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Fletchers Cove Fishing Report, June 2, 2006



Memorial Day weekend is the traditional start to Summer in Washington. This year, that transition was a perfect "triple-play" of the emotional, physical and recreational elements. People came to Fletcher's Cove last weekend in droves and many had that summery state of mind which says... let's have some lazy, hazy fun by the water. It was hot as holy, livin', well, you know what I mean. But that did not stop patrons from renting out most of our boats, bikes, canoes and kayaks for a day in the park. We had our American flags proudly displayed on the buildings to remind all of the reason they had the day off. Honoring the fallen on Memorial Day must not be lost to us in the modern-day holiday mix.

The torrid temperatures and passing days have inexorably pushed the recreational fishing season from Springtime bounty to Summer's modus operandi, which is the opportunism to take what nature offers in a relaxed and realistic frame of mind. With this week of hot, sunny weather the water temperature of the Potomac has popped and with it the end of the Shad and White Perch runs. Now the objects of the fishermen's hopes must turn to schoolie stripers, bass, walleye, catfish and the ever present surprise fish that lurk in the soft, flowing water. This week's surprise was a three-foot long Garfish caught by Mark Walpole on Wednesday. More Gar and Atlantic Needlefish have been spotted in recent days by other fishers. With the low flow of the river this season, we will be seeing and hearing of other unusual catches I'm sure. Blue Crabs come up to Fletcher's Cove in very dry years in the late summer. A couple decades back a fisherman-friend of mine caught two dozen jumbo crabs not far from the cove on one summer eve. The best soft-shell I ever ate I scooped up right in front of the dock at Fletcher's. Unfortunately for me, its sibling, an even bigger softie was stepped on in the bottom of the boat while attempting to capture crab number two. Without a major rain event, shoals of baby alewives may make a show in the Potomac as they did in the 1980's. Snake-Heads anyone? Who knows what lurks among the water, rocks and mud of the Potomac?

Eighteen to twenty-four inch stripers are roaming the waters near Fletcher's tempting those fly and spin fishermen willing to throw a big enough streamer or lure to entice the hungry fish. Just as hearty humans are enticed by the "all you can eat buffet" or the 42 ounce Porterhouse at the steakhouse, nature has fish programmed to eat all they can when the opportunity presents itself. Who knows when the next meal will swim by? Fishermen tend to use lures that are too small, not too big, and it always frustrates me when they resist the purchase of hearty sized lures with the look of "are you kidding me" on their faces. No... I'm not kidding. Just this week, Dick Tehaan, a regular's regular, caught an approximately 22 inch striper. It looked exceptionally fat and I queried as to whether it

was a hybrid or not. It was not. What it was, was a ravenous rockfish that had swallowed a nine to ten inch white perch which popped, partially digested, out of its stomach while Dick cleaned the gluttonous fish.

Walleyes were a highlight of this past weeks fishing. Mathew J. Mosler, a first time visitor to Fletcher's from Kansas caught a chunky four pounder on the hottest day of the week. Mike Alper and George Furness each had large Walleyes in addition to numerous medium sized Striped Bass. These are fishermen willing to hunt for fish, wait them out and take the good days with the slow ones. George is an amazing fisherman of NINETY YEARS OLD(!) who still motors around the river in one of our boats, fishing with home-made lures and generally amazing us with his gumption. Some of George's secrets to a long life? Lots of fishing, lots of garlic, and dedication to your partner.

With gasoline prices so high, why not use that money you would pump into your tank for a boat, canoe, kayak or bike rental close in-town at Fletcher's Cove? Good for your wallet, good for the environment and good for your sanity. Gatorade always available to wash down those fresh night crawlers or bloodworms.

Dan

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