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FISHING REPORT

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Report from Fletcher's Cove - March 31, 2011

A motley crew assembled at Fletcher's Cove on March 22nd with a singular purpose... get those rowboats into the water! There were seniors, who had seen many such days; there were just-out-of-college youngsters whose fresh footsteps trod a well worn path; there was even a mascot: Dimo, the "boathouse dog."

There is nothing high-tech about this job. Just muscles, momentum and mud. Hand load the boat off of its plank and cinderblock rack, line up on the trailer's rollers, transport and back her down to the water's edge, then muscle her into the Potomac. Our boats are heavy. No aluminum or synthetics here. Oak, marine plywood, caulk and paint. And there is a short window of opportunity these days. Siltation of Fletcher's Cove has afforded us precious little water most of the day to float the boats. An hour before and after an extra-high tide is about it. We really appreciate the help we get at launch time.

It's a proud day for Ray Fletcher and me. We've done this just about every year of our adult lives. After a winter of many hours spent restoring the boats for the next season, these are not just objects to us. They are individuals. And they will never look better than at this very moment. There is nothing quite like a wooden boat. That is why entire magazines are dedicated to the subject. They are safe, they are quiet; and if you know how to row them, they become one with their oarsman.



Our 2011 boat launch crew

All but one of our river boats are in the water now, ready to transport fishermen to some of the best fishing money can't buy. So, thank you to Gordon Leisch, Joe Fletcher, Doug Webb, Dickie Tehaan, Paula Smith, Mike Bailey, Mark and Alex Binsted, Nathan Heat and of course, Dimo! The job went very smoothly and safely with your kind help. A special thank-you to Nathan for those great venison burgers at the "after-launch" party.

Spring is a tortuous evolution in D.C. Just when the promise seems fulfilled, a cold, damp blast of winter whacks us in the kisser. As I write this, sleet and frigid raindrops fall on the sky-window. It is raw outside and the Potomac's water temp has fallen from 55

degrees last week to 46 today. That does not help fishing one bit. However, just as abruptly as the bone chilling cold returned, it will leave and the progression of spring fish arrivals will resume.

A very few hardy, dedicated and persistent anglers have tied into some very large striped bass over the last few days. Morning fishing, simple bottom rigs, the appropriate tackle and patience – that is all it takes, but YOU can't dictate... the fish do that. And remember, this is catch and QUICKLY RELEASE fishing. A big striper is a majestic fish. Respect that majesty if you are going to fish for them and don't handle them. At most, a quick photo and release, please! Duncan McGrath caught a 32 pound tagged striper this morning. It's been called in to the Feds and we are waiting to hear



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[Check out Dan's article on Fletcher's Cove in this month's issue of *The Buzz*](#)
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Petra Angelova with a blue catfish caught March 18th
(Photo by Nathan Heat)

where that beauty came from.

Alex Binsted caught the first hickory shad of the season on the 20th. Pink darts were his choice. We have plenty at the tackle shack. Please come and buy lots! Even if the fish are not biting, you can stare at them and smile, thinking of happy fishing to come. Excellent shad fishing is just around the corner.

Last week, Dick Tehaan, fishing from a boat, filled a basket of jumbo white perch, and released an equal number of others. During the same time frame, Presley Hyman was pulling them in right and left from the shoreline on night crawlers. That was the first wave of white perch to spawn at Fletcher's. Those perch are now gone, but there are usually four waves of perch to a season's run, so if you want to catch some of the best eating fish that swim, don't hesitate when the warmth returns.

The Jim Range National Casting Call Youth Fishing Day will be held on Saturday, April the 16th. If you have a few youngsters laying around and want to get them fishing, (or, if you just want to use them as an excuse to go fishing yourself) come on down to Fletcher's Cove that day... all supplies provided! Call us at 202-244-0461 for additional info.

One can hope warmth will return in April, and with it some really good fishing. Don't snooze too far into the month. Fishing is like a roller-coaster. Ups and downs, ups and downs, it is all part of the ride. Happy angling!

Dan



Dimo assists in a boat launch



Presley Hyman with some nice perch while shore fishing

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