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Fletchers Cove Fishing Report, November 26, 2005



Indian Summer was glorious at Fletcher's Cove. Thanks to the beautiful, mild weather, we were able to operate through the second week of November. With the arrival of the current blast from the north, business activities are now on pause until March. The water is cold and clear, the leaves near the end of their annual "coming out party." I hope those of you reading this had a chance to visit our secluded little spot along the Potomac this season. If not, (or even if you are a regular!), make a point of a winter exploratory foray down our way. The park is open dawn to dusk, year-round and there is no more natural setting this close in, all over Washington.

A brisk hike on the Towpath or Crescent Trail, a walk in the woods in search of urban deer, a sketch on an artists' pad or just a moment of solitude away from life's sometimes oppressive routine, all can be soothing to the soul. And as I often tell fishermen especially, a scouting trip will not only get you familiar with the lay of the land (and water), but help the visitor understand the tricky, (but worth it) access into our little Shangri-La.

Now under the stewardship of Guest Services, Fletcher's operated this past season much as it always has. Old and new faces appeared last March to get the ball rolling on a very successful fishing season. Nature was a little slow to co-operate, but by April the river was full of silvery migrants from downstream. Summer, of course, brought us heat and humidity, but also mostly long, sunny days to revel in the sub-tropic moment. The Fall just past presented us with quite a flooding scare on Columbus Day weekend, but as luck would have it the forecasted mountain rains were lighter than feared and we escaped the year with no significant high waters. Quite a bit of rare luck!

As regards fishing, this Fall was a time of uncommonly large Catfish. I don't think I've ever seen so many truly BIG Cats at that particular time. Catfish of course, are very plentiful all through the year. But it is in the late Spring when one expects to see the real monsters. October was especially kind to a few regulars who stretched out the fishing season and were justly rewarded. To put names to this fish story I must mention Carlos Fuentes (with Roberto Gamez) and "JoJo", both pictured above. Carlos' fish was 37" long and weighed in at 28 pounds. It was a real brute. JoJo's fish was a sleek, beautiful Catfish (can a Catfish BE beautiful?), and would have been even bigger in the Spring when "Catfish Thanksgiving" occurs and they feast on stuffed Herring. There was also a 24 pounder caught by Rocky Harkness who visited us multiple times to wet a line.

I have to mention a pretty, young lady fisher-person named Elizabeth. She fished regularly through the year, up to the last week. Thanks for your visits! We have quite a few female fishers, but at the risk of sounding chauvinistic (or worse!), my smile gets a little wider when I see them headed towards the store. Elizabeth and her partner caught some nice fish and always seemed to telegraph their enjoyment to those who crossed paths. I know I'll see you in the new year.

Fletcher's is one of the very few places in all the country to have maintained a fleet of historically styled, wooden fishing rowboats. Our boats are quite literally "part of the landscape." They are a joy to row and fish from, and with the right set of hands on the oars become one with the human passenger. I call some of our old-timers "Ninja rowers" because of their mastery of movement. Are they the fastest or prettiest boats on the water? Perhaps not, but they are perfect for purpose. The good news this 2005 is that Guest Services is able to invest in a significant addition of craft to the well worn boats that have endured so many seasons on the water. I think 2006 will see many a fisherman or casual rower loving their time in these new boats crafted by two traditional boat builders in our own Bay area. It is not the cheapest way to go, but it is the best.

It is now time to say thank you to all the people who made this year at Fletcher's Cove such a success: our loyal and new customers, Park Service personnel, D.C. Harbor Police, co-workers with Guest Services, the now "retired, but still fishing" Joe Fletcher, family and friends. All these good people had a hand in making 2005 a memorable and very heartwarming year. The memories runnith-over like a high tide of happiness.

Please come see us in the new year. Check out the other links on this web site and the "photos" and "previous fishing reports" sections. Go also to the www.guestservices.com site for the low-down on our extended family. Where ever you are now, we certainly look forward to meeting you!

Dan

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