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## FISHING REPORT

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**MAY 11, 2012**

**O.K... I know this is a fishing report, but I gotta talk birds. We'll get to the fish later.**

Birds, birds, birds. Never before have I seen such a variety of birds at Fletcher's Cove as in the past couple of months. Fletcher's has always been witness to a delightfully interesting mix of winged friends, but this spring provided a virtual explosion of species. Whatever the cause, (the mild winter and early season warmth come immediately to mind), the parade continues to this day. The mix will undoubtedly change as summer approaches, but if you like bird watching, a trip down to Fletcher's is advisable right now. I'm no ornithologist, but I do love to watch birds and right now I'm in heaven.

Here are some of the birds (in no particular order) seen recently in this little oasis between the Potomac palisades and the C&O Canal:

- Bald Eagles
- Osprey
- Snowy Egret (very early season)
- Great Blue Herron
- Terns (early season)
- Merganser
- Wild Turkey (real, not the spirit!!)
- Green Herron
- Baltimore Orioles
- Cedar Waxwing
- Warblers
- Wood Ducks
- Canadian Geese
- Cormorants
- Grebes
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Flicker
- Nuthatch
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Grackle
- Coopers Hawk (nesting pair)
- Red Shouldered Hawk
- Mallards
- Night Herron
- Black Buzzard
- Swallows (Tree, Barn and Cliff)
- Bluebirds
- Purple Finch
- Gold Finch
- House Wren
- Cardinals
- Eastern Kingbird

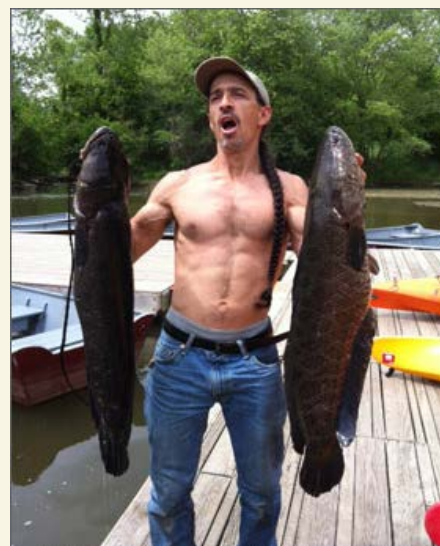


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[Check out Dan's article on Fletcher's Cove in the March 2012 issue of The Buzz](#)  
(pages 6-7)

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

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



"Fletcher's new 'snakehead king' Robert Curtin with two of eleven fish caught May 7th. His fish totaled around 100 lbs"  
(photo by Alex Binsted)

- Kingfisher
- And of course, starlings, sparrows and mockingbirds



The "Killer Ducks" 1985 (photo by Dan Ward)

No pigeon sightings this year, however! In spite of our proximity to downtown, there are no tall building ledges upon which to nest or take refuge around here. I believe the hawks and eagles would make fast food out of a pigeon hanging around Fletcher's. One year, long ago, we had a visiting brown and white pigeon which we took "under our wing," so-to-speak, and it stayed most of the warm season. It vanished one day in late summer, hopefully having moved-on, but more likely, it became food for a hungry critter of some type.

True and un-embellished story: After the devastating flood of November, 1985, three ducks appeared in The Cove. One was black, one was brown and one was white. These ducks were, you might say, enthusiastic, when it came to being fed. They liked it at Fletcher's and decided to stay a while. We wondered where upriver they might have begun their journey; I nicknamed them "the killer-ducks" because of their aggressive behavior. My son loved feeding them that winter and spring of '85 and '86. They stayed

together most of the time and I could not help but see a living metaphor for ethnic and racial tolerance symbolized in these three ducks. Fletcher's, I'm proud to say, has always been a melting-pot where every customer is equally judged and equally valued. Like the pigeon, those ducks vanished, all at the same time, hopefully to a safe haven somewhere else along the "Old Patowmack."

And now, for a little fishing news! The river at Fletcher's Cove continues its gentle flow into D.C. this generous spring of 2012. All the fish that swim in our waters are available to anglers at this moment; the water temperature remains in the "comfort-zone" for all the species. To put it sarcastically, if you can't catch fish in the river right now, please consider bowling! (Disclaimer: I love bowling, no disrespect intended. Yours truly was on the Grinnell College Midwest Conference championship bowling team, 1979.)

The tail-end of the white perch run continues for another week or so. After that, just small and occasional medium-sized perch will be around. American shad are now being caught in greater numbers, but they are not all over the place as were the hickory shad of past weeks. At the moment, many small and schoolie-sized striped bass are being caught on bloodworms and minnow imitation lures. Please handle these fish gently and quickly, and then return them to the water asap.

For the first time this spring, numerous good-sized largemouth bass have been landed right out from Fletcher's dock. Our tackle shack sells some of the buzz baits, poppers and plastics you can use to target bass.

Robert Curtin of Dickerson, Maryland has been crowned "King Snakehead" by the senior employees of Fletcher's. He de-thrones Alex Binsted who was king for two years. While happy for Robert, we are sad for Alex, a fellow employee who was truly a benevolent king.

I will let the photos do the rest of the talking for this report. Please come visit us as the lushness of summer envelopes the Potomac Valley.

Dan



"Harrison Silva with a plump largemouth he caught with a crank bait just out from Fletcher's Cove" (photo by Alex Binsted)



Colby Fletcher, sixth generation, still pulling in those bass! (photo by Joseph Fletcher)

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