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Report from Fletcher's Cove, April 14, 2008

When fishing conditions are tough... still, the tough fishermen go fishing. That's the way it has been for most of this season, with damp, bone chilling cold, gusty winds, extremes of low and high tides and a much lower than average river flow. Yet many of our regularly seen anglers have fought the doldrums one day, to be rewarded the next. I will post a few recent photos as evidence of this state of affairs.

With a little of Mother Nature's benevolence, the next couple of weeks may bring the bountiful fishing that often spoils us at Fletcher's. If you are good enough, patient enough, and lucky enough, angling at the Cove can at times be amazing, even to the "been there, done it all crowd." I've seen a few globe trotting anglers with their eyes glazed and jaws dropped after a good day on the Potomac.

On Friday, Mike Bailey and Mark Binsted had good success catching American Shad. With very clear water and a low flow, Mark implores his fellow fly-fisher-folks to "stop stripping so fast!" Good advice, as shad are spooky and deep with the recent water conditions. The river could use a little 'dinge' (Note to self: Be careful what you wish for).



On to the photos. Serious white perch fishermen (especially young ones) are rare in this bigger-is-better, "I need excitement" society. Nathan Heater and Angelo Moore are both young and serious about perch. They take the time to catch their own bait, tolerate bad days and conditions, and each year get into what are referred to as "the JUMBOS." The fish splayed out on the dock are some of the good eatin' size perch they caught on March 30th, a cold blustery day.



The nice walleye was bagged by Angelo while perch fishing.

You never know what might be seen along our beautiful river. As Nathan and Angelo fished a little ways down from Fletcher's they witnessed a curious

sight and snapped a great photo of several deer on a bank-to-bank swim across the Potomac.

On Monday, April 7th, a cold, dank day, a father and two young boys ventured out in a tidy rowboat for a



little fishing togetherness. Nicholas Nevarez happily holds the bonus to that bonding time. Little brother Bobby now has more to brag on his sibling! Dad Mike was the proud photographer. The fish was gently slipped back into the water.



Friend of the boathouse, all-around good-guy, and expert fisherman Lonnie Darr sent me a little something he wrote about the amazing river environment we all share. It would be useful for everyone to reflect on his words of respect and wonder...

Dan,

It is tragic that we as a people allow our rivers to get this bad. While wood and natural debris is to be expected, the silt and trash makes one very sad. I have been fishing out of Fletcher's for a number of years and still am amazed at the fecundity of the area. In spite of all the unconscious attempts to destroy this fishery, it keeps fighting back. The District dumps its spoils in the river with the excuse of grand fathering and the need for inexpensive water. The upper Potomac basin and the muddy Monocacy send tons of silt and debris down the chutes of Great Falls. Fisherman leave tons of trash in their wake as they "enjoy" the bounty of nature. The unseen pollutants wander their way into the fish and the ecosystem. Come the steady flows of Spring, the big stripers full of eggs start their climb upstream, the herring bring their roe and milt looking for some bottom to spawn, the shad come in waves and delight the angler with catches in the hundreds. The cormorants and ospreys and eagles come to the table. The bluebirds, tree swallows, orioles, wood ducks, great blue herons, vultures, and many other species come to fill the morning chorus with their calls. The spotted salamanders, wood frogs, spring peepers, and American toads sing in the evening and fill the woods with a racket. Nature will overwhelm and always make Fletcher's the place to be in the Spring.

Lonnie

Thanks for reading this. See you on the river!
Dan

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