

Fishing

By



"The Crappie Catcher"

Belize, British Honduras
December 16, 1967

Belize, capitol city of Honduras, lies a little over a thousand miles south of New Orleans, the Crescent City. It is located on the North Westernmost reaches of the beautiful multi-colored waters of the Caribbean. The particular area of the Caribbean which frames the sea-coast boundary of Belize is called the Gulf of Honduras.

The population of Belize City is about 40,000. The entire tiny Central American nation has a population of 110,000, which is less than 2/3 the population of Las Vegas. Only 4 to 5% of the people are Caucasian. Strangely, the majority of the population is made of people of African descent, many of whom are pure blacks. All races are smoothly blended into the racial fabric of Belize. The people of this Central American melting pot are pretty people. They are a very friendly people. Everyone speaks to everyone he meets face to face, and all speak with a tone of voice that rings with a melodious warmth and sincerity.

Honduras is the only political entity, south of the US border, where English is the national language. However, all other languages can be heard as one makes his way through the narrow busy streets of Belize City. Most Belizeans speak Spanish as well as English. Some of the African dialects can also be heard. Native Indian dialects are also spoken in this tropical setting.

The universal language spoken by the visitors of this tropical paradise is talk about fishing. The fishing in the Gulf of Honduras can be described as, "fantabulous". The varieties of fish are encyclopedic.

IN THE EYES of this writer a tremendous mystery is involved with the great sportfishing potential of the Honduras Gulf. It has never been widely publicized, and there are extremely limited facilities to accommodate the sport fishermen. There are no boats designed for off-shore fishing, as we know in our favorite fishing ports in the States. There is no live bait available. All sportfishing is by trolling, and most of the boats which take the fishermen out to sea are outboards in the 17 to 19-foot range.

This writer's first venture to find the "proof of the pudding" was in an 18-foot fiberglass, powered by a museum type Evinrude twin, which ran on only one of its cylinders most of the time. A set of new sparkplugs would have solved most of the problems of the boat's power plant, but a motor of less ancient vintage would have done a more satisfactory job. However, the old motor, much like an old fiddle, had enough good tunes left in it. It got us out beyond the cayes (pronounced 'keys') and put us smack-dab in the middle of a natural 'Marine Land' where the water was crystal clear and azure blue, with a snow white bottom.

Twenty miles off shore there seemed to be as many reefs as there were waves. The entire area is truly a fisherman's dream, but at the same time, it is an absolute mariner's nightmare. To be caught at sea at night would make a dark alley in Harlem seem safe by comparison.

YOUR WRITER was accompanied on his maiden voyage in the Gulf of Honduras by a Canadian businessman who had traveled nearly 5000 miles to wet a line and try his luck in this fishing paradise. He was living proof that the Crappie Catcher is not the only fool among nimrods. He was exactly the same breed as the rest of us who always believe that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, and that the other fellow's fishing place is better than our own. Neither of us was disappointed, even though our guide said over and over, "The fishing is not good today." We caught 16-1/2 fish. The half fish was the head of a gar, or needle fish, which was a 3 or 4-foot whole fish until

NLV FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE CHAMPS



FLAG FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS -- Members of the C.V.T. Gilbert Flag Football team, winner of the North Las Vegas Park and Recreation Department's Flag Football league play with a 7-0 record, display 1st place trophy... Kneeling (from left): Oliver Tatum, Bennie Webb, Eugene Hardaway, Bobbie William, Tony

Pollard, and Joe Hall... 2nd row - (from left) - Leon Smith, Carl Smith, Carlton McCullom, Herman King, Tony Campbell, Marty Young, Richard Dixon... 3rd row - (from left) - NLV Recreation Superintendent Dalby Shirley, Coach Morris Jordan, and Ass't Coach Richard Minyard. - Dick Walpole Photo

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DIXON TOP SCORER



RICHARD DIXON (center) triple threat man, who led C.V.T. Gilbert School to a 7-0 record to win the North Las Vegas Park and Recreation Flat Football Championship... Dixon scored 116 points to capture top scoring honors from 2nd place winner Carlton McCallum (also of Gilbert) who racked up 60 points.

Dalby Shirley (left), of the NLV Recreation Department agrees with Richard Minyard (right), Ass't Coach of the Gilbert Team, who says Dixon is a potential O. J. Simpson with his broken field running. - Dick Walpole Photo

my fishing partner got him within 50 feet of the boat. At that point, a giant barracuda snapped off about 2 feet of the fish. The remaining portion of the needlefish continued to put up some sort of a battle against the fisherman, even though 2/3ds of its body was in the belly of another fish.

Our total catch, weighing over 150 pounds, was comprised of 11 different varieties of fish, of which number there were 6 kinds of grouper, kingfish, barracuda, amberjack, red snapper, and 1/2 of a needle fish. All were caught trolling a feather jig with a strip of cut fish. The largest was a 20-pound king which we had prepared for our dinner by the chef at the Fort George Hotel. The kingfish, a variety of mackerel, turned out to be just as fantastic on the end of a fork, as it was on the end of a fishing line.

Excellent fishing is to be found in the Belize River which is a tidal water similar to the mouth of our Colorado River where it empties into the Gulf of California in Mexico. Perhaps the ease of finding so many varieties of fish in the river which runs through Belize City, is partial solution to the mystery of the absence of a sportfishing fleet. We will have more to say about the Belize River in later writings on the unsung saga of this tropical fisherman's paradise.

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