

# FISHING REPORT

**Reporting Period: February 25, 2024 to March 25, 2024.**

Note: Missing dates normally mean that the wind contributed to boats not going out to fish.

Send me any fishing news or pictures: [lyncurt0@gmail.com](mailto:lyncurt0@gmail.com)

02 /25/2024 HILL BILLY YACHT trolled around the Turner area, saw some birds and surface fish action, but no bites. Then tried Colorado Risco bottom fishing and caught Rockies, Goldies, and Mother-in-laws.

02//26 SAND DOLLAR went to Punta Willard and caught nice Goldie's, Sheephead, and a Grouper bottom fishing (275 -325 feet deep), and reporting 62 degree water. GATOR BAIT caught nice Goldies at Turner.

02/28 GATOR BAIT went to Turner to try bottom fishing but only had small catch of Goldies.

03//01 GATOR BAIT caught nice Goldies at Pedro Matir. EL SUENO went to Isla San Esteban and caught Goldies, Salmon (Pacific White Fish), and a 60 pound Baqueta Grouper (see below). Also SAND DOLLAR caught limits of Goldies bottom fishing. Photos below represents a typical day of bottom fishing, with Goldies, Rockies, Suegra (Mother-in laws), Trigger fish and Salmon.



03/02 NIGHTWINGS tried jigging at the south end of Turner but only caught a few Goldies, then did better on a higher grade of Goldie's at Dead Man before moving on to Colorado Risco for one decent Yellowtail and filled limits of larger Goldie's and Rockies to 5.5 pounds jigging (see above picture). GATOR BAIT caught a nice Fortune Jack (related to Yellowtail), a mess of sand sharks, and other bottom fish at a Pedro Matir. FIREFOX fished Dead Man for 9 Yellowtail and limits of Rockies and Goldies. An unidentified group of Hermosillo fishermen had a nice catch of Yellowtail and various bottom fish.

03/03 MONTANA KIDD'S inflatable had a good catch of Rockies, including one 2.5 pounder.. They were fishing the bay and near Cerro Prieto.

03/05 FIREFOX was fishing Dead Man and followed diving birds to catch 9 Yellowtail and some bottom fish. They were Northwest of Deadman jigging and trolling. Turner was reported as "Dead" for trolling.

03/06 EL SUENO fished the Turner area for Gooldies, Salmon and a Yellowtail.

03/11 SAND DOLLAR fished Eagle's Nest and Willard Point for limits of Goldies, Suegra, and a Yellowtail.

03/12 DOS PRIMOS caught one Yellowtail and bottom fish at Turner. Other boats were out but did not report, so fishing must have been really slow.

03/13 SAND DOLLAR fished around Turner for limits of "BIG" Goldies. EL SUENO got limits of Goldies but reported not sign of any Yellowtail.

03/19 EL SUENO fished Dead Man, Turner, and the Cross-Roads for bottom fish.

03/20 TZGIANE had a "nice boat ride" from the San Nicholas area towards Turner but saw little sign of fish. However they did have a Grey Whale breach a short distance in front of them. DOS PRIMOS head a great day bottom fishing for Goldie's, Rockies, Salmon, Triggerfish and four nice grouper, species unknown. They also caught two "bright orange fish", possibly Scorpion fish, Pop-Eyed Catalufa, Threadfin Bass, or maybe a "Gold form of Sardinera".

03/21 SAND DOLLAR good limits of Goldies in Turner area (?).

03/22 EL SUENO caught the usual bottom fish suspects. Same with SAND DOLLAR, not sign of Yellowtail or Grouper.

Since April and May are excellent fishing months, especially for some species. I thought that I could cover some of the species that become more available as the waters warm. Sea Surface Temperatures are slowly rising (4/23 data):

Local coastal and channel at

Tiburon reaching 68 to 69 (degrees F, 8 day avg.), 70 degrees (3 day avg.)

Tiburon West: 65 to 66 degrees (8 day avg.), 66 two 68 (8 day avg.)

Esteban West: 62 to 64 (8 day avg.) and 67 to 68 (3 day avg.)

## **TIDES**

This April there are two periods of high tide ranges; 4/6-4/11, and 4/22-4/27, and low tide ranges (slow drifts): 4/1-4/4, and 4/14-4/17.

**Moon Phases:** Solunar Table predictions 0 to 3: (poor to excellent activity) For believers

Third Quarter: 4/3 0 - 1 4/3 to 4/6

First Quarter: 4/17 0 - 1 4/19 to 4/22

New Moon: 4/10 3 4/9 to 4/11

Full Moon: 4/24 3 4/24 to 26

## **April Fishing**

White Sea Bass (Cabicucho) have already been caught in March but I feel like April into early June are good times to target them. November-December is also productive but that is a long ways off. They are extremely popular because of their size, fighting quality and as excellent eating fare. I have seen them from 10 to 80 pounds in this area. They feed on bait fish like sardines, mackerel, small croakers and squid if available. Live bait of the species mentioned are desirable live bait but those are not often available in this area. Jigging with heavy lures from 4 to 11 ounces work well in styles like Tady, Salas, and Shimano work well in chrome, chrome and blue, red head-white, "Scrambled Egg", "Angry Squid", and Mauve Squid are dependable colors as are the larger P-68 in white and glow in the dark. WSB are most often found over or near reefs, especially near sandy bottoms in many places near Kino. Most I know of have been caught in over 100' to 200' depths, but they have been caught regularly to less than 50' and deeper than 350'. They do have tender mouths, so a steady slow, steady rate of retrieving is important because you could lose a nice one if you reel in too fast or try to "horse" them in. I know because I have lost them that way. The main thing to remember if fighting a big one is to get their head turned and get them off the bottom, where you usually hook them. They usually have one good run like a freight train then a long tough resistance to coming to the boat. That first run is very tough to stop with a big one but just hold on. I usually have my drag set pretty tight to help keep them off the rocky bottom. When jigging, drop to the bottom, take a couple of turns to get off the bottom and raise and lower the rod at a moderate rate. If nothing bites, reel up about 10 feet and continue your jigging motion until about 20 feet off the bottom. A decent drift helps to cover more territory if not too fast or you may need more weight to get to the bottom. Top locations have been on the south end of Turner, north from Playa La Cruces on Tiburon, Deep Reef, and near 14 Mile, and possibly at Dead Man.

BUT, remember that the endangered Totuava are sometimes caught when fishing for WSB and keeping them is illegal. The best way to differentiate is to look at the caudal (tail) fin.

WSB have a concave, inwardly curved tail, while Totuava have a convex, outwardly curved tail (See photo).





Cortez Halibut also return to the shorelines from March into May, although I think late November through December has always been the best time for catching them. I have caught most off sandy beaches like at "Christmas Tree" (Estuary Santa Rosa), Red Rock Beach, and other beaches near Kino. I use spinning rods with 12 to 17 pound test mono with Kastmaster and Krocodile spoons and Striped Bass lead head jigs like Stump-jumpers or Holographic Striper Jigs, especially in blue and white or chartreuse and white (see below). I work the jigs across the bottom, jerking them up and dropping down along the bottom at a moderate rate. The spoons work best if cast out and allowed to sink then retrieve them at moderate speed, allowing to sink to the bottom every so often. I have usually not had to cast out a very long distance and have often had them follow the lure near to the shore. Sometimes I just stop reeling to allow the lure to sink, then strike hard to hook the fish when it settles over the lure (more with the jigs than spoons). Then just reel in steadily without jerking until you reach the shore, and try to slide it up on the sand, hopefully with a little help from a wave. Sometimes they will fight hard and make a few runs back out, but I do not keep the drag any tighter than necessary. Once I had a halibut over 20 pounds to the shore three times before it broke off, but the second one (23.5 pounds) was beached successfully, despite "help" from the two Dalmatians in the foreground.



Corvina, or "sea trout" are often caught with the Halibut and both of these are often caught at the same time of year, just in different places. Corvina are also found off sandy beaches and near estuaries, but often in deeper water such as off San Nicholas Beach ("14 Mile") along with Spotted Bay Bass "Sandies", and Yellowfin Croaker's. These fish will hit bait or lures like the ones mentioned for the halibut. They do travel in large schools and are constantly on the move. Again, I just cast out, let the lure settle, then reel it in with an occasional jerk. You do need to reel faster than when after halibut. By the way, Corvina are relatives of



the larger White Sea Bass and endangered Totuava, as well as the Yellowfin Croakers, all members of the "Croaker" family. Below, the Yellowfin Croaker is on the right and Corvina on the left.





One last species I must mention is the Leopard Grouper or “Sardinera” (aka “Brownies” or Cabrilla). They spawn in the late Spring from mid-April into June, usually very near rocky shores and reefs where there is a lot of weeds. We have used metal jigs for them but many catch them casting close to shore with medium sized Rapala X-Raps, for by trolling. They can reach weights well over 20 pounds and fight hard, are beautiful fish, especially if in the “Golden” phase, and one of the best eating fish. Sardinera are usually caught in waters 25 feet to 150 feet. They are a sought after fish for these reasons, but are a slow growing, long lived species that are easily over exploited and populations are at risk, so please keep to the limits of five fish per fisher-person.



Next month I will cover a few other species that show up later in the Spring into June.

Matt Curtis