

FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN FLYFISHERS
KWAZULU NATAL REGION.
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023

The Natal Fly Fishers Club (NFFC), Fly Fishing Association (FFA) and Underberg Himeville Trout Fishing Club (UHTFC) remain active supporters of FOSAF. Representatives from the Durban Fly Tyers, NFFC and FFA served on the Committee and during the year 2023 one Committee meeting was held. Distance does not allow the UHTFC to attend meetings, but the club is kept fully in the picture through our minutes that are distributed widely.

Feedback from these clubs indicates that membership continues to stabilize. Underberg Himeville Club currently have 160 members. Fishing during 2023 was great and numerous fish in excess of 10 lb were caught, indicating a good stocking strategy. Returns on river fishing likewise indicate very good fishing. The club hosts a still water and river festival annually in September and May each year respectively and they are both sell out events. Of concern to the Club but not pertaining to the full 2023 season but more of late in the last months of the year is the number of floundering and dead fish reported due to the heatwave being experienced. They have considered closing the dams but do not feel they have the rod pressure to justify closing the dams. However, they do encourage members to get on the water very early and get off by mid-morning and then come back late evening to limit the damage to fish caught.

The Fly Fishers Association in Durban reports that membership has increased marginally - they gained four new members last year with 1 resignation due to migration to the Cape. Interest remains good due to well-managed waters. Waters remain the same. Fishing stats have been excellent all year round with an average of 4,5 fish caught per rod per trip. Fish kept to fish caught remains constant at 12%. They have yet to have an over 60 cm fish landed, but several fish in the 55 cm to 57 cm bracket have been landed.

In Pietermaritzburg, the Natal Fly Dressers Society meets monthly ably facilitated by Jan Korrubel. Attendance at these meetings is great and great camaraderie have developed amongst the fly dressers. The Durban Fly Tyers also remain an active club.

Regrettably, we were not able to hold a separate fly-fishing event during the year to promote fly-fishing with the youth. We could not hold the event as the NFFC, who was going to assist in this regard had a very busy year with various celebrations, functions and clinics. Previous attempts to arrange this kind of promotion directly via schools were not successful mainly because scholars already are very committed with sporting and other activities. However, the NFFC hosted a very successful youth clinic early in 2024. It was very well attended and provided a tremendous opportunity for promoting fly-fishing and fly dressing with the youngsters who attended and their parents. Our thanks go to the NFFC for arranging this event that helps us achieve our outreach goals.

Springrove Dam remains closed for recreational fishing. Several attempts were made to contact people who would perhaps have insider knowledge on the subject but they could not be reached. The management of the dam again indicated that recreational fishing would only be considered when the land around the dam has been expropriated. This is a very long-term issue and is not seen as a priority by the Department of Water Affairs. We will keep on following up to keep a watchful eye on it.

The research findings of the Maluti minnow established that, based on genetic analyses the minnows in question are a separate sub-species which is genetically separate from the Lesotho populations. They have and continue to co-exist with trout and have clearly not been exterminated. For now this does not require any further investigation.

Mr Alletson is to obtain a copy of the scientific paper which was produced on the subject of the minnow and to write a short summary document in layman's terms which would then be placed on to the FOSAF website.

The KZN Region was originally delegated the management and control of the finances for funding the NEMBA campaign. As part of this responsibility, we keep our donors and other interested and affected parties updated regularly about the progress being made with NEMBA.

Our National Chairman Ilan Lax continues to spend a great deal of time on the respective negotiations and legal processes. Our court case with the Department of Forestry Fisheries & Environmental Affairs (DFFE) in which the Minister had applied for leave to appeal ended successfully in the Constitutional Court. Ilan continues to take forward the engagement with DFFE in a Ministerial Task Team on trout which has as its objective, finding a practical solution for managing trout under NEMBA. Recent positive progress in meetings with the DFFE legal team appear to be bearing fruit. We will keep members apprised of developments.

Reducing membership of FOSAF remains an ongoing concern. We appreciate the ongoing support of those people who have remained members or who have joined through their Clubs.

The Annual Financial Statements for the FOSAF KZN Region have been prepared and are attached for information.

Jim Read
CHAIRMAN
23 April 2024