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Fletchers Cove Fishing Report, May 21, 2005

The Potomac has gulped up a nice refreshing drink of Spring rainwater from Friday's downpour. In the short run, the murky flow will knock down fishing results a few notches. But the river needed a charge of new water to re-energize the fishing which had become a bit spotty after a torrid six week run since early April.

Not that there were no impressive catches just prior to the rain. Wing Woo walked up the hill Thursday afternoon with a nice 26 inch Striper (one of several large ones he caught). The fish and Wing were headed for a church social dinner. Mr. Woo is the reigning "Bass-Master" of the C&O Canal. He has pulled many a lunker bass out of the placid waters of the big ditch.

Anglers Raymond and Wolfe fished early last week with excellent results on Rock and Catfish. These two gentlemen make the trek from Chambersburg, PA several times a year to partake of the Potomac's bounty. We like to see you and thanks for the effort to fish here!

Lonnie Darr (the frog and toad man for Montgomery County) has had quite a string of fishing success this season. A man of perspective and persistence he angles with his college age sons on good days and bad, always with a smile and friendly chat.

Wally Lew, recently retired, is making good advantage of his newly flexible time. As noted in last Sunday's Washington Post, Wally and son Jonathan had a day of Striper fishing that would make any angler proud. Wally is a perch fisherman at heart (a mark of respect in my book) but when the Rock are there he takes advantage.

The cool rain mentioned above may bring up a few more schools of Hickory Shad, which are in the final days of a fantastic run. More common in the last couple of weeks has been the American (or White) Shad. Fewer in number but much larger in size, I dare say most anglers who have caught a White would gladly give up twenty Hickories for one White. They are powerful, they run deep and when you think they are done, off they go under the boat and around the anchor line. A source of frustration around Fletcher's Cove is how many good anglers become spoiled at the ease with which they catch Hickories only to prematurely give up on the larger cousin. Mike Alper has had a phenomenal three weeks of White Shad fishing with numerous days of double digit catches on fish running up to over five pounds. Mark Binsted has found the right chute and eddy on several occasions to battle big Americans on his fly rod.

The techniques for American Shad angling in the Potomac are quite different than those used for Hickories. Lots of subtle little differences and locations can spell the difference between a successful and a skunked fisher. I won't go into details here... (proprietary information you know!) but those who observe and learn will catch on quickly. Remember, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery!

As Memorial Day approaches, a reminder from the folks at Fletcher's Cove. All persons with rentals on the Potomac are required to wear their life vests as they head out onto the water. The river is a very safe place to recreate... for those who use good judgment. The news media pays so much attention to a river safety incident precisely because they are out of the ordinary events. The river does not "swallow people up" as is sometime portrayed in the media. There is always a reason, most of the time easily avoidable, for the rare accident on the river. I guarantee you that a trip around the beltway is much more perilous than a day on our beautiful National River.

Dan

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