



South Coast Fly Anglers



NEWSLETTER June 2025

Chairman: John New (078 203 4549) **Treasurer:** Stephen Brand (082 551 9010) **Secretary:** Dick Plaistowe (082 453 8618)
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Preparing to cast.

This month's newsletter follows the usual format, with a comprehensive Events Calendar well into July and a description of these coming events. We also have four comprehensive articles on recent fishing trips, where some decent fish were caught on at least two of the outings and we blanked on one.

The notes on the monthly meeting are to keep those members, who were unable to attend the meeting, "In the know." Not much in the "Fry, Fingerling and Stocky Stories," this month, which shows that I need additional input from you, the readers, for the next newsletter. Cheers. Arthur.

Events Calendar.

Date	Event	Venue	Time
June 11th	Fly-tying workshop	Neil's home	18h15
June 16th	Grub 'n travel meeting	Neil's home	18h00
June 20th to 23rd	Trout outing	Lake St Bernard	TBA
June 26th	Monthly meeting	Umtentweni Tennis Club	18h00 for 18h30
July 2nd	Committee meeting	Pieter's home	18h00
July 6th	Saltwater outing	Shelly beach	Early
July 9th	Fly-tying workshop	Neil's home	18h15
July 20th	Saltwater outing	Pumula	Early
July 31st	Monthly meeting	Umtentweni Tennis Club	18h00 for 18h30

Coming Events:

At the **fly-tying workshop**, which will be held at Neil's home on **Wednesday 11th June, at 18h15**, we will tie the freshwater Griffiths Gnat and the saltwater Surf Candy. The club will supply the synthetic bucktail and the Mylar tubing for the Surf Candy. BYO material for the Griffiths Gnat. Recipes have been sent to members.

There is a **grub and travel meeting** at Neils home on **16th June. Time 18h00**. This is for those members who will be going to **Lake St Bernard from 20th to 23rd June**.

As usual, the **monthly meeting** is at the **Umtentweni Tennis Club on Thursday 26th June, at 18h00 for 18h30**. Flies of the month. Griffiths Gnat and the Surf Candy, as well as any fly of your choice for the **Open Section**.

The **July Committee Meeting** is at Pieter's home on **Wednesday 2nd at 18h00**.

On **Sunday 6th July**, we will once again try the **Shelly Beach ski boat area for a salt water outing**. We will hopefully have better weather than we had on our last attempt. No braai, but we may pop into some restaurant for a bite to eat, after the fishing.

Past Events.

Trout outing to Silver Streams. Friday 8th May to Monday 12th May. By Frank Ellison.

After a very Democratic vote as to who should write this report, I decided to do as told!

Four very expectant fly fishermen left Uvongo early on Friday morning for Silver Steams in the Southern Berg, arriving just after lunchtime. We drove straight to our accommodation for the weekend, what a surprise, the block-built chalet comprised two bedrooms, bathroom with bath and shower, toilet and a communal kitchen/dining area, plus lounge.



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Each room had an electric heating wall panel, the beds had electric blankets and the lounge had an open fire, which proved very efficient . WHAT LUXURY,

After setting up our gear we took a walk to the river, which was flowing well and very clear. We saw fish , we thought fish, but did not catch fish. They were just not interested.

Saturday dawned bright and clear and not too chilly and after a hearty breakfast, produced by our own Jamie Oliver, (Neil,) we all strolled up the track towards the mountains, some went further than others, with varying degrees of success. Fish were caught, not many, but caught.

Sunday was very similar to the previous day, although we all decided not to walk too far, which suited the more senior citizens, as away from the camp the going was a challenge, particularly for yours truly, who was already on cussing terms with the river, having taken an unplanned dip the previous day. Most fish were spotted lying under the bridge, so we concentrated our efforts in this area, to no avail, as our offerings were totally ignored. The fish were just not interested. The more adventurous, opted to walk further up or down the river and were rewarded for the effort.

In total for the weekend, thirteen fish were hooked and landed, with only one being kept. Sizes varied from 450 mm (the largest,) to 60 mm (the smallest.) Sean scored six, including the biggest, Neil got four around the 300 to 250 mm length, John got two about 200 mm and lost two, Frank got the prize catch at +/- 60 mm. This last one was not worth crowing about, considering the experienced rookie-dunking that followed.

Some tried again on Monday morning but, as the ambient temperature was about 3 degrees in the sun, one was not inclined to dally, so again, no fish caught to crow about.

After breakfast we packed up and left, getting back to the coast after lunch. The road between Kokstad and Swartberg is being resurfaced, so there were several stop/go points, but when finished it will be a great improvement.

Thanks guys, for an enjoyable weekend in good company, which made me realise that there is always something to be learned.

Trout trip to Wattled Crane. Friday 16 to Monday 19 May. By Dick Plaistowe.

Friday morning saw John and Arthur leave early and Neil, Dick and Stephen a tad later, for Wattled Crane. As the Ranger had only reached Harding, when the Toyota arrived at the Pink Church, Arthur and John carried on, collected the keys and opened up the cottage, before Steve, Neil and Dick arrived. The old adage of “the fate of the gate, lies with the chap in the front,” was unfortunately true for John and Neil respectively, as they were in the front passenger seats of the two vehicles, so many thanks to them for opening and closing the numerous gates on the very rough, boulder-strewn road to the dam.

The countryside was looking spectacular after all the rain, the sky was clear and Wattled Crane dam was full, with barely a ripple on the water. We all set up our kick boats, some quicker than others, as is usual and set off to search out our prey. The water was a surprisingly warm 19 degrees Celsius (this may have been a bad recording, as the subsequent days temperatures were 10-10,5 degrees) and the air temperature around a pleasant 23 degrees.

I had decided to fish floating line with a Papa Roach, cruising the weeds and reeds at the top end of the dam, which is my preferred style of fishing. I systematically and patiently worked the edges of the dam, allowing the fly to sink to the bottom, which was visible, such was the water clarity, occasionally twitching the fly to produce a darting action, then a slow pull. All to no avail I'm afraid, so I changed to an intermediate line with a Walker's Killer and immediately had a strong take from a fish, which eventually decided to part company. The deeper water proved to be the answer, still towards the top of the dam, but in the middle, around the old channel, with two really nice fish of around 44 cms.

Friday was very definitely John's day with six fish, he really showed everyone else up, catching on Black Woolly Buggers, Walker's Killer and Red Tag, (whatever that is, never heard of it before, but I guess I'm displaying my ignorance, maybe it should be a fly of the month, so that we can all have one). Neil and Dick two fish, Stephen one and Arthur had plenty of strong takes, but that was all. Eleven fish for the afternoon. All the fish were reported to be of a similar size, feisty and in excellent condition. The air temperature took a nose dive from about 23 degrees mid-afternoon to 17 degrees at 16h30 and 13 degrees at 16h50. The sunset was the most spectacular of the weekend, crystal clear, crisp silhouettes and burnt orange to red skies and not a building or light in sight.



Saturday morning saw Arthur, John and Neil out early, whilst Steve and Dick fought for the “Last man on the dam” award. I fished floating again, along the reeds from the cottage to the top of the dam, changing flies from Papa Roach, to a Mickey Finn variant, a Walker’s Killer, and finally to a greenish Muddler Minnow, which eventually hit the spot with a decent fish, after several strong takes - Hallelujah. That was my only fish of the day sadly. John came out tops again, shared with Neil this time, with three fish a-piece, Stephen one fish and Arthur, still having some solid hits and a couple of feisty fish that escaped.

Sunday saw a similar start to the day and Arthur caught, after much perseverance, John and Neil caught three fish each, Dick and Stephen blanked. The fishing was difficult with overcast and cool conditions, with gusting winds blowing the kick boats every which way, which was tiring to say the least.

Monday saw a final dash to the water for all, except Dick, who’d decided that he was really happy with only three fish for the weekend and a complete absence of envy for the more successful of his mates. Well, that’s my story and I’m sticking with it. Arthur caught again, to much jubilation and donated his fish to Stephen, to take home for Belinda. John also caught one fish, Neil and Stephen blanked, but not voluntarily, as was the case for Dick.

So, in a nutshell, the fish caught were as follows for the four days: Congratulations on a great effort to John: 6, 3, 3, 1 for a total of thirteen fish, Neil: 2, 3, 3, 0 for a total of eight fish, Dick: 2, 1, 0 for three fish, Stephen: 1, 1, 0, 0 for two fish and Arthur: 0, 0, 1, 1 for two fish; a total of twenty-eight fish, definitely down on previous outings. There was much debate about the stocking policy which Stephen undertook to speak to Cathy about.

Successful flies were probably Woolly Bugger on top, Walker’s Killer, Mrs Simpson, Red Tag, Papa Roach, Muddlers Minnow, Invicta (fished by Neil, it’s an old-fashioned fly, but has stood the test of time), Beaded Nymph and Red Eyed Damsel all catching.

A notable addition to Arthur’s Fines Book must include Arthur himself, for leaving his battery box at home. I hasten to add that Arthur should get the award for perseverance, by ending up with two fish, after blanking the first two days, all the time having to kick himself around the dam for four days, without a motor - now only an indestructible octogenarian like him could’ve survived that feat, they simply don’t make them like that these days. (*The Master at Arms has also noted that Neil managed to tangle his fly line around the prop of his Water Snake, jamming the motor and thereby burning off one of the connections. Ed.*)

A few final thoughts - we are so blessed to have venues such as Wattled Crane, amidst the majestic Drakensberg and their foothills, almost on our doorstep, also the special members of our Club, without whom the fishing would be a bit lonely and lastly many thanks to Arthur, the Snack King, for yet again making the evening snacks. (*Dick’s lasagne, Neil’s salads and brunches, Steve’s braai duties and John’s dishwashing skills, also contributed hugely to a really great week-end. Ed.*)

Saltwater outing to Rocky Bay in the Park Rynie area. Sunday 25th May. By Arthur Cary

Our previous trips to Rocky Bay have been plagued by bad weather – either gale force winds from the South-West, a screaming rip current or rough seas. I cannot recall who was allocated the task of ordering good weather for this trip, but whoever it was, please take a bow; you did a grand job.

The Sunday sunrise was magnificent and the old adage of “A red sky in the morning - - ” did not hold any water at all. A gentle north-easter greeted John, Neil and Arthur when they arrived at the parking bay. Bruce Black had arrived a 06h00, a full hour earlier, while Derek Salzmann and Gordon Gove (members of Durban Fly Tyers) rocked up a short while later. Bruce now resident in hillcrest, is a member of both clubs,

Bruce, who has fished this area many, many times, had his chosen spot way out on a rocky point, and it proved to be an extremely good choice. The rest of us sought out different areas, where we thought we had a good chance of a hook up. “Rocky Bay” is aptly named, because that is what it is, extremely rocky, with hardly a clear stretch of sand to the south, while to the north of the car park, there is a ski boat launch site and a clear swimming beach. It was to this area that John and Arthur eventually migrated, after blanking to the south.

A wise move on the part of the SCFA members was not to throw down the gauntlet to the DFT chaps, as we were taken to the cleaners, regarding species and numbers of fish are concerned.

Bruce caught a total of 17 fish, bringing in Rainbow Wrasse, Mooney, Karanteen, Blacktail, Wave Garrick and Flagtail on his trimmed orange Brush Fly. Gordon added 9 Moonies, while Derek landed a Flagtail and a Mooney. On our side, Neil had umpteen hits and a number of chases, but did not manage a decent hook-up. John caught one nice sized Wave Garrick and Arthur landed one Wave Garrick and a Flagtail, just as the light north-easterly started to freshen up.



We retired to the beach restaurant for a very hearty breakfast, at a very reasonable price, before heading homewards, with happy hearts.

It bears mentioning that John added an unplanned swim to his “fines list.” Crossing a shallow channel, that had a hidden hole, proved to be his undoing. The jury is still out as far as Arthur’s dunking goes, because when he hooked his Wave Garrick, he got clobbered by a “rogue wave,” which up-ended him. (all normal swells are “rogue waves,” as far as Arthur is concerned.!!!!) Scrambling to his feet and still hanging on to his rod, he landed and released his fish. Who says, “Barbless hooks lose more fish?”

Monthly Meeting. Thursday 29th May. Umtentweni Tennis Club.

Present: 12 members. It was great to see Toi and Mike S. after a long absence. Good to have Liam back for a short while, before he again does a flit to Oz. **Apologies:** Ken, who recovering from a knee op and David, Neil, Sakkie, Matt, Mitch and Pieter C.

FotM: Judged by Liam.

Freshwater: **Flash Back Nymph:** John, Toi, Arthur, Neil, Mitch and Sean.

Saltwater: **Slinky Fibre Bait Fish.** Neil, Sean, Toi, John, Arthur.

Freestyle: Mitch (Grey Minnow,) Sean (Para RAB.)

Coming Events:

See calendar above.

General:

As Toi, Mike S. and Liam had not yet paid their 2024 dues according to the Master at Arms, this little matter was settled to the satisfaction of Treasurer, Steve. (*Insufficient for that committee Seychelles trip, but actually not too bad. Ed.*)

Arthur mentioned that on the Bushman’s Nek outing, an Ezemvelo Wildlife official had told members of the SCFA group, that a “Hiking-fee” of R100.00 was now required from members of the public, who wanted to hike or fish above the waterfall. The members concerned had not heard of this on previous visits, so declined to pay. Arthur had asked Peter Arderne, Secretary of the Northern Region of FOSAF, if he could find out if this request was legitimate. (See the results of Peter’s investigation in the “Fry, Fingerling and Stocky” section, below.

Dave M. is looking for a kick boat. If you can help, please contact him on cell number 083 266 7436 or e-mail vividjones@gmail.com

Liam reported that the Umzimkulu river is looking good for scalies. He also said that he is making progress for SCFA members to again get access to the river. An outing may be arranged for August or September, which are the best months for scalies. Watch this space!!

Sean and Steve gave their respective reports on the outings to Silver Streams and Wattled Crane. (See above reports.)

Steve announced that SCFA funds are healthy and that the club will pick up the tab for accommodation at Lake St Bernard. Members who are going on this one, will pay the rod fees (R160/day for 2 days fishing,) and the food and transport costs, as usual. Details of the club banking account will be sent to those who are going on this trip, so that they can pay their rod fees directly to the club.

Saltwater outing to Mzamba. Sunday 1st June. By Arthur Cary

Compared to the last two visits to this beach, the outing at the beginning of June, was very tame indeed. In 2023 we caught sardines on fly and last year John had his little chin wag with his Environmental friends from Bizana.

2025 Saw Kevin, John, Steve, Sean and Arthur all blank. No one had the slightest touch from a fish, despite trying any number of flies in the river and in the surf, for a good two and a half hours of intensive work. It bears mentioning that the first nets of sardines were pulled on the Saturday at Port Edward, which is less than 10 km up the road. Whether this was the reason for the dearth of fish, or was the very heavy back line and resultant strong surge, the culprit, is a matter of speculation.



Having given up the uneven struggle, we retired to the parking area, some 100 metres from the end of the road, and made good use of Steve's braai fire. This area promises so much potential, that we will be back sometime in the near future.

Fry, Fingerling and Stockie Stories.



We wish Ken a speedy recovery from his knee op and trust that he will soon be able to again terrorise the local fresh and saltwater fish.



On the Silver Streams outing last month, members who wanted to fish the Ngwangwane River on the Saturday, were told by an Ezemvelo Wildlife official, that there is a R100.00 per person, per day "hiking fee" for those wanting to go for a walk up any of the trails. Members thought that this was a scam, as it was the first time that any of the group had heard of this. Peter Arderne of FOSAF has ascertained that there is indeed a R 100.00 fee for anyone going walking or fishing above the waterfall.



Sean reports that the costs for Mountain Lake are as follows:
Membership of the Matatiele Angling Club: R 1125.00 per year.
Cost of the cottage: R 530.00 per night. Cottage sleeps 6.
Vehicle entry fee: R 45.00 per vehicle.
Rod fee: R 138.00 per day. (club members do not pay a rod fee.)

Last Cast.

I think that there is sufficient for readers to digest, so no need for me to add anything, except to say that I hope to see many of you at or on the water now that the sardines are in the area.

Cheers Arthur.

