

FOSAF
KWA ZULU NATAL CHAPTER

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016-2017

It gives me pleasure to present the Chairman's Report for 2016 -2017 for the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Chapter of FOSAF.

The KZN Chapter committee met 3 times during the year. Some progress has been made on the NEMBA Alien and Invasive Species Regulations but frustratingly we are still not out of the woods. Although the mapping exercise was accepted in principle, it appears that at every meeting the goal posts have been shifted. Undoubtedly, this important work needs to be continued but the funding for the time spent on this work remains a concern. Ian Cox indicated during the year that regrettably he is not able to assist directly with the work as it grossly affects his income. Ilan Lax remained our representative dealing with it. The longer-term survival of our sport will depend on the success we have in this regard. Donors who have donated money for this work are regularly updated on the progress being made. Some more funding has come in during the year and between FOSAF and Trout SA Ilan has been remunerated and had his travelling expenses paid for attending meetings. The remuneration paid to Ilan is far less than he would earn in his own practice.

The Natal Fly Fishers made available R10 000-00 for the mapping GIS work that has been conducted by Richard Viljoen.

FOSAF is registered as a public benefit organisation which assists with funding and donations, as donors are able to reflect donations as a tax deduction. Hopefully going forward it will benefit donors and we should be able to raise more money.

The Committee continues to function with representation from the major clubs in KZN. Fruitful discussions are held about matters affecting our sport.

Although we have set an objective for us to get more people of colour on board we have not been successful. This is reviewed regularly at committee meetings but regrettably, we are not making progress in this regard. Unless we can get more involvement from people of colour longer term, it would adversely affect our sport.

The Community-based Ecotourism initiative of the Umgano Project at Mabandla, which has received support from FOSAF over a number of years, has unfortunately come to a bit of a halt, as the consultant who was leading it, has had to move away from the Creighton area. A further compounding factor, however, coincided with the continued severe drought (allegedly the worst in 50 years). Therefore, the rivers of Mabandla have been closed to all fishing until streamflow in the rivers has again normalised, and fish stocks have had the opportunity to recover. The project is now seeking a new partner to lead this initiative. The potential for all the other ecotourism activities remain. It is hoped that the proclamation of the community nature reserve will take place in the not too distant future, and that this will create renewed interest in this beautiful area.

Good work continues to be done on the clearing of riverbanks on the Umgeni River. Andrew Fowler, current Chairman of the Natal Fly Fishers Club and author of the book *Stippled Beauties*, has donated the funds from the book to this project. Andrew is also organising and co-ordinating the work with work parties and contractors doing the work. The Riparian Owner, Mr Russel Watson, has been so supportive of this initiative and has made available labour, tractors and front-end loaders to assist. This has had an interesting effect as other Riparian Owners on the river have also started clearing the banks on their stretches of the Umgeni. This in time will be prime fly-fishing waters.

We have again this year tried to get a Yellow Fish representative onto our committee. Dr Gordon O'Brien, from the University of KZN (UKZN), joined the Committee and will represent the Yellow Fish Working Group on the Committee. At UKZN they are doing research on the Yellow Fishes of SA. This is indeed a useful liaison.

We continue to promote both fly-fishing and fly dressing at schools. It is however problematic as at some schools the teachers are very reluctant to introduce a further interest group, mainly because of learners being overloaded.

With the appointment of the new CEO at Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife (EKZNW) in early 2016, we were confident that the Freshwater Fishing Liaison Committee Meetings (FFLC) would be re-established. However, after many attempts to get a decision in this regard we have again, frustratingly, made no progress in this regard. Various alternatives are currently being explored to put pressure on EKZNW to get it going again. This was indeed a useful platform for anglers to meet and discuss issues of concern and to plan for effective utilisation of our water resources and sustainable angling.

The water levels in the Spring Grove Dam in Rosetta were good but the drought has negatively affected it. This is a magnificent dam for both trout and bass. We have made several approaches to Msinsi Holdings, who is mandated by Umgeni Water to manage this water, to find out when this water would be opened to the public. The information given is that when the dam was built the properties alongside the water were not expropriated and still belong to the owners. Whilst attempts have been made by Msinsi Holdings to get access for the public to the dam via the owners' properties, they have flatly refused to agree. The Department of Water Affairs have indicated that in time they will expropriate the land thereby allowing access but this is likely to take a long time.

This year again two very successful trout festivals were organised; one in the Kamberg and another in the Boston area. The Natal Fly Dressers Society and the Durban Fly Tyers are two very active clubs promoting fly dressing. Monthly meetings are held where fly dressers are given input from the more experienced fly dressers. Monthly evening get togethers are organised for fly-fishers in Pietermaritzburg to promote fly-fishing and develop a fly-fishing culture. This has been useful as it attracted quite a number of young fly fishers.

My thanks go to those who have attended the few Committee meetings and made a significant contribution to the activities of the KZN Chapter. Also to Maxi Holder for looking after the Secretarial work and Kevin Culverwell who is our Treasurer.

My best wishes to the incoming committee for the next year.

J P Read
Chairman