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FISHING REPORT

ARCHIVED FISHING REPORTS

November 10, 2015

The Fletcher's Cove rental season ended on November 1st. With the unseasonably warm weather of late, it seems odd not to be sending our wonderful customers out in kayaks, canoes and rowboats; but in Washington, seasonal transitions are as unpredictable as politics, and a closing date must be selected ahead of time. While the sun has shone brightly and mild breezes have blown on recent days, the water temperature is in the 50s, so it's necessary to play it safe with walk-up rentals to the public.



A trophy smallmouth bass caught by Alex Binsted (photo by Matt Nagy)

2015 has been a good year down by The Cove. It started off with a welcome helping hand from the National Park Service to improve safe access to our rental dock. In the nick of time we were able to open for the spring shad, perch and striper runs up the Potomac. The fishing was good, our visitors were happy, we were busy. A triple play! A spring vista like no other is to gaze out on the water to see our tile-red classic boats dotting the surface, anchored in eddies and seams where the shad can be found.

As the water warmed into summer, along came kayakers and canoeists to explore one of the nation's most amazing urban rivers. It's great to see people actually taking a break from Washington's bee-hive-like workaday world. Over

the winter, read Louis J. Halle's "Spring in Washington" and you too may feel the compulsion to break free from the hive and explore the area's precious natural gifts.



Autumn fog frosts the Potomac (photo by Dan Ward)



A banquet sized walleye caught near Fletcher's by Ryan Jenkinson (photo by Dan Ward)

Now, the fall colors have peaked along the Potomac Gorge and morning fog often coats the river like nature's butter-cream frosting. Winter's stillness down by the cove is your opportunity to appreciate

"AN IMMOVABLE FEAST"

Old friends add flavor to an annual fish fry
by Bill Heavey
(credit to www.fieldandstream.com
and A Sportsman's Life)



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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.

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

peacefulness not available during the hustle-bustle of the rental season. Those anglers who took advantage of the effect cooling waters had on productive fishing were rewarded with some fine fat bass, catfish and walleye. Our regular "Wednesday catfish hunters" ([see the July 30th report](#)) arrived early each week and on most occasions wrestled-up some impressive denizens of the deep. Ryan Jenkinson showed up one day with a walleye that went corner-to-corner on a 40 quart cooler. He released several others. Alex Binsted uses soft plastics such as Gitzits and Senkos to fool bronzebacks of impressive size into thinking there is such a thing as a free lunch. Even though rental boats are no longer going out, it is still possible to fish from shore. It has been mild this season so the odds of a catch are good until that inevitable blast of icy winter hits.

Beyond the natural beauty and the great fishing, Fletcher's is a people place. It is that great attribute as much as any other that drew me there in the first place. I was painting an old boat a couple of weeks ago and up comes a biker to my spot at the edge of the parking lot. I recognized him from earlier in the season when Alex and I had done a small favor in lending him a kayak paddle. We had talked at that time about ecology and the beauty of the river and off he went downstream in a home-crafted boat. As I stood with paintbrush in hand he handed me an artfully wrapped present, said thanks and that it was good to see me again. Off he rode down the canal. The present was a delicious baked item but the real gift was a beautiful card with words of appreciation he penned about his grandmother and hope for the coming year.



It's rowboat fix-up time down at The Cove. Our fleet of unique wooden boats needs lots of TLC and if you have ever fished out of one, I think you will agree the results are worth the time and effort. About half the boats were pulled in late September and are just about ready to go for next spring. We are currently waiting for the right conditions to pull the remainder from the water. I'm hoping we can assemble the same muscular crew for a second pulling in the near future. Thanks, guys... my old back is grateful!



The boat pulling crew, clockwise from top left: Ryan, Dickey, Keith, Chris, Mike, Alex, Etel and Mark (photo by Dan Ward)

Additional end of season thanks go out to so many people and organizations that helped make 2015 another great year in Fletcher's long colorful history... To Superintendent Kevin Brandt and the C & O Canal NPS staff; The Great Falls maintenance yard crew; The C & O Canal Trust; The newly formed Friends of Fletcher's Cove; The personnel of The D.C. Fisheries and Wildlife Office; The D.C. Harbor Police and Fire Department; The Palisades Citizens Association; The folks at "H.Q." (Guest Services Corporate Office) with a special wink to Kris and Tricia; To our great Boathouse staff... and of course our many, many valued customers and friends who make this not a job, but an adventure!

As I like to do before the last boat leaves the water for winter storage, I took a little row out into the drizzle today. With each stroke of the oars, the past came closer and closer. Across the water, in the mist and stillness, the ghosts of a lifetime of characters surrounded me. So many amazing people I've been lucky to know, so many enriching associations and experiences to hold onto. And in that introspective moment it occurred to me that the great thing is they keep coming! In a real sense, the spirit of the past and present came full circle.

Thanks for reading this... hope to see you in the New Year!

Dan

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