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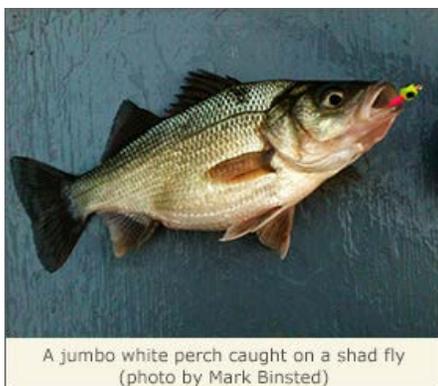
## FISHING REPORT

[ARCHIVED FISHING REPORTS](#)

April 16, 2016

Although the first hickory and American shad were caught over a month ago, this yo-yo season of spring in Washington has allowed the angling action to blossom as if anew day after day. The windy, chilly days of "March-in-April" tested many an anglers' dedication to the sport. "I'd rather fish in a downpour than this kind of wind" was a sentiment expressed in many fashions over the past few weeks (some not fit to print!). With mild and hopefully calm days to come in the week ahead, the ratio of American to hickory shad should increase as the water warms into the 60s. When the dogwoods are in full bloom, it's time to fish for a big roe white.

As for other species, when the redbud blossoms turn to green leaves the larger striped bass will ease down the Potomac and be replaced with small and medium sized schoolies. Several of our regular annual striper hunters scored large cold water fish from the deep drop-offs as they jigged the coveted big Binsted bucktail jig.



"open species" and any number or size can be kept. They are delicious as well, but please throw back at least as many as you keep and only keep as many as you can use.

Fletcher's Cove is a major outlet for the District of Columbia fishing permit. We sell A LOT of them. When a youngster comes up, we ask "Are you over 16?"... that's easy: if yes, they need

The first and second waves of the white perch run have occurred with most substantial catches occurring downstream closer to Key Bridge. I still hold out hope that some schools of large perch will come closer to Fletcher's Cove with the third and fourth waves of fish. I've noticed two things recently that fuel my hope. Thick schools of minnows in the cove that tell me perch are driving the little morsels into the shallows and the first beautiful wisteria blossoms that foretell the arrival of what perch anglers call "jumbos" or "humpbacks." The largest perch of all often show up around May Day. Several serious perch seekers have hooked into fat walleyes while probing the deep for jumbo perch. If you like to eat fish, walleye is as good as it gets! One fish per day is allowed in D.C. waters. Perch are an

### "AN IMMOVABLE FEAST"

Old friends add flavor to an annual fish fry  
by Bill Heavey  
(credit to [www.fieldandstream.com](http://www.fieldandstream.com)  
and A Sportsman's Life)



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[Check out Dan's article on Fletcher's Cove in the March 2012 issue of The Buzz](#)  
(pages 6-7)

[March 2011 issue of The Buzz](#)  
(pages 11-12)

[Rowin' on the River at Fletcher's Cove](#)  
article in *KidFriendly DC*  
July 2013

[Click here](#) for a great interactive map  
of the area around Fletcher's  
(opens in new window)

### CHAPTER SHAD REPORTS

During the shad run (usually April thru mid-June), our chapter sends out reports of fishing conditions at Fletcher's Cove and elsewhere as we receive information. If you know someone who might want to receive these reports, [email NCC-TU](#) with "SHAD" in the subject line and provide your name and email address. If you received shad reports last year, you don't need to resubscribe.

[Click here](#) for a great interactive map of The Boathouse at Fletcher's Cove Area Fishing and Outdoor Fun (opens in new window)

one; if no, they don't. But when a customer in the AARP range comes to the counter, well, that's a bit tricky. People are vain after all. Some people look pretty young and you sell them a permit only to find out that they are over 65 and do not need to buy one. (Oops, voided license.) They feel good, they have saved money, and you gave them an unintended compliment in thinking they were younger than they are. Conversely, it's not so hard to offend someone who looks pretty old by assuming or asking if they are over 65 when in actuality they are much younger. That's an awkward moment. And then they have to buy the license from you after you thought they were too old to need it. Ouch for them, uneasy moment for you. There's not much one can say to wiggle out of that situation. So guessing a person's age is a bit like judging a book by its cover... surprises abound.

Personally, I take pride in my advancing age.



Rowboats wait for a benevolent tide to float out on the Potomac (photo by David Policansky)



The delicate Wisteria sends a message... big perch are biting (photo by Dan Ward)

Being the "old-timer" at the boathouse is kinda cool. Slinging canoes and kayaks over my head and marching them up and down the hill is no longer part of my job. There are young bucks for that. Along with sore backs and gimpy knees, age brings some positive attributes to my role as a river-rat. Not only are many of our customers happy to see a familiar old face, but they know when I tell them something it comes out of wisdom, not the shallow posturing of youth. I've seen it all before and good judgment is the offspring of experience mated with common sense. I learned a lot from old Julius Fletcher and his sons, Joe and Ray. Their "old-timer days" by the river have passed down to me and only now am I really beginning to appreciate what a precious thing they and the place have given me.

Fletcher's Cove had a great two day visit from David Policansky on his annual trek east from New Mexico. David is an expert among experts with the fly rod and battled the winds and tides to score many shad on a red and white cone head fly. In spite of the tough conditions, David clearly was feeling grateful to get the chance to get out on the Potomac and test the waters. He always wants to know what is happening at Fletcher's and how he can help now that he is away most of the year. David is the kind of person who, when he shows up, just makes you feel better. I can't explain why. He just grounds me.

I knew it would happen. My "dynamic duos of angling at Fletcher's" has unintentionally slighted at least one such duo whom I should have included. I plead guilty as charged and have already been chastised by the fairer half of this duo (by way of the masculine partner, Minnow Master, who showed up across the counter to buy worms and deliver a stern message). I sleep less soundly these nights. Catfish Mona is MAD. At me. I wrote sweet little love messages on the worm containers destined for her use, but that may not have been enough. You don't mess with Mona! She hauls in big catfish like they were puny little bluegills. Bucket-mouth bass are no match for her personally trained, French-Canadian night crawlers. So I've warned my wife... if a raven-haired petite woman comes knocking in the dark, don't let her in. Mona will have her revenge, but let it happen by the river where I can baptize away the guilt.

Thanks are due to two groups who held their annual "office fishing parties" at Fletcher's Cove this past week. Chris Wood, president and CEO of Trout Unlimited and his staff from the national



Catfish Mona with a bucketmouth bass caught with Fletcher's specially trained worms (photo by Minnow Master)



Alex Binsted with a clean striper caught while shad fishing (photo by Mike Bailey)

office went shad fishing and picnicked by the river side on Friday. Chris' three boys joined in on the Emancipation Day fun. It was a glorious morning to be out on the water.

Coincidentally, staff members from The Office of The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission also held a wisely timed party on the Potomac. The Commission is a deliberative body that coordinates the conservation and management of the near shore fisheries along the coast. That just happens to include the shad fishery. An appropriate office get together, I think!

I hope you have a chance to fish or at least visit Fletcher's before this fairest of seasons turns sticky-hot during D.C.'s hazy days of summer. Thanks for reading.

Dan

P.S. Mona has just replied and is in a forgiving mood. (Could this be a trap?) Apparently, she and Minnow Master caught many bass at their secret pond using Fletcher's blessed worms. I will include a photo of one of her bass, but rest assured that my wife is still packing by the bedside if Mona comes to call in the dark of night!

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