



's Most Exciting Coverage of Inshore Saltwater Fishing!

## Stay Dry, Stay Warm, Catch Fish Kayaks Can't Be Beat For Cold- Water Specks

Friday, January 25, 2008

*(Editor's note: This is part 1 of a 2-part story on kayak fishing for cold-water speckled trout with Texas kayak angler Vincent Rinando.)*

There's no time like wintertime when it comes to catching monster speckled trout on the Texas coast.

Every year thousands of determined trout chasers bear the biting cold and damp coastal winds in hopes of bringing that one magical 10-pound sow to hand.

Some speck seekers prefer to use their boat to make long drifts over deep-water structure, but most Texas trophy-trout aficionados swear that slowly shuffling over a waist-deep mud flat is the only way to go. Team Ocean Kayak pro Vincent Rinando doesn't care for either of those methods - at least not anymore.

"I grew up fishing out of a boat, wade-fishing - doing all that stuff," Rinando said. "If you told me back then that I could catch a lot more and bigger trout if I got a kayak, I would've said you're crazy. But that's the truth. I catch more big trout now than I ever did wade-fishing or drifting in a boat."

In part1 of this 2-part story, he tells you why.

### Kayak Comfort

There's no denying that making a long winter wade can take a toll on the body. Trudging through gunky mud in 55-degree water can sap your strength in a hurry. That's one big reason Rinando favors the kayak during the colder months.

"Wading is an effective way to catch big trout, but when you can get better results without having to get cold and wet, why bother," he said. "In a kayak you stay warmer and drier than you do while wading."

The kayak also allows him to stay on the water longer without expending so much energy, and that comes in handy when trying to coax lethargic winter trout.



Photo: TeamOceanKayak.com

**Vincent Rinando (pictured) says he catches more and bigger trout out of a kayak than he ever did wade-fishing or drifting in a boat.**

"Winter fishing is all about patience," he said. "You have to stay with it if you want a shot at that big fish. Sometimes you only get a few quality bites a day. People don't think so, but paddling a kayak takes much less energy than making a long wade in cold water.

"With a kayak, I stay comfortable and that lets me stay on the water longer. The more time you spend in productive water, the better your chances are at hooking up with a quality fish."

### **Stealth = Success**

"Cold-water trout are as wary as they come," Rinando said. "In Texas, our bays get extremely clear during the winter months, and those trout are extra sensitive to sights and sounds."

He thinks the kayak's stealthy characteristics make it the perfect tool for sneaking up on sensitive winter specks.

"No matter how quiet you try to be in a boat, you're never going to be as silent as a kayaker," he said. "It's really tough to drift over cold-water trout in a boat and not scare them. They can hear the water slapping the hull, they can hear you walking around, they can hear the trolling motor - by the time you get within casting distance they're already spooked."



Photo: TeamOceanKayak.com

**Rinando believes kayaks are less noisy than boats and more comfortable than wading.**

It's for those same reasons that wade-fishing has become the calling card of most big-trout enthusiasts, but even the most methodical wade-fisherman can't match the kayak's nearly silent approach.

"Even if you're careful you're still making a lot of noise when you wade," he said. "Your body is pushing water and you're sending out shockwaves in front of you. If those shockwaves reach the fish before your bait does, you can forget it.

"Wading also clouds the water," he added. "I've seen wade-fisherman walking along a reef with a 200-yard long mud streak in front of them. You kick up mud and then the tide can push it out in front of you. Those trout know something funny is going on when the water turns muddy all the sudden."

### **No Water, No Problem**

Anglers all along the Gulf Coast experience the lowest tides of the year during the winter months. That condition is made even worse when a strong cold front comes through and blustery north winds drain the bays and leave expansive mud flats where knee-deep coves used to be.

While low water can be a boater's worst nightmare, Rinando believes it's a kayaker's best friend. "As a boater, those days are the worst. The water's low and hazards are everywhere. It's hard to launch and it's even harder to navigate. I remember launching a boat on those days and having to back 10 feet off the ramp just to get my boat in the water. It's a real pain.

"But in a kayak, you never have to bother with that kind of stuff. You don't have to worry about boat ramps or hitting a reef on the way to your fishing spot. It's simple and stress-free."

Besides making things tough on boaters, receding water concentrates trout into deeper areas that are sometimes cut off by shallow water or dry land on all sides. That's when the kayak shines the most.

"Those are some of the best days to have a kayak. The bays are quiet because all the boat ramps are high and dry, and the fish will group up in just a few areas that pretty much only a kayak can get to.

"Some of the best fishing days I've ever had were when all the water had been blown out of the bay," he added. "If I didn't have a kayak I probably would've stayed at home like everybody else."

"As a kayak fisherman, one of the best pieces of advice I can give is don't let low tides and cold water keep you from fishing. Usually kayakers have to battle boats and other fishermen for the best spots, but on days like those, you can have it all to yourself."