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Manukau harbour fishing report

Skatit visusPage TransparencyFacebook is showing information to help you better understand the purpose of a Page. See actions taken by people who manage and post content. Skatit visu What the hell are you doing with those? echoed around the valley and I was in trouble once more. We were going to Auckland to visit my parents in Cornwallis, at Manukau Harbour. The purpose of the visit was to welcome mom who was in Europe for a holiday, but we only had one day up there because I had things to do the next day. Missus was a little perplexed as to why I was sticking a pair of bars and my gearbox in the car. As always, my apologies were met with a language that would make a truckie blush, but like most fishermen I know, I try to be prepared for anything, and besides, how long does it take to say hello to Mom? Luckily my brother Ian thinks a lot like me when it comes to fishing matters and when we got his welcome home it was all over and he was connecting the boat up to the tractor. Mom was on top of it as usual, and told us to go and enjoy the port as she was now convinced that Kiwis not only have a great lifestyle, but we also live in one of the best places in the world. Now all we have to do is stop the bureaucrats and other rat bags filling up for all of us. As we stood around the point in glazed water, the Manukau looked like a small piece of paradise right on the doorstep of our largest city. Those unfamiliar with the port (including Aucklanders Hills) would be forgiven for thinking of it as a giant sandbar that is covered by about a metre of water at high tide. It is true that the sandbanks are extensive in the Manukau, but well-defined channels make it quite easy to find your way. As you approach the Heads, the water clears hills and the port takes on a whole new atmosphere. Instead of the sandstone and the black mud of the shallows, the harbor is washed up by steep, bush-covered hills that fall sharply into the water. The beaches around this area have a certain magic about them: very quiet with the rugged bush or farm surroundings adding this special ingredient. Wildlife changes significantly as well. I rarely spend time near the Heads without seeing dolphins or seals of any description, with the strange pilot whale and even orca snooping on rare occasions. Fishing also takes on a new perspective. It is quite common to see Kahawai's work on the main canals leading to Heads and the prospect of catching BIG fish increases the closer you get to opening the ocean. The tidal flow is quite large, which is the biggest nuisance, and we tend to fish our favorite spots in the water or near the loose water. One thing you will notice here is that fishing is either hot or hopelessly bloody! Very much you have a mediocre day; the fish are there or they're not. You can catch big kahawai (3-4kg) almost anytime here, though during the summer lots of beggars are also close by. I spent many days just shaking a spinner or jig around the rocks, going home with kahawai fresh enough to fill the smoker. Few people think about trying boat jigs because of the rip, but in the calmer moments of the tide can be – and usually is – very productive. You can even try a slow recovery with a soft plastic bait or fish stacked near the bottom (from the harbor, not your butt – unless you like that sort of thing!). I've taken gurnard, trevally and even snapper with a slow recovery, but be prepared because the kingfish is very interested in this kind of thing as well. The kingfish in the harbor seems to be in all sizes and although they will take jigs, baits and live baits, I caught most of the bass on a pilyly bait or cut. The last one I picked up was about 14kg and had several small flounder in his intestine, indicating where he was spending his day before I screwed up for him. The snapper tend to be small school fish in the harbor, but every year large specimens are taken (especially from the deepest holes – check your chart for these) and I fondly remember the time we stopped in the main canal to experience some deep water and picked up a good snapper one after the other. Unfortunately this was before the GPS was around and we never made it to the scene again. If you are looking for a great snapper your chances are better off the bar. The rip is strong here, so it's a good idea to get to this point near low water and fish the tide of entry. That way, if your anchor drags on or your engine pulls away (or both) you move away from the bar and expect to postpone being a statistic for a while. If your boat is equipped to handle it, and you get your facts and the right time, fishing over the bar can be very rewarding. This is not a bar for or ignorant – make sure you know what you're doing and, if possible, follow or go with someone who's crossed the bar before. The tidal change is enough to stir the wind and water up here, so be careful. Depending on how far you are prepared to travel, you can expect anything from snapper to tuna and marlin. During the summer, bouncy and albies abound and are caught in a very good size. I've heard stories and seen evidence of good yellow tuna working beyond the circuit breakers. Try to find this on the east coast! If you like land fishing, then whatipu has to be visited. A mix of surfcasting or rock fishing is right there at your fingertips. Here again, though, one should be careful, as this beach sits right in the Manukau bar and has the rough (and dangerous) qualities of any of the west coast beaches. Kahawai, kingfish, trevally and snapper are all captured either from the beach, the Ninepins (rocks), around P aratutai Island (an island locked in the earth by sand) or more back around the inside of the Heads. I still like bait pills as anything will take them. But mullet is extremely popular as huge huge these fish enter the port at certain times of the year, so they should be considered as a natural bait for many species – and it gets on its hook as well, too. The platform I use varies with the type of fishing I do, but a standard platform would be a fairly long dash, with a sinker running above the swivel. Stray is good if you can get out of the chain, and the same goes for using berley. A main hook of about 5/0 will help you stop hooking the small snapper and fit a smaller goalie hook if you want to see what's pinching your bait. Hold on to quality hooks and tackle how big fish are definitely out there and will hit when you least expect it. I lost a lot of good fish before I got along. Most of us spend heaps on sticks and reels (and bait), so why the hell does we save at the end of things? I still think fresh bait is the best when aiming at the bigger fish, and catching your own at Manukau shouldn't be any problem. There are pipers, sprats (yellow-eyed taint), mackerel, kahawai and shellfish all over the place, but they are more common in the shallower and lighter areas. If you like scallops, you can get big much closer to home than you might think (often swimming at low tide) and even crayfish are on the menu, but I'd have to kill you all if I told you where, then you'll have to find them for yourself. If you want to stretch something, try putting a big bait on heavy equipment and berley up big. Many big bities and rays are found anywhere in Manukau and have provided me with hours of fun and the odd pair of messy panties to boot (wait anything). There's definitely no need to kill these creatures – take a picture of the thing if you want, but then release it back to play your important role in nature's food chain. Besides, the bags don't have one of those things hitting my boat. As you can see, I think Manukau is a very special place. Lots of people scoff it as dangerous, useless, dirty, shallow and all sorts of other defamatory comments, swearing they'll never get caught out there. I just smile and sometimes agree, because frankly, the fewer people out there the longer it will stay as it is – magic! April 1998 - by Rob Raw This article was originally supplied by NZ Fisherman Magazine and revised to Fishing.net.nz 2013 by John Eichelsheim Re-publishing elsewhere is banned The biggest challenge to port fishing this season was the red identity that plagued us during the summer. While Phil Goff assures us that Manukau is not auckland's forgotten port and tests show nitrate levels are lower than ever, I must say I never knew the problem was so bad. The red mass is a form of algae and a report I read a while ago suggested that nitrates were feeding it. Our local politician went on to say how you can really smell how clean the port is nowadays. Come to Big Bay at the height of summer and take a whiff phil. You could build a mountain off outside the stuff that is washed on the beach after a big tide. If you can avoid the identity house, however, the fishing is still great. Once it gets in your line, you need to clean it or you won't get a bite. Sometimes that means bringing your speech every few minutes. That's a bit of a chore, but you can make things easier for yourself by fishing for loose water around each stage of the tide. Fishing in the shallows also helps as you can get your line in and out of the water very quickly. Fortunately, that's where the fish are this time of year. Last weekend we picked up 11lb snapper and while we just picked up a few small trevally, there are some much bigger ones around. Gurnard will begin to present more in catches as the weather cools down and his condition will also improve. Kahawai are scarce, but large fish up to 3kg are being caught. Kingfish are also worth aiming at and are very rewarding to pick up. A live jack mackerel caught in the bottom can do wonders. Keep the berley will help attract the baitfish and the kings and you will be amazed where you will catch them. The west coast is producing a great snapper too and any depth up to 30m can produce on the day. Regardless of where you pick up your snapper, they are in prime condition and the gut will have thick white fat deposits that acts as an energy store during the winter. You'll also notice a sticky buildup on your filleting knife and the blade will need constant cleaning to help you cut the fillets easily. Be sure to make the most of your fish using an iki for a quick death and plenty of ice to cool them. I take a 90-liter icy dumpster two-thirds full of ice – but I have an ice machine. Tuna is still around, but marlin numbers appear to be low this year. I help weigh fish to the Counties Sport Fishing Club and my phone hasn't exactly run hot with fish weighing requests, especially in the latter stages of the season. They're there, of course, and it's not too late to catch them. As always, the most important thing is to stay safe in the water and around the water, and a close second is to get out as much as you can and enjoy your fishing! Be careful, watch out.

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