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Fletchers Cove Fishing Report, May 1, 2006



O.K. I know it is the opening day of Striped Bass season in District waters. And this is a fishing report after all. But allow me a diversion, (not a digression) to tell you of a moment of personal serenity experienced at Fletcher's Cove. This noon, after a busy morning servicing anxious anglers, I stepped out of the "office" only to hear a beautiful song sung by a welcome Spring visitor. The song took me away for a brief few seconds to a place where all is right with the world and balance rules the day. A winged guest, a beautiful Baltimore Oriole was perched above in a Sycamore, serenading a potential mate.

Fletcher's Cove, for all its emphasis on fishing and human recreation is a great gathering place for birds of all types. If you love to see birds, come here with a pair of binoculars and note book and you will rarely be disappointed. A Swan, an Osprey, a Great Blue Heron, a Wood Duck, even a Bald Eagle may well give you a brief yet spectacular show.

Now, as for the fishing... It was indeed the opening day of Striper season in D.C. Two fish per day are allowed per angler, if they are between 18 and 36 inches long. Many came out today to try their luck. The river is in good shape for fishing of all kinds. The flow is average for a change, and the color is that of the yellow-green crayon in the Crayola box.

To mention a few names, our friend Helena (and her Father) came to fish for perch, (she is good at that!) and Stripers. Her big catch of the day was a 38 inch Rockfish which she photographed and carefully released. Mike Alper fished today for Shad only and caught 17, mostly whites. In my mind, a tribute to the sporting nature of his angling. For many fishermen, it is not easy to resist the pull of the glamorous Striper to pursue the pure sport of Shad angling. Yes, Shad are still running. In fact the larger White (or American) Shad should be around for the bulk of this month. We have the darts if you have the time. Wing Woo, an old timer who does not look so old, came to the dock at six o'clock with his limit of two rockfish. Wisely, he kept the smaller of his legal sized fish as they are by far the tastiest to consume. And "The Judge" Wally Lew and his cohorts slapped a big stringer of Jumbo White Perch on the dock to the amazement of a few less fortunate fellow fishermen. Case closed.

I want to mention two angler-authors who frequent the boathouse to our great satisfaction. Sandy Burk is a friend, a fisher, a conservationist and author of "Let the River Run Silver Again", a children's book about the effort to re-stock the Potomac River with American Shad. Sandy, who fished today, lives what she writes about and therefore it comes from the heart as well as the mind.

Sebastian O'Kelly, with Christopher Arelt, has authored a collection entitled "The Offbeat Angler, Fish Tales & Muddy Adventures." It is a pleasure to read and for those of us who are open to the alternative in angling, who sometimes delight when essence trumps image, whose pursuit of the sport is woven into the larger fabric of life's experience, it is a work that should be front and center on the book shelf.

We are back to renting boats this week at Fletcher's Cove. The river is in beautiful shape and beckoning you to come to its shores.

Dan

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