snook will be hard to find. Those snook that are encountered will be smaller on average and difficult to catch. In the colder water accurate placement of the fly will be critical as the snook will not move far to grab a bite to eat.

REDFISH

The reds are somewhat more tolerant of the cold then the snook and may be found in the holes around the oyster bars. In the afternoon if the sun warms the water enough the reds will move into the shallow grassy areas.

TROUT

With colder water temperatures trout will become more active and should be a primary target fish for the month. The trout will be over the grass or around islands in 4 to 6 feet of water.

TARPON

With the onset of the cold weather the tarpon will be gone from our area.

POMPANO

Look for pompano in the passes. Try working a shrimp or small crab pattern right on the bottom.

OTHERS

Sheepshead will be encountered more as the water temperature drops. Look for them in the holes and around the docks. As the fishing slows down because of the cooler water temperature jacks and ladyfish may save the day. They may not be glamorous but they are a lot of fun to catch.