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[Report from Fletcher's Cove, April 20, 2009](#)

As mentioned in the last report, it is a painful metamorphosis to Spring in Washington. Last Thursday, I'm opening the dock and... Whoooooa!... slipping on FROST. On Friday, wool socks, thermals and a pleated jacket are necessary at daybreak. By mid-afternoon my feet are two boiled hot-dogs. Shorts and a tee-shirt are all the fashion. Please, someone stop the roller-coaster!

The past week was a carbon copy of the one before. Cold, damp weather early in the week hindered both fishermen from fishing and fish from spawning. As the week progressed, the crowds built, just as the perch, shad and stripers responded to an up-tick in the water temperature.

True to historic averages pointing to April the 15th, the American shad are now appearing in greater numbers with each passing day. Many hickories are still being caught, but the ratio will shift as the days pass and the water warms. For the most fun you can imagine on a light spinning rod or fly tackle, hook a broad-bodied American shad and hold on for the fight. It will be quite different than the stuttering, aerial tussle of the hickory shad. Deep, powerful runs and an unwillingness to give up are the hallmarks of the "white" shad. If you are lucky enough, (or cursed?), to hook a really big one, say five pounds-plus, you may want to warn the spouse and kids about a certain illness which has suddenly come over you. Tell them you love them, to cash in some bonds, and that you will be back after some time in late May.

Danish-American relations improved from excellent to "even better" on Saturday, when Mike Bailey, Fletcher's resident "fishing ambassador" took Friis Petersen, Danish Ambassador to the United States, out for a morning of shad fishing. As you can see from the photo, Ambassador Petersen REALLY got his hands around trans-Atlantic co-operation. This makes me very happy. As a teenager, during the height of the Vietnam War, I spent a month on a bird sanctuary outside of Roskilde, Denmark. In spite of the international tension and ill-will that war produced, virtually all the people I met were amazingly friendly and treated me with the greatest kindness and brotherhood. Since then, whenever I encounter a Danish visitor to our country, I go out of my way to return the kindness I was shown so long ago. According to Mike, Ambassador Petersen was not only a fine angler, but a skilled oarsman as well. Denmark, after all, is a country of the sea.

A reminder: As part of The Jim Range National Casting Call, next Sunday, April 26th is family and youth day at Fletcher's. The National Park Service, along with AFFTA, Fletcher's Cove and other service organizations will provide demonstrations on fishing, conservation and the opportunity for kids to wet a line in the C&O Canal. For information, [click here](#).

A couple of other fishing related items to think about... There is still some serious white perch fishing to do around Fletcher's Cove. Nathan Heater, Jay "the floor man," and Johnny Hoffman have had great success in finding these silver delicacies of the deep. "Humpback" perch of over a foot long have been showing up in buckets and fish-baskets of late.

Striped bass season in the District of Columbia does not start this year until May 16th. After that date, you may keep two fish per day, 18 to 36 inches in length. The season and regulations in D.C. have NO RELATION to those of Maryland or Virginia! There is no "trophy season," special stamps, boat license, or any such confusion. Just buy yourself an individual fishing permit, (for those who are over 16 and under 65!) and follow the rules, please.

Hope to see you on the blossoming shores of the Potomac!

Dan



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