

# Fishing

By



## "The Crappie Catcher"

Belize, British Honduras  
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Belize, in fishing talk means, "fishing fantasy". Only those who have actually experienced fishing the fabulously productive waters of this Caribbean wilderness country can really believe that such a nimrods' paradise actually exists.

The shoreline of Belize is protected by the 190 mile long Great Barrier Reef of the Caribbean. The reef, second only to the Australian barrier reef, runs parallel to the coast line 15 to 30 miles off shore. The Great Barrier is made up of more than 160 tropical islands which seem almost to hold hands with one another, to form a protective chain stretching the entire length of this Central American nation. There are some who say the reef holds the storm at sea while it holds the fish close to shore. The lagoons and shallow flats protected by the Great Barrier are year around, all-weather fishing grounds where most of the world's trophy species of sport fish can be found.

It is almost never that the weather will keep fishermen ashore. However, if such a 'never' day should come, the Belize River which never feels the sting and disturbance of storm wind is right at hand with fishing equally as unbelievable as that which is found in the sea. Every day is a good fishing day in Belize. The weather never stops the fishing. There is lots of rain, but the temperature range, from a low of 60 to a high of 90, with a mean temperature of 78, prevents the weather from being a factor which would lessen the enthusiasm of even the 'fair weather' fisherman.

The Belize River is a beautiful tropical river. It winds its way from the sea through the jungles of Belize and into neighboring Guatemala.

Several ancient Maya Indian cities were built near its banks centuries before Europe became civilized. The famous Xunantunich ruins are on the Belize River near the Guatemala border. The Maya temples were built at about the same period when the Egyptians were building the great pyramids. Although the Maya temples were not nearly so large as the tombs of the pharaohs they were far more ornate than their Egyptian counterparts, and they have withstood the ravages of time equally as well as the great pyramids.

THE BELIZE RIVER is a typical tropical estuary. It seems to have been scooped out of the towering green jungle which lines its banks. The jungle banks are an impenetrable wall of tangled trees, vines, and bush that form palisades of living jade. It is totally impossible to take one step from the river's edge into the wall of solid jungle, unless it is along a beaten path. The eye cannot see into the intense denseness any further than a man can stretch his arm into this wall of living plant life.

Travel along the Belize River by boat is much the same as navigating Boulder Canyon at dusk under heavy overcast. The overhang, of the tops of the tall trees which line the banks, keeps the river under constant shade. The river traveler usually sees only water and jungle, with an occasional peep at the sky in those parts of the river which are a little too wide to be canopied by the tops of the jungle trees. Most of the river is narrow enough to cast from one bank across to the other. The Belize River is something quite different from anything ever seen in the travels of most nimrods. It is magnificent. It is also eerie, but it is loaded with fish of many sorts and sizes.

A branch of the river courses through the city of Belize. The town market place is located at the very edge of the river bank. Boats bring all sorts of commodities to the market. The garbage is dumped into the river. The moment the garbage hits the water, the water begins to boil with the rush of thousands of catfish com-

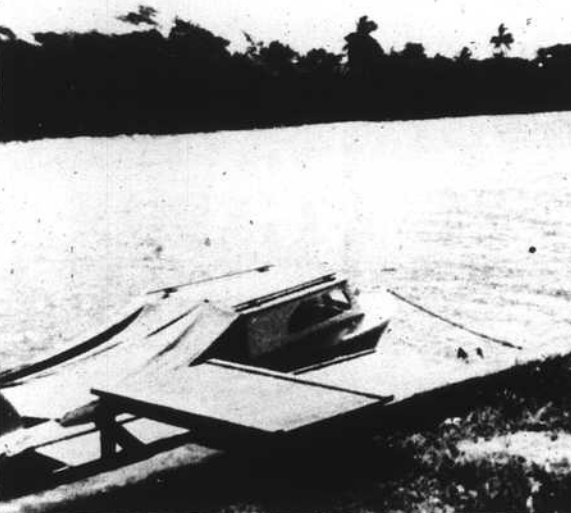
# Crappie Catcher In Nimrods' Paradise



YO HO HO - and a bottle of rum... The Crappie Catcher reasoned (correctly) that no one would believe how really hard he is working, so "had this prima facie evidence documented".



IKE WALTON IN BLACK FACE holding 20 lb. King Mackerel (right) and 15 lb. bad bad-acting Barracuda (left)...Note: the cat that shot this pic shot off the damn tails of the fish, but you can't look a gift horse, etc. -- just call him a -----!



SHOT ACROSS BELIZE RIVER from a fishing camp toward the jungle wall on opposite bank. Note how jungle grows right to water's edge.



FIRST DAY'S CATCH - Note piece of garfish (upper left). CC related in last week's issue what a battle this remaining portion of the garfish (or needlefish) put up even after a giant barracuda snapped off about 2 feet of the fish as it battled the fisherman... 2 red snappers next to garfish... King Mackerel far right front, 2 barracuda to left of King. All the rest are various species of Grouper which belong to the Bass family.



BELIZE RIVER near its mouth--one of the widest areas of it.



ENTRANCE to most interesting room in Ft. George Hotel... You guessed it - gateway to the booze bar.

peting one against all the rest for food. No one fishes for catfish in Belize. The people do not eat them because they believe the flesh of the fish is contaminated by the sewage and refuse dumped into the river.

Nimrods who like to fish for cats would find something more than they ever dared to dream of at the market place in Belize City. (Big Boy-side would be happier than a queer in the YMCA if he could drop his line there). The catfish that

dash to the spot where garbage is dumped appear to be numerous enough to step right out into the water and walk on them. A person could easily dip a ton of cats in no time.

The Belize River is a schooling grounds for Silver Tarpon, one of the world trophy species. The river is also the playground for snook, kings, spanish mackerel, barracuda, sharks, and a zillion species of fish, along with an occasional gator.