



Welcoming  
**Dave Graybill**  
To The  
**Nickel Ads**  
*Classifieds*

# The Fishin' Magician

First, I want to bring you up to date on the steelhead fishing on the upper Columbia and Rufus Woods. Then I want to share some exciting news about fishing in Belize. If you have ever wanted to escape from North Central Washington in the height of winter and experience some of the best salt water fishing found anywhere, you'll be interested in this.

If you want to avoid fishing with freezing lines but want to get in on some great steelhead fishing now, better get to it. Colder weather is on the way but we're having another great return of fish. I have been having a great time fishing at the "end of the line" for steelhead, the stretch of river just below Chief Joseph Dam. On my last trip, I came home without a keeper steelhead for the first time this season at Bridgeport, but my fishing partner Tom Verschueren and I were busy all day long.

This was the first time that Verschueren had ever tried fishing with a bobber and jig, and he caught on right away. He hooked the first fish, and we thought he had on a dandy steelhead. It turned out to be a triploid that weighed about 8 pounds and it put up a terrific battle. We had fished for triploids before, at the bottom end of Rufus Woods in the summer, but catching one in the winter below the dam was a completely different experience. These fish have been away from the net pens a long time and have been fending for themselves. They don't even look like the triploids we used to catch, with the small heads and tails and fat bodies. These fish are now trim, fit and full of vinegar.

We bounced between the point below the bridge and the bank near the Colville hatchery and although I didn't



hook any steelhead, we were busy catching and releasing nice triploids until the current came to a standstill. As long as there is good current the bite remains constant, but when it dies, you're done. We did catch one jack salmon that was in pretty bad shape and saw big kings jumping and swirling, too. These fish should clear out soon.

There are some anglers that have complained about the number of triploids being caught at Bridgeport and even below Wells Dam. I have been told that there is a plan for another special season on them next summer. It will take place earlier, probably in June or July, before steelhead are present in the river. This will help reduce their numbers. I'm not complaining. They make for action-packed days at Bridgeport.

Anglers fishing for triploids on Rufus Woods are having good success, particularly at the upper end near the net pens. There are numbers of 8- and 9-pound fish being taken by bank anglers in the vicinity of Coyote Creek. I have also heard that Brands Landing is producing consistent catches of triploids and I am planning a trip soon to find out for myself.

Ever wanted to get away to warmer weather in February? Well, thanks to the folks at Journey Travel Tours I have a great deal for you for a trip to Belize. The second largest barrier reef in the world is just off the shore of Belize. This makes for amazing fishing. As many of you know, my wife and I have made a couple of trips to this country and have enjoyed some fabulous fishing for bonefish, tarpon and other species.

Sandy Mathews, owner of Journey Travel and Tours, has done wonders putting this together. I can't believe the prices she has arranged for the airfares, lodging and guide services. The cost is way below what I have paid in the past when I arranged most of the trip myself. We'll be staying at one of the finest resorts on Ambergris Caye, and using the same guide service I used last time.

Abner Marin, of Go Fish Belize, is the son of the first fly fishing guide in the country of Belize, Carlos Marin.

Those who want to come along on the trip, which is from February 3rd through the 14th, should get in touch with Journey Travel and Tours right away. There are just 20 spots available. Those that make the deadline for this trip will get the 11-day, 10-night trip, including five days of guided fishing at a price you just can't get anywhere else. Check out the details on their web site. There are options that allow bringing a non-fishing partner, and if you want to fish more days, that can be arranged, too.

I will be providing a seminar, prior to departure, on what to bring along if you plan to fish. I'll explain the kinds of tackle I use for fishing the flats for bonefish, or to be prepared to do battle with tarpon from the guide boat. I should mention that the trip is not exclusive to fly anglers, although Belize is famous for fly fishing for all species. The guides gladly take anglers that want to use spin or bait casting gear. The guide service even offers off shore fishing for wahoo, grouper and other kinds of fish. There is even reef fishing available in the afternoons and evenings, and this is a blast. You won't believe the variety of fish you can catch in the shallows at the edge of the reef.

If you are interested in some fabulous fishing in Belize this winter, I have something for you, too! You can all the details at [www.journeys-tours.com](http://www.journeys-tours.com).

Reach Dave at: [www.FishingMagician.com](http://www.FishingMagician.com) or [Fishboy@nwi.net](mailto:Fishboy@nwi.net)

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