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FISHING REPORT

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JULY 19, 2011

It's as hot as hades in Washington this week. Natives know each summer that "it" is coming, but even with the ubiquitous A/C of the late 20th Century, a heat wave like this is a most unwelcome guest. This is the time to lighten-up, slow down, and relax the pace of life a bit.

Intense summer heat puts the fish of the Potomac into a lazy mood. They are cold-blooded creatures, so the warmer the water, the warmer the fish; no air conditioning available for them! They eat less and are not so quick to expend energy chasing an uncertain meal. Fishing tactics should take this into consideration. Slow down your retrieve or fish a still bait. Fish the deeper, cooler waters or in the shade. Morning angling, after a night of cooling darkness, is a good bet. Happy summer anglers are those who enjoy the process and keep any results in perspective.

Besides our finned friends, there is much wildlife to experience at Fletcher's Cove on a summer visit. I make a point of alerting our kayak, canoe, boat and bike patrons to keep an eye peeled for the various types of water turtles that make the Potomac and C&O Canal their home. Birds of all types, from Bald Eagles to tiny hummingbirds, are residents of the Potomac gorge. The river-bottom flood plane is a fertile environment for creatures great and small: Toads often hop out from an overturned kayak; most dawns, one can see a beaver plucking willows for a fast-food breakfast; and one morning recently, a bushy-tailed red fox hopped across the entrance of the centuries-old access tunnel under the canal. Come for a summer visit with open eyes and a relaxed state of mind. You can then embrace the heat in a whole new way!

During the repeated high waters of spring, some of our frustrated regular fishermen had to make opportunity out of hardship. One old friend and angler who has been coming to Fletcher's for years is Oscar. Just Oscar. He and his angling partner had some good late spring results fishing right off the entrance roadway during the flooding. Nice catch, eh?

And... our fishin' buddy Brooks Noble has done it again. Brooks has a gift when it comes to finding, hooking and boating very large catfish. Last week he latched onto a monster of a blue cat and managed to wrestle the torpedo-sized fish into the boat. It weighed-in at 55 pounds. The photo is on display at the tackle-shack. If Brooks wasn't married, I'd swear from the picture that he was having a romantic interlude with the fish. Fortunately, Norma isn't the jealous type!

Before the recent downpours, the woods around Fletcher's were very dry. With all the flotsam and driftwood piled up from the spring floods, it was only a matter of time before an errant spark from a careless visitor caused a fire. One June evening a fire spread rapidly through a large pile of wood just above Fletcher's Cove. The D.C. fire department's fire boat was able to maneuver around the rocky channels and get within range to douse the flames with its powerful water jets. Our thanks to them! Outdoorswoman extraordinaire and dear friend of Fletcher's Sandy Burke took these unique photos.



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



"Oscar and friend with a high-water catfish caught on Fletcher's driveway (photo by Dan Ward)"



"A June driftwood fire just above Fletcher's Cove"
(photo sent by Sandy Burke)

I hope you will find time to visit Fletcher's before summer wanes. It's hot down here to be sure, but the feel along the river is not stifling, rather it is natural and in tune with the earth. The breeze off the water will kiss your cheek and can lighten your spirit. A brief moment is sometimes all it takes to journey far away.

Dan



"The D.C. fireboat crew on the scene. Thanks!"
(photo sent by Sandy Burke)

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