

FLOUNDER MASTERY



Alabama

Salt
STRONG

Flounder Blueprint (Alabama)

**with
Patric Garmeson**

<https://www.saltstrong.com>



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Introduction

- In this course we'll be dissecting the area from Mobile, Alabama area all the way into the panhandle of Florida and really on both sides (Fig. 0.1)
- Captain Patric Garmeson, a renowned Flounder expert in this region will be our guide
- The course will cover the following:
 - Winter Flounder
 - Spring Flounder
 - Summer Flounder
 - Fall Flounder
- We'll be unveiling tips about the following critical topics:
 - Where to find Flounder (the best spots, depths, water temp, types of structure, what type of bottom, etc
 - When to find Flounder (the best time of day, the best tides and moon phases along with moving water vs still water etc
 - What to use to catch Flounder (live bait/artificial lures, best rigs, line strength, leader length, rod size, reel size etc)
 - Retrieve techniques like speed, setting the hook and the timing involved plus all other tactics; and
 - The ultimate advice for the busy angler who has very limited time to fish and wants to maximize their chances for success. We call this section "One Spot, One Bait, One Tide".
 - The ultimate advice for the busy angler who has very limited time to fish and wants to

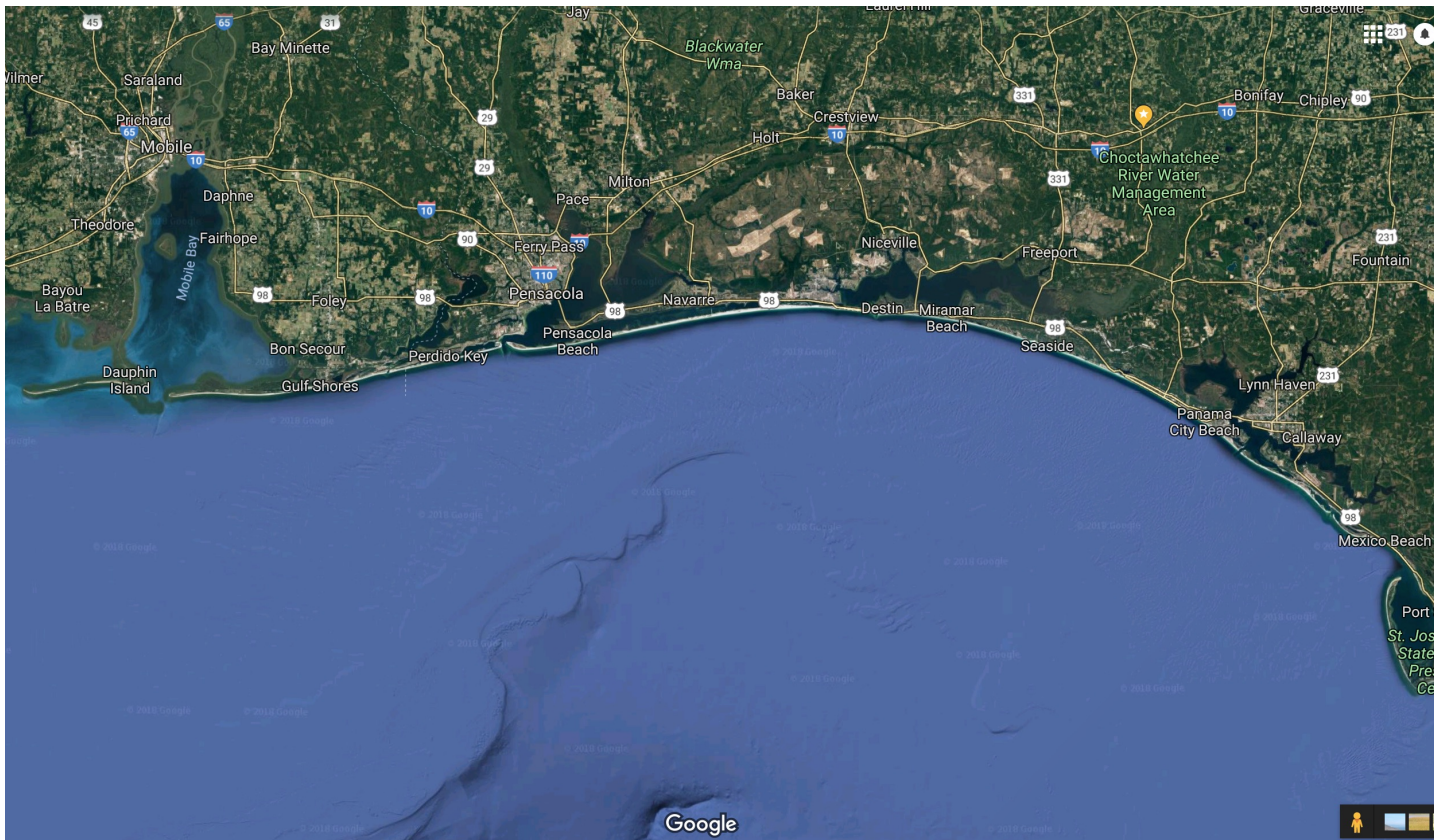


FIG. 0.1 - ALABAMA COAST

Module 1

Winter Flounder

Where To Find Winter Flounder

- In this section we're covering the January - March timeframe
- Mobile Bay had numerous estuaries and rivers
- During most of January, Flounder will be migrating, or will have already migrated, out of these estuary areas into the Gulf
- They will be in spawn mode, somewhere around the nearest structure offshore
- There will be very few flounder actually in shore in Mobile Bay or in the rivers/estuaries in early to mid January
- However, by the third week of January and into February, the spawn is mostly over, and things have cycled. So Flounder are starting to migrate back in, but they do not stay in this areas for long.
- On their way back in from the Gulf, you'll begin to see them at the eastern end of Dauphin Island and the tip of Fort Morgan, rounding these corners and heading into the Bay (Fig. 1.1)
- In Winter, as in Summer, Flounder will be found around structure - rocky structure, hard structure like

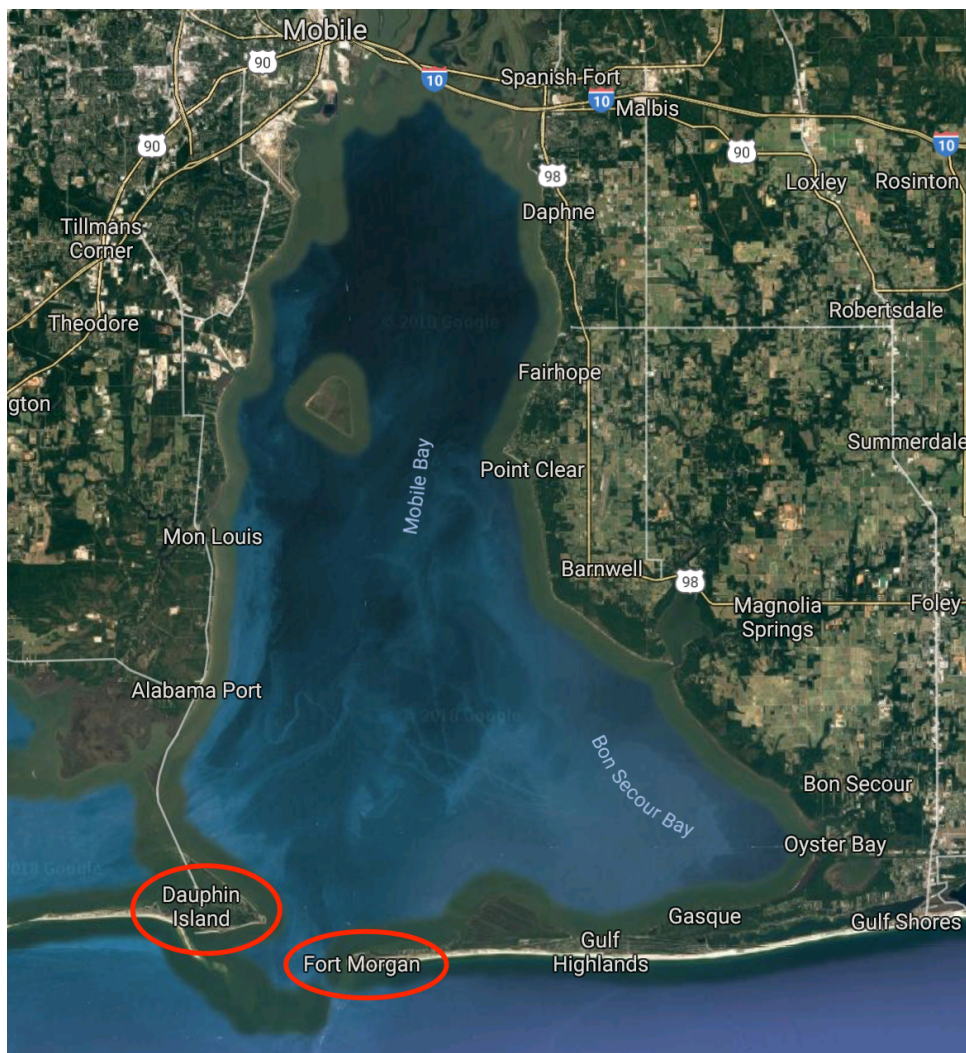


FIG. 1.1 - DAUPHIN ISLAND AND FORT MORGAN

pilings etc.

- Most of the bait types around these areas the Flounder be feeding on are going to be a lot of mullet, as well as some crustaceans like small shrimp and crabs
- There are some fairly sharp drop offs and some flats along the Fort Morgan side, where the fish will lay in shallow and feed. From here, they're going to drop back off into deeper water and continue migrating up the Bay
- While the Dauphin Island side is a little bit shallower, there are some rock jetties over on the eastern end of the island which are good ambush points for those fish to feed on a lot of finger mullet at that time of the year (Fig. 1.2)



FIG. 1.2 - DAUPHIN ISLAND JETTIES

- Most Flounder are going to be found along the jetty areas, tucked tight to the rocks. A couple of these jetties actually have some fairly sharp drops that go from about four feet down to about six or eight feet. So Flounder may be found on those ledges
- Fort Pickens (Fig. 1.3) is a pass East of Mobile Bay towards Florida and the same trends will apply in this location. Although the pass is a lot deeper than Mobile Bay, there are a lot of shallow bars around there.
- The key to fishing successfully and finding Flounder at this time of the year is locating all the little cuts where the fish are migrating in to find their home for the rest of the year

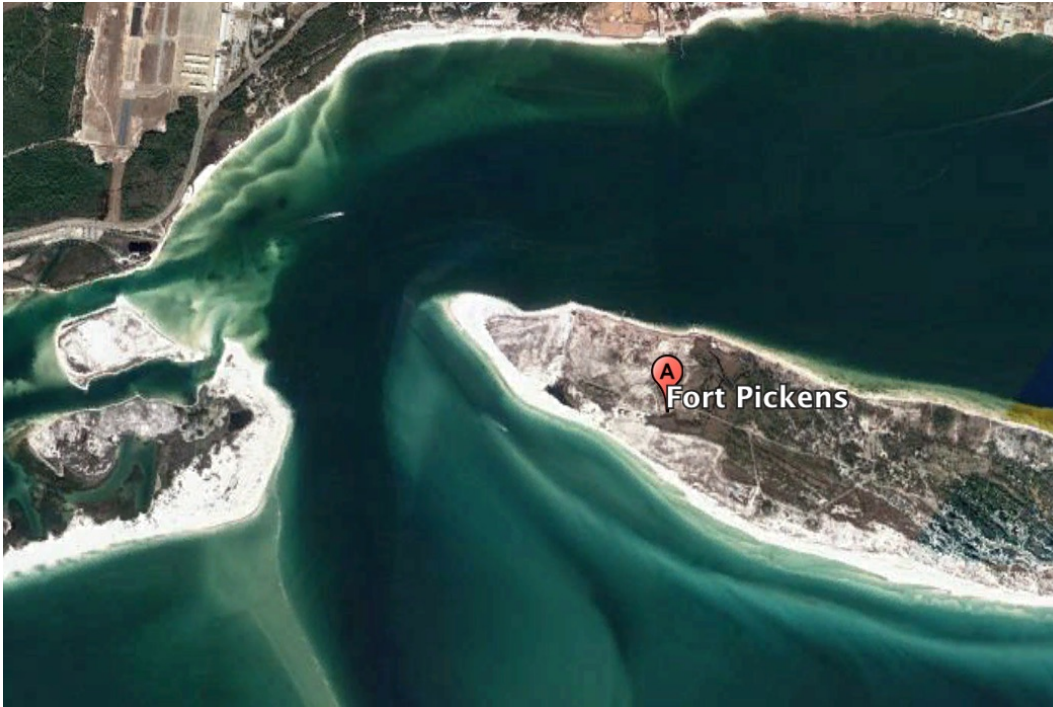


FIG. 1.3 - FORT PICKENS

- A unique feature of Mobile Bay is the gas rigs (Fig. 1.4). If the points of the passes are not working a good plan B option is to hit these Gas Rigs as the Flounder will tend to stop off near these. They have both the vertical structure of the rig itself, and some added limestone to enhance the bottom.
- Off these rigs, bouncing a jig off the bottom will be the easiest way to start locating Flounder and oftentimes is best way to be able to maximize keeping your bait in the water, as opposed to having to re-hook live bait continuously
- Around these rigs water depth ranges from about 12-22 feet
- On an incoming tide, a 3/8oz jig-head is preferable
- On an outgoing tide, a 1/2 oz up to a 1oz jig will be required due to the strong tidal flow during the outgoing tides at this time of the year



FIG. 1.4 - GAS RIGS IN MOBILE BAY

When To Find Winter Flounder

- An outgoing tide is preferable when targeting Flounder during the Winter months as they are more active at this time, tending to move and feed more into the tide
- Water temperatures over 58 to 60 degrees are ideal and seem to be when Flounder are going to be feeding and most active

What To Use

- During this time of year a mullet profile/pattern is the desired lure type to “match the hatch” (remember earlier we said that the main bait source at this time of year will be mullet). Paddle Tails and Curly Tails work well
- Ideally, a darker color rigged on a 3/8 or 1/4 oz jig-head works best
- The 3/8oz jig-head can be used in as shallow as 4 to 6 feet of water, all the way up to 20 feet of water
- Live Finger Mullet works very well if you’re more into live bait
- In the Winter months, in these locations a depth of 6 to 8 feet of water is fished most often, focusing mainly on the ledges
- Patric uses both YUM and GULP brand lures, preferring the 4” variety (white Swimming Mullet and Paddle Tail grub)
- Patric prefers the following items when fishing for Flounder at this time of the year:
 - 20lb braided line
 - 20-24” of 17-20lb Fluorocarbon leader
 - Any rod that he would typically use for bass fishing or speckled trout fishing size - a low profile bait caster is really nice for flounder fishing, because you can cup that reel in your hand and be able to let that line rest on your finger while you’re working your bait. Patric believes you will have more success on hook ups using a bait-casting reel over a spinning reel, because as you retrieve and work the bait, it’s very difficult to have your finger on the line as the line wraps around the bale

Retrieve Techniques

- During this time of the year, the desired retrieve is a really slow crawl, almost keeping the lure in contact with the bottom the whole time. As with fishing for most species with lures though, your aim is to find a cadence that works, casting perhaps 5 times, before changing the cadence of the retrieve up to perhaps some small hops
- Casting up current and working the lure back with the current is the appropriate retrieval method where fishing for Flounder, as it is with most species. As mentioned, the Flounder are moving into the current, not going with it
- You’ll want to keep your line somewhere across your finger, so you can feel the subtle bump and when you do, there are two tactics you can employ:

Jig Head

- If using a jig-head, it’s a jig, reel down, get the slack out of the line and set the hook with power and authority, almost as soon as you feel the thump
- This can help avoid the situation where the Flounder bites, but then immediately turns towards you
- Failing to set the hook powerfully in this situation can result in the fish never being actually hooked but just holding onto the bait as you lightly pull/reel and then swimming off when it gets near the water surface, realizing something’s going on. In this case, you’re really just reeling in the fish until it decides to let go

Live Bait

- If using live bait the technique is to slowly drag it across the bottom. A typical live bait Flounder rig would be a 1/4 to 1/2oz weight, a barrel swivel, connected to about 18" of leader with a #6 Kahle hook tied on - with a Finger Mullet or Bull Minnow nose-hooked
- This setup will limit unwanted by-catches too. Here, you'll keep the weight in contact with the bottom and just slowly reel it and that mullet or that bull minnow is going to flutter behind the weight
- With live bait, wait maybe 8, 10 or even 15 seconds before setting the hook. You can even pull back a little bit to see if the fish gives you a little bit of weight back before setting the hook
- That countdown a lot of times gives the fish enough time to where he grabs the bait, possibly spits it back out (if he's taken it tail first, in which case they won't swallow it that way), and then to suck it back in, head first.

One Spot, One Bait, One Tide

- During this time of year, the best lure to use is the GULP Swimming Mullet - Flounder love it!
- For best results, work this lure around the ledges and structure in the Fort Morgan area
- Fort Morgan is ideal due to it's shallow grade on one side, and deeper cut on the other
- Find other spots with similar ledges in the winter to maximize your strikes

Module 2

Spring Flounder

Where To Find Spring Flounder

- During Mid-March sees the Flounder in the second leg of their journey getting established in Mobile Bay and surrounding areas
- There are many small rivers and creeks scattered all along the Mississippi Sound that are all full of life , especially juvenile life - perfect for feeding Flounder(Fig. 2.1)
- This is where the Flounder will be staging at this time of the year
- The main targets in the Spring will be the river and creek entrances
- While the majority of structure you'll target when fishing for Flounder will be ledges, bridge pilings or dock pilings that are close to river mouths are also productive areas
- Pay attention to the depth you catch your Flounder in. Although we mention that most Flounder will be caught in the 3-8 foot depth range, if you catch one in 5 to 6 feet of water, a lot of the fish are going to be in that 5 to 6 feet of water range . And at that point, you can really dial in on where you need to focus your efforts.
- If fishing a channel and you're catching them on one side, but the bite dies off, switch to the other side and work some of that area, as well. You may find that there's are Flounder that were working the channel and then pushed up on either side, and you may have more fish on the opposite side, and they're just directly across the river or across the creek from you.
- In the Spring there is very little sea grass to speak of so most of the targeted areas will be a muddy or silty bottom. Getting into the late spring, summer, early fall, we talk more about rocks and grass beds



FIG. 2.1 - MISSISSIPPI SOUND RIVERS & CREEKS

- This is the time you will see a lot of fish filtering into West Fowl River and others that have a larger watershed as these put a lot of nutrients back in the water, this feeding a lot of those bait fish we discussed earlier (Fig. 2.2)



FIG. 2.2 - FOWL RIVER BAY AND WEST FOWL RIVER

- The main focus is going to be around creeks and rivers at this time of the year but avoid the Bayou Coden area this time of the year due to the fact it only has a local watershed, so likely to not hold as many fish
- Typically, the bigger the creek and the opening, the more bait fish going in and out and thus the more Flounder
- Some of these creeks and channels (like the Bayou La Batre) have a decent amount of water - about 18 - 20 feet deep. Rather than fishing the bottom of those channels, you'll target along the edges, and probably in the 3 to 8 foot of water range.

East Fowl River

- East Fowl River (Fig. 2.3) is a great place to target Flounder in the Spring months of March and April. Just like at the mouth of the Bay, there is a choke point where a lot of fish move through to get into these areas. The best bet is going to be starting near the mouth of the East Flow River at this time of

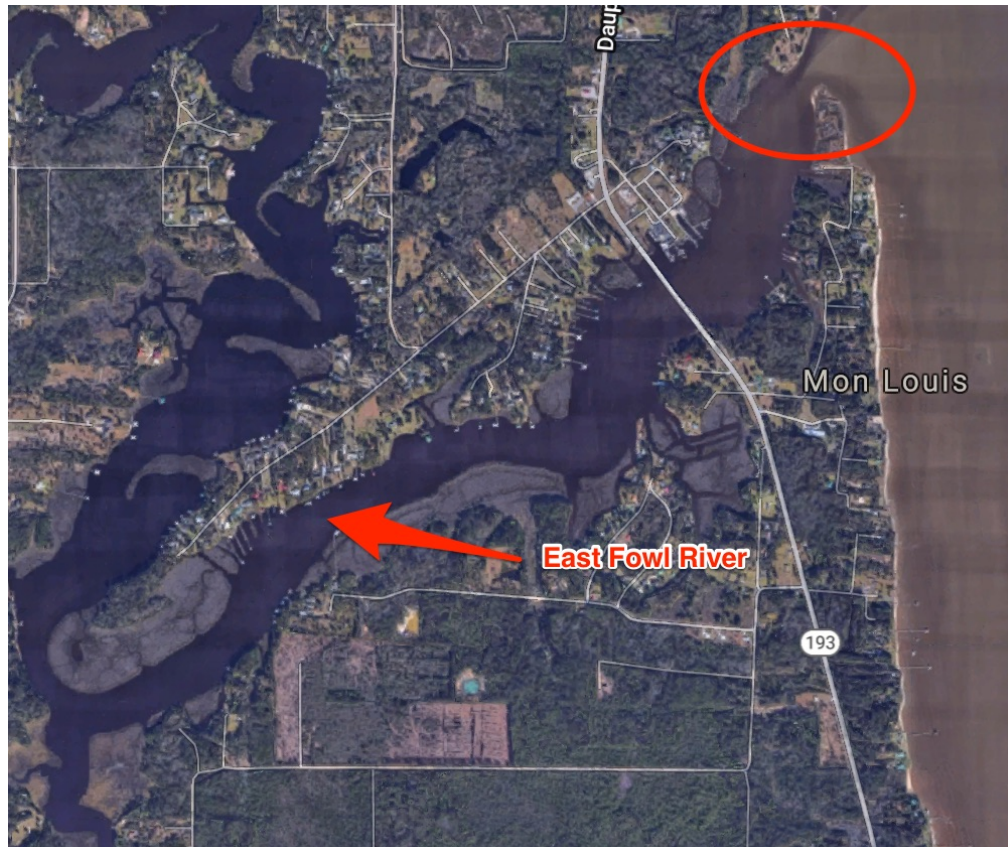


FIG. 2.3 - EAST FOWL RIVER

the year

Theodore Industrial Canal (Deer River)

- Theodore Industrial Canal (Fig. 2.4) goes a little bit against the grain with regard to watershed. It is a 40 foot deep channel that ties into the main shipping channel. This channel has historically given away a lot of flounder along the mouth. There are a lot of rocks in here, so there's rocks along here and a marsh also. This marsh is one of the better areas in the canal for catching flounder, due to it's proximity to this creek that's likely full of Mullet and Bull Minnows at this time of year



FIG. 2.4 - THEODORE INDUSTRIAL CANAL

Dog River

- Dog River (Fig. 2.5) is another productive spot this time of year. It has a really small mouth (so again, that desirable narrow choke point), which opens out onto some flats. Focusing near the mouth and bridges, working on the ledges in 6-8 feet of water will be your best bet. This is one of the only areas that catching Flounder in the middle of the channel is fairly effective this time of the year.
- This is all relatively deep water through this channel. Going further back into Dog River there's a marina and from dock to dock, it's all pretty deep - a funnel if you will that concentrates life on incoming and outgoing tides. You can catch flounder all through here. Beyond here though, look for Flounder to start dumping out of the channel and begin filtering up onto the flats, either side of the channel.



FIG. 2.5 - DOG RIVER

Mobile River

- Mobile River (Fig. 2.6) is the main shipping channel offering 40 feet in depth along its length
- It dumps into Mobile Bay where the shipping channel continues with a 40-50 foot depth.
- A great deal of life lives in the channel. This is because, regardless of how much fresh water is in the Bay, there's always going to be salt at the bottom of that channel. So, there is always a lot of life in the bottom of that channel, almost year round. Fish will utilize this channel if the water is fresh on top
- Patric has success with Flounder on or near the top of the channel at some of the range markers that are in 12 to 18 feet of water - right off the edge of the channel
- Even though the Mobile River is surrounded by 42,000 square miles of watershed feeding the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, the Mobile River is its own little eco system due to its ability to always hold salt water.
- In the delta there is far more flushing and at times it may be completely fresh water in these areas, but also full of life. This massive watershed empties out into Mobile Bay dumping with it tremendous amounts of nutrients (both good and bad) that are coming from all over the state, feeding algae and all



FIG. 2.6 - MOBILE RIVER

types of marine and fresh water life, and therefore creating opportunity for growing a lot of bait fish

- In this area (Fig. 2.7) we can see where the Bay starts necking down and getting into these choke points where fish start shooting up into the rivers
- In here there are some channels here that go out on to some flats, and you have some deep water
- These are some areas here where the Flounder are going to be coming into this channel and finding their way into the main river, or they're just coming up the Bay, finding their way straight up the main river
- Patric's theory is that that the Flounder look to making their home in the rivers throughout most of the summer



FIG. 2.7

When To Find Spring Flounder

- During the Spring, targeting Flounder on the falling tide is ideal although at this time of the year Flounder are feeding well so an incoming tide can be productive too
- Tide changes are always good times to target Flounder - far more preferable to a slack or really slow tide - so moving water is definitely desirable

What To Use

- This time of year, the Mullet and fin fish type patterns are good lures to use. But shrimp are going to start showing up on the Flounder's menu, as well
- The further South and East you are at this time of the year, (for example Bayou La Batre, Mississippi Sound, Oyster Bay, Period Bay etc) there are a lot of shrimp - brown shrimp and pink shrimp, or hoppers, as they are locally known. So employing a shrimp imitation lure would not be a bad choice at that time of the year. Live shrimp, or even dead shrimp would be sound choices as well

Retrieve Techniques

- As is typically the case, casting up current and working the lure back with the current is the appropriate retrieval method
- Position yourself parallel to the channel or parallel to the ledge, cast down the ledge and drag the bait back along the ledge
- Another effective technique involves throwing the bait out beyond the ledge and working it back up the hill

One Spot, One Bait, One Tide

- Targeting Flounder near a river or creek mouth is your best bet to maximize your potential for success during the Spring.
- Remain focused on that 3-8 foot range using a Shrimp imitation lure such as a Z-Man EZ ShrimpZ

Module 3

Summer Flounder

Where To Find Summer Flounder

- Here we are looking at the timeframe from Mid-May through Early-June as the start of our Summer
- As mentioned in the Winter Module, Flounder will be found around structure - rocky structure, hard structure like pilings etc.
- We already know that the Flounder have been moving into the rivers and creeks and while they may stay in there, they will also move in and out of these rivers and creeks as the tides allow
- Start looking out into areas with open water structure
- The creek and river mouths will still hold fish, although not as prolifically as they did in the Spring time

Dauphin Island Bridge

- With Dauphin Island Bridge (Fig. 3.1) being such a large structure, it's safe to assume that you could find Flounder under here around or near a piling for this entire bridge. This entire bridge is fishable and holding fish
- Because this is a choke point, choose your currents wisely. You want to choose the lighter tide movements as opposed to the really strong current flows created as the Mississippi Sound flows in and out of Mobile Bay
- This is an ideal place to go on neat tides or very slack tides, where you have minimal current movement and you can just get around and pick this bridge apart
- Oyster beds can be found West of the bridge and while you will not target Flounder here, you may snare



FIG 3.1 - DAUPHIN ISLAND BRIDGE

them as a by-catch while fishing for Trout or Redfish

Gaillard Island

- Gaillard Island (Fig 3.2) is located in the middle of Mobile Bay and is surrounded by rocks where the Flounder will stage around
- Most of the water surrounding the island is 3-6 feet deep up against the rocks
- Locate bait fish to maximize your chances catching Flounder



GIG. 3.2 - GAILLARD ISLAND

Point Clear

- Point Clear (Fig 3.3) is on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, east of Gaillard Island
- It's a major feature of the Bay, and the Flounder will hold up along there, along the rocks
- Anytime you can find points like this (that you know get hit with lots of current, definitely fish the area when the water is moving.

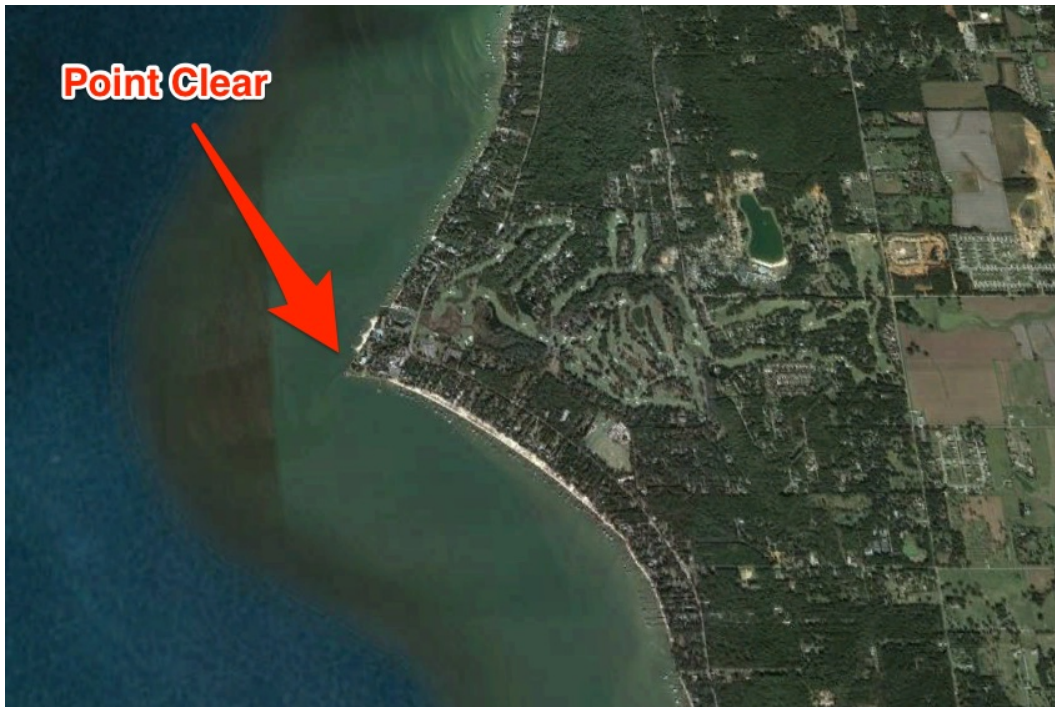


FIG. 3.3 - POINT CLEAR

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Blakeley River Grass Beds

- The area circled below, along the Blakeley River (Fig. 3.4) holds the bulk of the sea grass in Mobile Bay where you'd be most likely to find Flounder
- Flounder can be caught in these grass beds, targeting potholes as you would for other inshore species



FIG. 3.4 - BLAKELEY RIVER GRASS BEDS

Mobile River

- The Mobile River (Fig. 3.5) is a really good summertime area, and it's all structure. You have rock jetties, docks, dry docks and good shorelines. These are all areas to look for flounder
- As always, pay attention to the depth you're catching fish in and continue to target those depths
- Shallow water for Mobile River will be 8 to 15 feet of water. Most Flounder are going to come from that depth range
- There are some areas along the shore that are 3 to six 6 deep, however the structure is often so thick

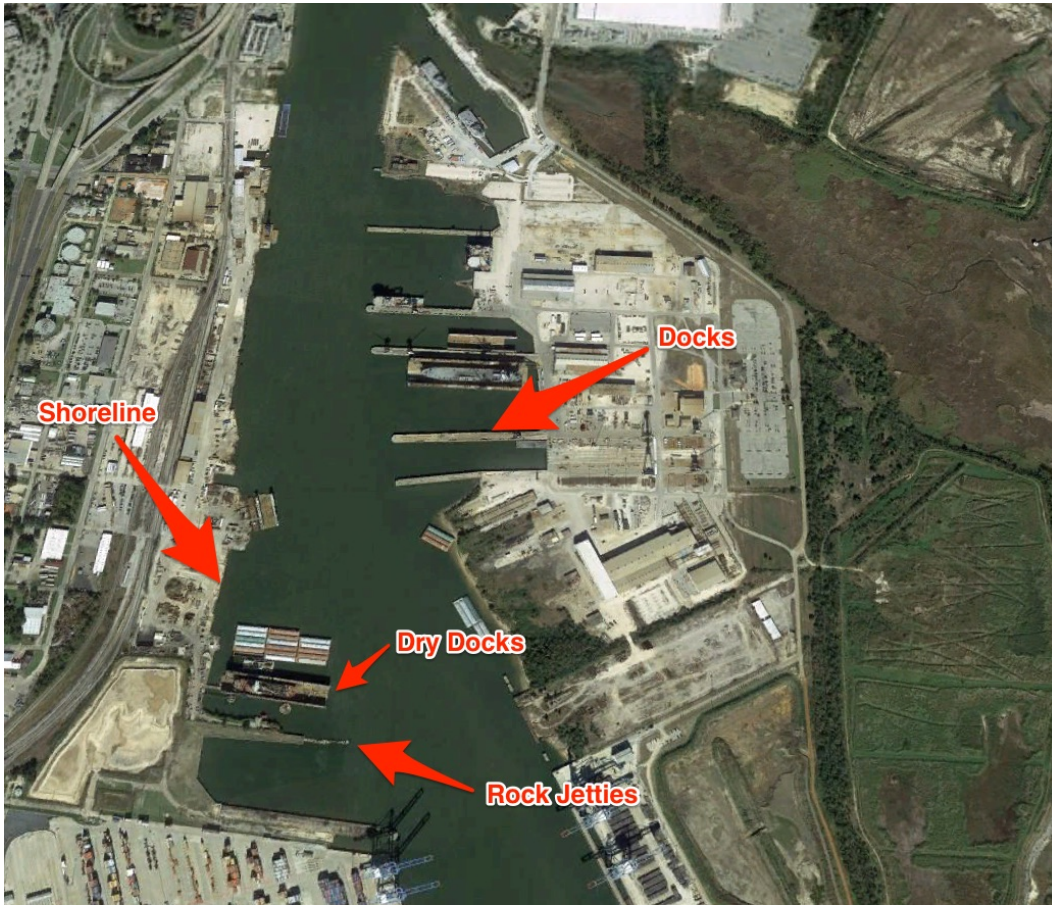


FIG. 3.5 - MOBILE RIVER

that it's difficult to fish through it without getting hung up

When To Find Summer Flounder

- Mid-May through Early-June
- During times of lighter tide movements

What To Use

- The most common baitfish during the Summer months will be Menhaden or Pogies as they are known locally
- Using a live (or dead) Pogie or a lure that mimics a Pogie or some sort of Shad will be your bait of choice this time of year
- These types of baits are very abundant this time of year so using these ensure's you'll be "matching the hatch"
- Flounder are opportunistic predators, so while they will eat just about anything Pogies will be their primary food source during the Summer months
- Experimenting with different rigs, heavier/lighter line etc. depending on season is not necessary. Stick with tackle that will be in contact with the bottom
- A regular Bucktail Jig can be a very versatile lure for targeting Flounder, tipping it with some kind of cut bait (Mullet, Croaker etc.). Flounder seem to be more receptive to something with some smell or flavor to it, this time of year

Retrieve Techniques

- At this time of year, look to position more in the eddies
- Instead of positioning yourself in the current, try to get out of the current, but near wherever you've got lot of water moving - get close to it, but out of it. You will find more Flounder in those areas.
- Some schools of thought suggest that because the water temperature is hotter this time of year, the Flounder are more lethargic, not wanting to put forth as much energy dealing with the current
- As far as tempo goes, you're still retrieving relatively slowly at this time of the year. The Fall is when the Flounder start getting revved up

One Spot, One Bait, One Tide

- While both the Mobile River and Gaillard Island are both great Summertime spots, the shallower water of Gaillard Island will be the best bet simply because it's going to relate to more areas that people can fish.
- The 6 to 8 foot range is what you'd want to target, preferably with hard structure like concrete or dock pilings etc.
- Locating and fishing near baitfish is also a huge bonus
- Again, a GULP Swimming Mullet is a very sound option at this time of the year for a lure. Hook it on a 1/4 or 3/8oz jig-head
- 2-3" Pogies will be your live bait of choice
- The eddies are the locations to target during the Summer, working the bait, staying tight to the bottom

Module 4

Fall Flounder

Where To Find Fall Flounder

- During the Fall, the place to target Flounder is in the rivers
- Flounder can be found all the way up these rivers (Fig. 4.1) up to as far as Highway 65
- The following rivers and bays are all fair game:
 - Mobile River
 - Spanish River
 - Raft River
 - Apalachee River
 - Blakeley River
 - Tensaw River
 - Chuckfee Bay
 - Grand Bay

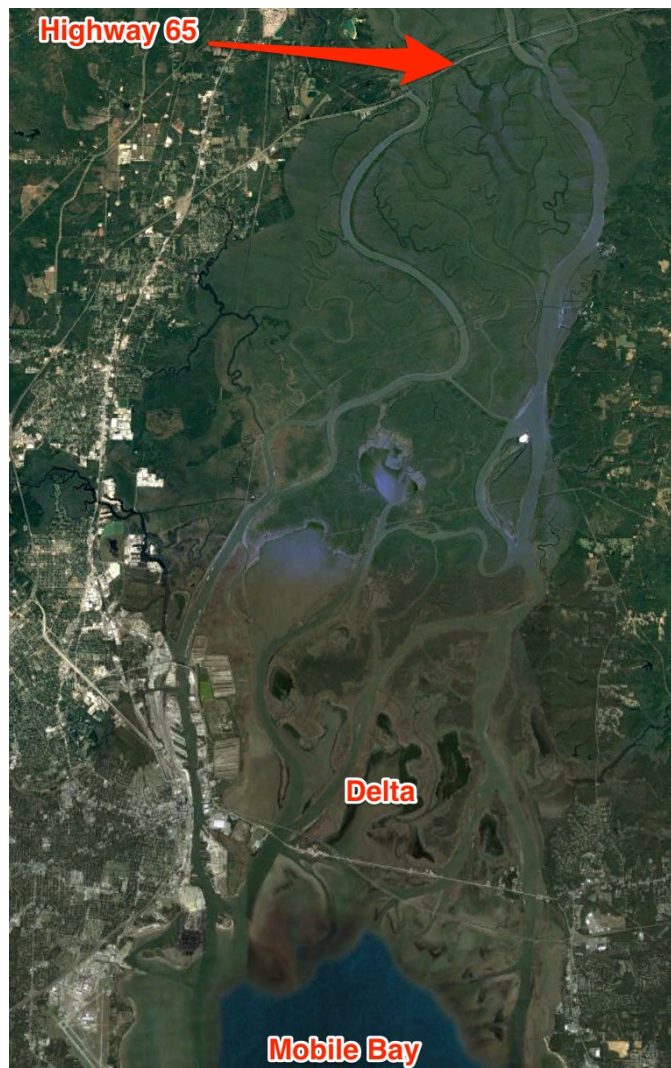


FIG. 4.1 - DELTA AND RIVER SYSTEM

- Chacaloochee Bay

- In the Fall you will have the Flounder making a journey that will mirror the Springtime - they will all need to funnel back out of the rivers into Mobile Bay, usually behind cold fronts - particularly from early November through Christmas
- Fall is the time of the year to start watching your weather and fishing based on the weather
- When North winds blow a cold front through, this will push the water out of these bays like Grand Bay or Chuckfee Bay, taking their water levels from about 3 feet down to about 1 foot. At this point, a lot of the bait fish, the Flounder, everything starts falling out of these bays
- As these fish are moving, you can start catching them very similar to where you were in the Springtime, at the mouths of the creeks
- In areas where you have been catching Redfish and Speckled Trout, a good tactic is to put your lure on the bottom and see if you can find some Flounder
- There are only three exits into Mobile Bay from the Delta River System marked below (Fig. 4.2)
- Beyond those exit points there are a number of smaller channels where Flounder can be targeted, if



FIG 4.2 - EXIT POINTS

- there is an abundance of bait starting to stack up in any one of these ditches
- One of the good things about fishing this area in the Fall is you can get a full day of fishing in by targeting Flounder on the incoming tide and Trout and Redfish on the outgoing
 - Water flow plays a big part in a flounder's behavior
 - During the late Fall period (November through Christmas), Flounder bunch up around some of the points with structure in Mobile Bay as they are working their way south, headed out of the pass for their winter spawn again
 - The water between Alabama Point and Dauphin Island as well as the pass between Dauphin Island and Fort Morgan (Fig. 4.3) will be great places to target Flounder on the first or second day following cold fronts during this time of the year

- During these fronts, the North Wind will push fish down onto the Peninsula (Fig. 4.3) where there is family consistent depth and docks (Fig. 4.4)
- Timing is critical here as the fish will not remain here long after a cold front - remember, they are migrating back out of the bay at this time so hitting this spot a day (at most 2 days) after a cold front is crucial
- We will see similar patterns after cold fronts in Perdido Bay
- Areas where there is a Lagoon with a small inlet or pass and some sandbars like this one in the Gulf Shores area (Fig. 4.5) are great places to target Flounder in late Fall/early Winter - both inside and outside the pass
- The general rule during November and December is to get back down towards the open water of the



FIG. 4.3

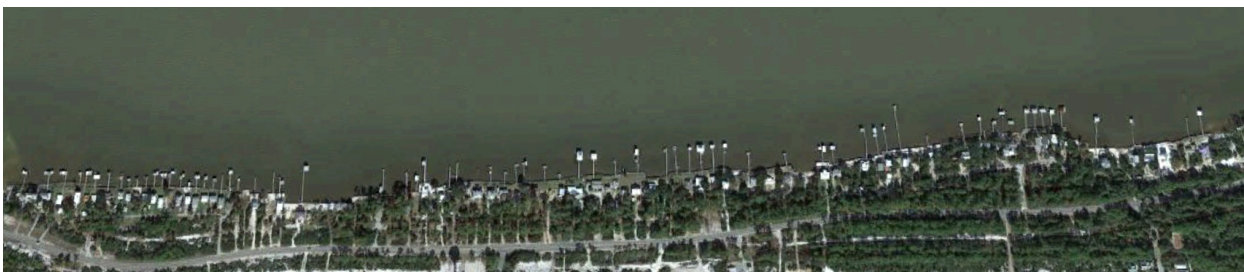


FIG. 4.4 - PENINSULA DOCKS

Gulf and the passes



FIG. 4.5 - GULF SHORES LAGOON AND INLET

When To Find Fall Flounder

- Patric believes the best time to target Flounder this time of the year is an incoming tide because they are using that tide as it's coming in to know what direction they need to swim to get out of those rivers
- Patric catches the majority of his Flounder between 8am and an hour or two before dark with the most productive time being when the sun is directly overhead (this will create a silhouette, or more of a shadow, for the Flounder to respond to and allows them to find your bait easier)

What To Use

- During the Fall, use whatever you can catch in a cast net for live bait - Shrimp, Mullet, Croakers, Porgies, Spots etc
- Late Fall (November/December) Finger Mullet will likely be the best live bait choice
- Whatever you're catching close on where you're planning on fishing, use that for live bait
- As far as jig-heads are concerned, any that we have discussed previously will work - these fish are fired up and feeding at this time of the year, so as long as you get your bait/lure in front of him, he's going to eat it



FIG 4.6 - LIPLESS CRANKBAIT

- Again, those Paddle Tail, Curly Tail and Shrimp profiles all work well in the Fall
- 1/2oz Rattletrap Lipless Crankbaits (Fig. 4.6) have proven successful in the Fall and early Winter also
- During the Fall these Lipless Crankbaits are good exploratory baits and can be fished over Oyster Bars, near rocks etc, although you'll want to avoid dragging the Crankbait along the bottom to prevent hangups. Instead, reel it such that it's just bumping the bottom. You can almost keep it up off the bottom, but will need to be able to feel the bottom every so often to know that you're close enough for a Flounder to be able to find it.
- Redfish will take these too, if the Flounder bite is slow
- Avoid dragging the Crankbait along the bottom in . You want to reel it to where it's just kind of bumping the bottom. You can almost keep it up off the bottom, but you need to be able to feel the bottom every so often to know that you're close enough for a flounder to be able to find it.

Retrieve Techniques

- These Lipless Crankbaits are best employed on the flats and near the flats, in 3 to 5 or 6 feet of water.
- Flats and points are good for throwing these Crankbaits, thrown it up current, up the hill, and then working it back down the hill

One Spot, One Bait, One Tide

- The ideal spot to target Flounder during the Fall would be a point on a river, or possibly where two rivers come together, or maybe a major creek and a river meet (Fig. 4.7). Targeting points facing into the tide are your best bet
- Position yourself on the down current side of the point and work your bait from the shallow, back to the deep
- A GULP Or Z-Man Shrimp on an incoming tide is the best option in the Fall as this time, shrimp are falling out of the rivers and Flounder will be feeding heavily on them



FIG. 4.7 - WHERE RIVERS MEET

Bonus Module

Q & A Time

- **What is the best way to avoid spooking Flounder when in a boat?**
 - Flounder do not appear to spook very easily at all. Patric relates a story where he's been trolling and then seen a mud cloud kick up from the Flounder that shot away from the foot of his trolling motor, indicating the motor was very close to the fish before it spooked off
 - Flounder will often be caught directly under the boat (especially in the Summer where the shade from the boat can draw them underneath), so ensure you work your bait all the way around the boat.
- **What are some of the other big mistakes that you see them make when they're going after flounder?**
 - If live bait fishing, setting the hook too soon or not setting the hook hard enough to really drive that hook in there are the most common mistakes, the latter particularly when using soft plastic lures. Again, set the hook with power and authority
- **What are some other mistakes to be aware of?**
 - Flounder are notorious for getting off right by your boat so always have a net ready as soon as you know it's a Flounder
- **What tips do you have for catching a "monster" Flounder?**
 - Use live Pogies, Croakers, Finger Mullet or big Bull Minnows (close, but different to a Mud Minnow)
 - These in the 3-4" range Carolina rigged with enough weight so they stay close to the bottom is a great way to entice large Flounder
 - The bigger Flounder will be found in deeper water. The Gas Rigs in Mobile Bay, mentioned earlier will be a great target area, working around the legs of them - ideally this will be a fairly slow current day, where you can fish around them and not get tangled up in the rig
 - Numerous other species will find those live baits appealing though, so you will be fighting through some of these other species while trying to target the monster Flounder
 - Once these inshore predator species get to that trophy class range, they're independent. They do their own thing, and look for something big to eat
- **What are some tips on catching flounder from the beach?**
 - January and February are the best times of the year to catch Flounder from the beach in Alabama, as they migrate back into Mobile Bay
 - You will also find them as they fall back out as previously discussed in the Fall Flounder module
 - Most of the discussion in the course has revolved around the Southern Flounder. The other species of Flounder is called the Gulf Flounder and they can be found along the beaches periodically throughout the year
 - With the Gulf Flounder, it's less about time of the year and more about when the bait cycles occur
 - As far as bait is concerned, a Bucktail with a piece of cut bait would be effective for either Southern or Gulf Flounder
- **Is there anything that's uniquely different about Mississippi/Alabama Flounder as opposed to those in Florida or Texas or even up in the Carolinas or New Jersey?**
 - Due to limited experience fishing other waters other than Tampa Bay, Patric can really only offer the following comment here: "The ones that I have caught (in Tampa) seem to be a lot smaller than what we're catching around here. But I think the ones I was catching were like those Gulf Flounder, and not the Southern like we have here. The Southern get really big."

- Jacksonville however has giant Flounder according to anglers Patric has spoken to from there, who are catching 10 - 13 pound specimens

- **What are the sizes of the flounder that you typically get in your home waters in Alabama?**
 - Average size is 1.5 - 2 pounds. A large Flounder will be about 5 pounds
 - The state record was a 13 pound 3 oz specimen caught by Pete C. Melech in Mobile on 10/15/1975

- **For that Mom or Dad who wants to get their kid(s) out there and catch a couple small easy Flounder, what do you suggest?**
 - Some of those tidal rivers in the Summer like like Dog River, Fowl River, Fish River, Magnolia River. Those are going to be some areas that are going to be pretty easy to fish, working around those ledges along the edges of the channels.
 - Rig the kids up with live bait (as discussed earlier), on a Carolina rig, jigging it and moving it around a bit, for the best chance of success

- **When you're covering ground looking for Flounder and you happen upon one, are you putting power poles down or anchoring down and literally just trying to cover that entire area before moving, or do you continue to move?**
 - In this situation, you definitely want to hold your ground and fish the area, whether it be power poling or anchoring down or spot-locking with your trolling motor

Cooking Flounder

- A popular way a bigger Flounder (in the 3-6 pound range) is prepared in the Mobile area is stuffed with crab meat
- Although not necessary,. de-boning the entire Flounder before stuffing it is preferable. In this way you can create a Flounder pocket of sorts to stuff with the crab meat
- Another simpler method to prepare Flounder is filleting them and pan searing in a skillet achieve that blackened style flesh.