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FISHING REPORT

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May 7, 2015



If you made it over to Fletcher's Cove in April for a little springtime angling you were lucky, smart or both. Except for a six-day period of high, muddy water, April provided a bonanza of catch-and-release shad and striper fishing. There were days of hickory shad abundance that I call "spoilors." That's when fishing is so fast and furious that it spoils the angler for those days to come when things are a bit lean. Our fleet of boats was in high demand even on weekdays when word spread of the bountiful fishing. Many of our early spring anglers are regulars and it is a rejuvenating experience for me to see them again after the long off-season.

Now, with the hot days and warm nights of the last week, water temperatures have climbed rapidly and successful angling demands more work and a realistic attitude. The thick schools of hickory shad are thinned as many have returned to the sea. Tight pockets of American shad move in and out of the eddies, spawning ever more quickly as the water warms. If you are

parked on one of those spots, the reward can be amazing. Just yesterday I watched from the tackle shack porch as Alex Binsted, our resident virtuoso angler, caught 30 American shad (including four doubles). He was surrounded by other boats, none of which could reap the bounty he enjoyed.

May brings us a new set of opportunities with the opening of striper season on the 16th (for angling regulations in the District of Columbia, including those for striped bass, go to ddoe.dc.gov). Schoolies are showing up now as the larger rockfish move downstream. This week, numerous feisty stripers have been caught by shad anglers on their larger darts. Our little tackle shop has a selection of lures that are good choices for both fresh and saltwater bass.

Snakeheads have been few and far between this spring in the waters near

"AN IMMOVABLE FEAST"

Old friends add flavor to an annual fish fry
by Bill Heavey
(credit to 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 Fletchers 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)

Fletcher's. Probably this is because there has been just one modest high water event. Time will tell if this is a trend or just a result of seasonal conditions. On the other hand, big blue catfish (the snakehead's invasive cousin) are chopping away at anything in their path. Brooks Noble brought me a photo to tape on our wall of a 60 pounder he caught last week. Brooks has a way with the slimy denizens of the deep!

Mark Giaudrone sent me a great photo of his handsome and happy son John with a beauty of a hickory shad caught just upstream from Fletcher's on April 28th. Mark wanted me to mention that two fly fishermen gave up their prime spot to allow the young angler a better chance for a catch. Mark did not get their names, but thanks so much, guys, from Mark and especially from young John. The spirit of social fishing is one thing that has endeared me to the whole Fletcher's scene over so many decades. It's clubby, but compassionate. Kindness is catching here.

Aside from fishing and boating, Fletcher's is a great place to watch so many types of wildlife. The wooded lowlands along the Potomac are home to many critters that would seem out of place given that we are technically inside the boundaries of D.C. itself.

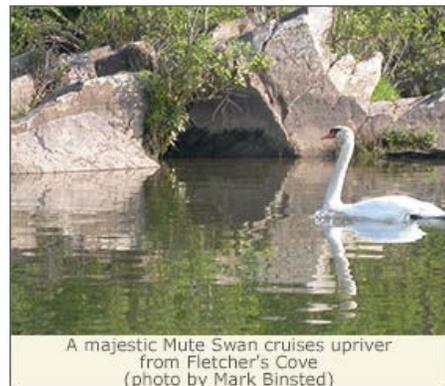


Shad expert Bob Smith with his awesome personal Maine manufactured oars. (photo by Dan Ward)



Proud angler John Giaudrone with a fine hickory shad (photo by equally proud dad, Mark)

It's a birdwatcher's paradise with an ever-changing assortment of winged friends to see. Last week, as I watched anglers just out from the cove, a large white bird came drifting down the "chute" along the District shoreline. It crossed over to the Virginia side to avoid the anchored boats. With its impressive size and long neck, I knew it was no white goose. Upon further consultation, it turns out that our "big-bird" visitor is a mute swan. It's been seen each day this week.



A majestic Mute Swan cruises upriver from Fletcher's Cove (photo by Mark Binsted)

Iridescent nesting swallows of April have been replaced by beautiful Baltimore Orioles calling to their mates and looking for spots in the tips of Sycamore trees on which to nest. Turtles are out in force

sunning themselves on "turtlescapes" of logs and rocks. Blue tailed skinks feast on hatches of flying ants. It's a nature lover's paradise down by the old Potomac. Come visit and see for yourself!

Dan



Dogwoods in bloom signal the heart of shad season (photo by Dan Ward)



A herd of deer take an early A.M. pause near Fletcher's parking lot (photo by Dan Ward)



Need to slow your pace of life? Turtle-watching is a sport at Fletcher's Cove! (photo by Dan Ward)

