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## FISHING REPORT

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**JUNE 16, 2011**

Summertime bears down on Washington. We have already had a taste of the "three H's"... hot, humid and hazy. A respite of cooler weather here and there is welcome, but we all know what to expect: long stretches of days when the air is so heavy and damp that you wish the refrigerator had room inside for a chair. In the age before air conditioning, people would head down by the river for a break from both the heat and their daily routine. It is still a good idea! Not that it's cool down by Fletcher's Cove, but there is often a breeze off the water, and the natural green beauty and gently flowing waters can produce a calming, cooling state-of-mind. Give it a try.

The hot weather has closed the door on spring fishing. The often flooded weeks of the herring, perch and shad runs are a frustrating memory this year. There WERE days of great angling and if you were lucky to be on the water then, cherish those thoughts. But over and over, just when fishing really got hot, more rain upstream would wash it all away.

Now the Potomac is flowing gently, with the deep green color of calmer waters. Summer fishing will be about large and small mouth bass, schoolie stripers, bluegills, sunfish and lots and lots of catfish. Results can be impressive, but your focus should be on relaxation rather than results.

Thirty-plus years ago, on a damp, cold, late March morning, some boathouse river-rats came to shore with a big mess of perch. People were hungry, business was slow and the thought of a warming wood fire seemed wonderful. With all those perch, some guys with sharp knives, a crackling fire and the two ancient boathouse cast iron fry pans... what would you do? Thus was born Fletcher's famous perch-fry, a tradition that lasted until 2005.

Never mind that the oil wasn't quite hot enough, the side dishes were non-existent, hands served as plates and it was a bit too early to start drinking beer, at that first fry those perch fillets tasted great! As the years rolled by, the perch fry became an elaborate event, cherished by those on the guest list or lucky enough to be visiting on the day. There were local wines, lots of corn bread and side dishes of all types. Mirroring what Fletcher's was always about, the perch fry was an egalitarian affair. People from all walks of life, all ages and backgrounds, would lend a hand, bring food, help cook and join in the clean-up. It was a living oxymoron, planned spontaneity. Washington Post reporter Angus Phillips would usually fish on the day of the fry, and then write an article about his angling adventure and the event. This made the day even more coveted. It became necessary to keep the date a closely guarded secret, or be overrun with too many mouths and not enough fish!



Some of the snakehead-fry crew: Mike Bailey, Bill Heavey, Alex, Mark (Papa) and Derek Binsted (photo by Dan Ward)

Jump to 2011. A dry, warm, early June



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[Check out Dan's article on Fletcher's Cove in the March issue of \*The Buzz\*](#)  
(pages 11-12)



Shad fishing line-up, with Mike Bailey, Lynn Scholz and David Policansky (Photo by Mark Binsted)



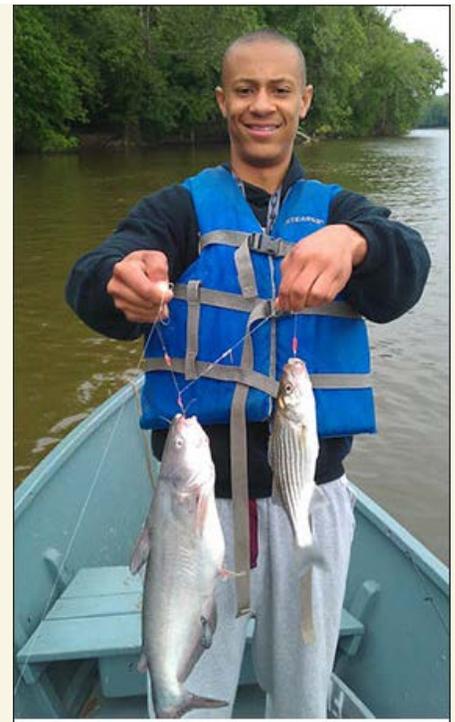
Fresh, sizzling snakehead fillets in Fletcher's antique Griswold pan (photo by Dan Ward)

morning. River-rats Alex Binsted and Paula Smith are marching down the canal towpath dragging along a bucket with five large snakeheads. The 'old-timers' miss the perch fry. Snakeheads give up a lot of fillet. They appear to be a fish of our future. And, there is a whole new generation of young river-rats at Fletcher's. So, what would you do? Call it **Fletcher's first annual snakehead fry**. Paula did the filleting, Alex did the frying, and this time there were lots of side dishes. A propane gas hose malfunction, (Fletcher's own version of a "wardrobe malfunction") necessitated a quick switch to old reliable wood. Quite appropriate, as damp, smoldering wood was the fuel at the first perch fry.

Only time will tell if this fry becomes an annual event. Traditions are hard to keep in this fast-paced, worship-what-is-new-and-different world. But I can tell you this... the fish was excellent, the people were happy and the moment was precious!

I hope to meet you at the river.

Dan



Tyler Moore, fishing with Nathan Heat, shows off a double from his first "drop". (photo by Nathan)

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