

# Dave Graybill

## The Fishin' Magician

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April is a big month. There is the "April Fools" opener in the Columbia Basin. There are other spring fisheries, such as walleye and big trout fishing going by April. This is also the month for some special events, like kids fishing days in a couple of locations. As long as the weather treats us right, some of the best fishing of the year can be had in the month of April.

I had been hearing of good walleye fishing on Potholes Reservoir, and I also had learned the walleye bite had begun on Banks Lake. I was very eager to give it a try; maybe too eager. One of my fishing buddies, Bob Whitehall, called me the night before saying that there may be a better day to go, given the weather forecast. The forecast I paid attention to didn't look that bad, and I assured him it would be fine. It wasn't.

We met Dennis Beich, retired Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Director of Region 2, at Big Wally's, and he expressed the same concern about weather. He also mentioned that he and his friends had caught four limits of walleye the day before at Potholes. That just got me more excited about getting on the water.

It was actually pretty good for the first couple of hours. No wind or rain, but the clouds got lower and lower and it looked more like rain was on the way as the morning passed. We had one nice walleye in the cooler and had caught a couple of nice perch, too. I had caught and released a couple of small walleye, so we were catching fish at least. Then the rain came.

It started slow and built from there. It rained as hard as any of us had seen it rain so far this year. I just kept

grinning and pointing out that there were fish on the fish finder and we were still getting hits. It continued to rain and there was just enough wind blowing to make it really cold. At one point, Beich said he promised he would never ask me to go fishing ever again. I just laughed into the wind, and kept trolling.

We were trolling spinners the whole time, and blue was a very good color. I also had good success with a large purple blade with a neon chartreuse stripe, made by Dutch Fork Custom Lures. We got almost all of our hits at 40 feet, and spent most of the time on the back side of Steamboat Rock.

We got another keeper walleye and had caught and released at least 20 undersized fish when we packed it in. Whitehall even managed to catch two burbot, which none of us had ever seen caught on Banks. There were two very happy anglers on my boat when I started taking down my gear to head for the launch. I have to say they did me a great favor by toughing it out and staying out on the water. I am very eager to get back out on Banks. I know the next time I will get a lot more keepers. I will wait until the weather forecast calls for better weather or I will be fishing all by myself.

Get your calendars out. There are a couple of dates that I want you to remember. The first is the annual Garage Sale put on by the Central Washington Bass Club. This is a great place to go to find some super deals on all kinds of tackle for bass fishing. There will be rods and reels and a ton of plastics and other gear. I will be there with a table full of stuff I have collected over the past two years, since I missed last year's sale. It will take place on North



Wenatchee Avenue at the Canned Food Outlet, across from Smitty's, beginning at 8 a.m. Just look for my boat right out in front of where the tables will be set up. The sale lasts until 2 p.m.

The first fishing event for kids is coming up on Saturday, April 12th. The Moses Lake Irrigation and Rehabilitation District hosts this event, the Columbia Basin Kids Fishing Derby, at Connelly Park, which will be held on Saturday, April 12th. There will be lots of fish to be caught and other activities for the kids. There are some terrific prizes to be handed out to lucky anglers and free hot dogs and Pepsi for everyone that attends. You must pre-register for the event, though, and you can do so at Mar Don Resort, Airway Heights Deli, Lakes Market, and Dairy Queen in Moses Lake. This will be the fourth time that the MLIRD and Pepsi have held this event, and hundreds of families have come and had a great time. It's a good time to get your

family excited about the fishing season. The general trout fishing opener takes place at the end of the month. This is a perfect place to practice before that big weekend.

I hope you all have your new fishing licenses. They need to be renewed April 1st every year, and I hope you remembered before the April Fools opener last Tuesday. Most people will be fishing the lakes that opened in the Columbia Wildlife Refuge, most of which are south of Potholes Reservoir. Every year there can be some great trout fishing on these lakes. Most will offer yearling trout of 11 inches to a foot long, from fall fry plants. There are also some carryover rainbow, and some of the lakes produce some real brutes. Many of the larger fish come from the walk-in lakes. Every year it seems that many of the big fish are taken from Corral Lake, which is right across the road from Mar Don Resort. By the way, if you are new to the refuge, stop at the store at Mar Don and pick up a fishing map. They have the best one I have found for the area. Fishing access and camping is available at most all of the lakes that are reached along the roads throughout the refuge.

I will be fishing on Potholes for walleye before making a survey of the Columbia Wildlife Refuge lakes, and then I am going to go back to Banks. Don't forget, the Triple Fish Challenge Derby is going to be on Banks on the 26th and 27th of April. I want to have the fishing figured out by then!

Reach Dave at:  
www.FishingMagician.com  
or Fishboy@nwi.net

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