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OCTOBER 17, 2011

2011 has been a challenging year for angling along the Potomac at Fletcher's Cove. No less than five times between March and September, the river has roared down the gorge and reached a level at, or above, our entrance roadway. Before the Potomac reaches this state, the complete re-packaging and movement of the dock and all the boats must occur; I'm tired just thinking about it now!

These conditions put the kibosh on all normal angling and also, of course, boat rentals. To add salt to this wound, in recent years the canal often has been drained when the river is rising to even a modestly high level. This was never done in the "old days" and effectively ends the opportunity of rentals or fishing in the C & O Canal for the duration of the high water, which is just when it is needed the most.

In spite of the tough times, though, excellent days of fishing did occur this year. If you want to get out along the river at Fletcher's, come soon, as business operations will cease after October 30th.



Matt Murtha with a beautiful Potomac Catfish

Matt Murtha is a regular angler at Fletcher's. He is an excellent fisherman and a customer we value very highly. Matt fishes quite often, and unlike many present-day fishers, he does not just show up when the fish are thick and the water and weather are perfect. He not only enjoys the act of angling, but the outdoors itself. Matt knows that with persistence, patience and a sense-of-place, the reward is all around him and the fish will come. The 24-pound catfish Matt is holding was caught in June. The 18-inch bronze back was caught below the bluffs above Chain Bridge in July. Thanks for the photos, Matt!

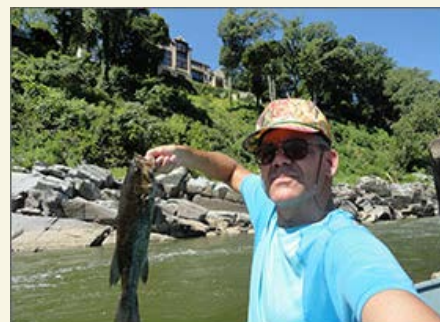
Dickie Tehaan is a real boathouse old-timer. He doesn't fish as often as in days of yore, but Dick still has the magic. On Tuesday, October 11th, he drifted his boat into a spot known to "old-timers" as a fall season holding spot for small mouth bass. As they say, knowledge is power; Dick wielded his power and boated seven small mouth from two to almost five pounds. Two fish were over four pounds. The one pictured here measured 22 inches and was released after the shot. Dickie had that old "twinkle" in his eyes. I was so glad to see that.

After several years of anticipation, it really was the "year of the snakehead" at Fletcher's. Many of that new, invasive species were caught in spite of the bad conditions, and at least that made things interesting. It seems that most of the snakeheads disappear from the area above Key Bridge after the late spring. One theory is that they head back



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[Check out Dan's article on Fletcher's Cove in the March issue of The Buzz](#)
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Matt Murtha holds a classically marked Potomac bronzeback (Photo by Matt)



Todd Miller with a scary-big snakehead from the Potomac" (photo by Collin Riley)

down to the lazier part of the river to summer-over in shallow creeks and coves, better there to ambush smaller fish and animals. Recently, Collin Riley sent me a photo of his friend Todd Miller holding a magnificent (or incredibly weird, depending on your point-of-view) 34- inch snakehead. This fish was caught July 21st near the mouth of Four Mile Run. A truly awesome "urban

angling experience." Thanks, Collin and Todd.

With the big shot of rain from Tropical Storm Lee, I think we are now set to witness a beautiful show of fall colors along the Potomac Gorge. Fletcher's is a great, close-in place to view this annual natural wonder. Your choices include the quiet towpath, the suburban-ish Capital Crescent Trail, the rugged Potomac shoreline, or one last boat rental on the water for an up-close and personal leaf-peeping experience.

Enjoy the fall...and thanks, as always, for reading!

Dan



Dick Tehaan with a whopper smallmouth bass caught on one his signature bucktails (photo by Alex Binsted)

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