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FISHING REPORT

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May 5, 2014

Unlike March, April was a kind month to anglers at Fletcher's Cove. A delayed start to the runs of herring, shad and white perch quickly built in strength as the days passed and the heart of the month produced spectacular catches of hickory shad, a surprising number of Americans and some coolers filled with white perch for those willing to hunt them out of the deep.

Our 29 wooden rowboats were often gone soon after daylight as those in the know came from all directions to get in on the action. Darts and flies flew over the counter to be cast into the depths. Chartreuse was the "hot color" of the month, but methinks that was more about the anglers than the fish; the old saying is that a lure has to catch the fisherman before it catches a fish! The water of the Potomac was clear most of April, so those silvery objects of desire were seeing all the colors just fine.

The water temperature remains in the prime zone for both fish and anglers. Reports from downriver by reliable sources indicate that "green shad" are showing up currently and this bodes well for a prolonged run of these beautiful ocean fish. (Green shad are females that are just arriving in the spawning zones of a river and whose roe is not yet mature enough to be spawned out).



protected location and the arduous task of moving the dock out of harm's way was undertaken when the river level forecast became eleven feet at Little Falls pumping

While the bulk of April was nirvana for fisherman, the last few days saw a rainstorm of historic proportions hit the metro Washington area and quickly change everything. Four to 7 inches of rain over the watershed east of the Blue Ridge quickly roiled the water and accelerated the flow to near flood levels. On Tuesday the 29th, as the first showers fell, Alex Binsted ventured out to take advantage of the last few hours of fishable water. In less than two hours he caught 20 American shad. By Wednesday morning, the river was unfishable and we at the boathouse were quickly making preparations for a potentially damaging flood. Our boats were moved and corralled in a



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[Check out Dan's article on Fletcher's Cove in the March 2012 issue of The Buzz](#)
(pages 6-7)

[March 2011 issue of The Buzz](#)
(pages 11-12)

[Rowin' on the River at Fletcher's Cove](#)
article in *KidFriendly DC*
July 2013

[Click here](#) for a great interactive map
of the area around Fletcher's
(opens in new window)

CHAPTER SHAD REPORTS



During the shad run (usually April thru mid-June), our chapter sends out reports of fishing conditions at Fletcher's Cove and elsewhere as we receive information. If you know someone who might want to receive these reports, [email NCC-TU](#) with "SHAD" in the subject line and provide your name and email address. If you received shad reports last year, you don't need to resubscribe to get them in 2013.

[Click here](#) for a great interactive map of The Boathouse at Fletcher's Cove Area Fishing and Outdoor Fun (opens in new window)

station. Thanks to our Boathouse crew and to old river-rat Dick Tehaan, who chipped-in with hours of willing help, the dock was moved and roped-down just before the flow became too powerful to challenge. The river is truly our master. It showed us its grace for weeks, but all things must balance and the angry side appeared as a reminder of the strength of natural forces.

Looking forward into May, great opportunities for fishing success should be opening up as you read this. The largest perch of the year are usually caught mid-May. Not buckets full, but jumbo sized fish. Shad will continue their runs with the proportion of whites to hickories increasing. The legal striped bass season starts on May 16 with two fish per day allowed. Both must be more than 18 inches, but only one can exceed 28 and be no more than 36. (No one can claim fishing escapes the complexity and regulatory nature of our time). Complete D.C. fishing rules are available online at <http://ddoe.dc.gov/service/regulated-fishing-activities>.

The Family and Youth Casting Call, originally scheduled for May 2 and 3, was postponed due to the storm and the high, murky water level. It will be rescheduled for June; more details to come later.

Fletcher's will start renting canoes and kayaks when the river level drops to an acceptable level, possibly this coming weekend. One must call for current conditions and opportunities, as these things change on a daily basis.



Fletcher's Cove Preps for Flood Waters
(Photo by David Policansky)



Giant Moth Attacks Fishermen on Potomac
(photo by Dan Ward)

I opened the boathouse at daylight on April 22 and spied what I thought was a dried leaf stuck to our "unit poster," which lists hours and such as well as a photo of boaters out on the water. On closer inspection, this leaf thing was in fact an amazingly beautiful moth, disguised as a leaf. It had attached itself to the Plexiglas in such a way as to appear to menace boaters pictured in the poster. "Mothra revisited." This reminded me that you never know what you might see at Fletcher's. From the smallest insect to a raging flood along the Potomac, an array of unexpected (and mostly delightful) experiences will greet you if you just visit us down by the riverside.

Thanks for reading. See you at the river!

Dan

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