



South Coast Fly Anglers

NEWSLETTER

July 2025

Chairman: John New (078 203 4549) **Treasurer:** Stephen Brand (082 551 9010) **Secretary:** Dick Plaistow (082 453 8618)
Liaison and Records Clerk: Pieter vd Merwe (083 543 7005) **Scribe:** Arthur Cary (039 681 3274) **Member:** Neil Scott (083 265 6608)

Preparing to cast.

Only one report on an outing this month, and while fishing was really tough, a super time was had by the eight SCFA members who made the trip to Lake St Bernard. It goes to show that you don't have to catch fish, in order to enjoy the outing.

There is the usual Events Calendar, with dates going forward to the end of August. Diarise these and jot them into your memory bank, because you do not want to miss out on any of them. Shad have been thick in certain areas, so the outings to Shelly Beach and Pumula this month could be your chance to bag a couple of these characters. See you there. Arthur.

Events Calendar.

Date	Event	Venue	Time
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
August 10th	Saltwater outing	Mzamba	Early
August 13th	Fly-tying workshop	Neil's home	18h15
August 24th	Scaley outing	Umzimkulu River	08h00
August 28th	Monthly meeting	Umtentweni Tennis Club	18h00 for 18h30

Coming Events:

Our first outing of the month is to the **Shelly Beach Ski Boat Club beach, on Sunday 6th July**. There are no braai facilities, so we will retire to a restaurant for a bite to eat after fishing.

The **fly-tying workshop is at Neil's home on Wednesday 9th July, at 18h15**. Dave's Demon and the Clacker Clouser are the Flies of the Month, recipes of which have been distributed to club members. Brown Marabou for the Demon and brass beads for the Clouser will be supplied, other materials, BYO.

Pumula is the saltwater venue for Sunday 20th. On previous visits to this area, shad were on the bite, so come prepared. As we will braai afterwards, bring your own meat and liquid refreshments.

The **monthly meeting is at the Umtentweni Tennis Club on Thursday 31st July at 18h00 for 18h30**. No change to the agenda, with the braai afterwards. Flies to be judged are the freshwater Dave's Demon and the saltwater Clacker Clouser.

Past Events.

Trout trip to Lake St. Bernard, Friday 20th June to Monday 23rd June. By Kevin Bailey.

If you are one of those readers who is merely interested in numbers and size of fish caught on a fishing trip, read no further than the next sentence. **Eight anglers fished Lake St Bernard for two days and netted 14 fish, the largest of which weighed just under 2 kg.** If you enjoy a badly written note on a most enjoyable outing, to a heavenly trout lake in the lower 'Berg, read on.

Since we could only book into the Lake St Bernard cottage after 14h00, it was decided that leaving at sparrow was unnecessary, so John, Frank and Arthur headed out just before 10am on Friday morning, with Rob following shortly after.



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Steve had the normal multiple, morning tasks required of a farmer and he and Matt only got away after 14h00, while Kevin, being a self-employed builder, managed to do a duck after 16h00. Neil left from Maritzburg and took a slow drive via Underberg.

We hit the first signs of snow at Ingeli and did not lose sight thereof, until we left the area on our way back on the Monday. As was reported widely on the news, Kokstad was cut off from the outside world for two days, due to the terrific winds and snow that hit the area in the first week of June. Broken trees, downed telephone and electrical lines, provided ample proof of the devastation that this storm caused.

The lake was a picture of tranquillity, when we arrived. The snow-capped mountains were reflected in the mirror-like surface, with not a cloud to be seen. We had been warned that the cottage was without electrical power, due to the damaged power lines, but that the hotel camping-site-donkey was available for showering, which was a real blessing. Although the cold set in when the sun dipped below the yard-arm, daytime temperatures rose to the upper teens and we fortunately only had a short burst of wind on Sunday afternoon.

Kick boats were set up and a lazy lunch was enjoyed, while the rest of the group arrived in dribs and drabs. As there is a "rod fee" charge of R160.00 per day, irrespective of the hours put in, we had decided to only fish on the Saturday and Sunday. SCFA picked up the tab for the accommodation, which came to a tad over R8000.00. We are indeed lucky to have the financially astute Steve, as our Treasurer.

Cell phone coms were out of the question, due to the no-power-problem and because we could not contact Kevin to check on his progress, Steve launched a search party, after we had enjoyed our hamburger supper. We fortunately met him, a short kilometre from the cottage. He had missed a turn off and when his GPS incorrectly informed him that he was in Lesotho, he realized that something was amiss!

As the evening wore on, the temperature dropped into the minus digits, but thanks to the fire, well stoked by Frank, umpteen blankets and multilayered sleeping gear, we all slept well.

Saturday morning dawned bright and clear; cool, but no wind, so we headed out to the various points of the 68-hectare lake. Matt headed out into the "tongue" of water to the south east of the main body of water and had a good view of two otters fooling around in the shallows, not 5 metres from his kick boat. As he said, that made his day, even if he had not caught a fish. In fact, he actually landed up with a couple of decent sized rainbows, caught on a Papa Roach. The otter that Neil saw, clambered onto a rock and proceeded to consume a fish that he, the otter, had caught.

A total of 7 fish were landed that first day. Tough work for all of us.

Supper consisted of soup, provided by Steve, which hit the exact spot and the Jetmaster fireplace, a dash of OBS and a wee dram of the golden liquid, all did wonders in keeping the cold at bay.

Sunday morning was a repeat of the Saturday and anglers only ventured out onto the water after the sun had thawed the frost and the nip had been taken out of the air. Fish were again few and far between. No particular fly would guarantee a hit. Neil, Matt John, Frank and Arthur, however managed to get onto the board.

The lake abounds in wildlife and apart from the occasional call of a fish eagle, numerous ducks and the huge flotilla of red knobbed coot, sufficient in number to put many a navy to shame, there were scores of Egyptian geese, a dabchick that tailed Rob for more than half a kilometre and guinea fowl in the adjacent fields. Overhead, white backed vultures soared in the cloudless skies with the snow-capped mountains reflected in the lake. Water temperature varied from 10 degrees in the shallows to 6 degrees in the deeper water. **Who needs to catch fish when surrounded by scenes such as this?**

Matt and Kevin, who are members of the blue-collar brigade, had to get back for work on the Monday, so left mid-afternoon, while the rest of us, fished for as long as possible, only giving up the unequal fight as the afternoon wore on. We packed our gear, had a quiet sundowner or two and enjoyed Steve's kassler steak and wors braai.

On the trip back, we were lucky to see a pied crow and a white backed vulture having a debate as to who had first feeding rights on the carcass of a beast that had succumbed to the cold of Sunday night.

As mentioned in the first paragraph of this article, eight anglers totalled 14 fish in two full days of fishing. A catch rate of about one fish per eight hours of fishing. The thousand-dollar question as to why the fish could not be tempted, remains unanswered. A recent report in the Witness suggests that low barometric pressure may be the culprit for low catch rates in KZN at present, but at St Bernard we magical weather, so I don't know. Despite the lack of co-operative fish, the trip was worth every ounce of effort. Roll on, the next one.



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Monthly Meeting. Thursday 31st June Umtentweni Tennis Club.

Present: 10 members.

Apologies: Dave Moldenhauer, Pieter vd Merwe, Liam, Pieter Claasen, Toi, Mike Skellern, David Schultz, Ken, Mike Kirkham, Matt.

FotM: Judged by Dick.

Freshwater: **Griffith's Gnat:** Sean, Neil, John, Arthur, Mitch, Toi, Toi.

Saltwater: **Surf Candy:** Sean, Neil, John, Arthur, Toi, Mitch.

Freestyle: Sean (Caribou Spider,) Mitch (Goldilox,) Toi (Red Tag.)

Coming Events: (See Events Calendar above.)

General.

John expressed his thanks for the sponsorship received from the club for the St Bernard trip. SCFA picked up the accommodation tab, which came to just over eight grand.

Mitch reminded those present, that when fishing is tough, a good fly to try is the Micky Finn. (A streamer, tied with a silver tinsel body and a tail of red, yellow and orange bucktail or synthetic.)

Dick reported on a 4-day trip to Goxhill in Himeville and Rockhurst, south of Underberg, where fishing was just as tough as it was at Lake St Bernard. Three anglers only managed 4 fish in two days, despite trying all the flies in their respective fly-boxes.

Neil and Steve gave a synopsis of the trip to Lake St Bernard. (See the article above.)

Steve said that, despite coughing up the accommodation fees for St Bernard, club finances are still in a healthy position.

Fry, Fingerling and Stockie Stories.



As mentioned in a note to SCFA members earlier this month, we received the sad news that erstwhile member, John Gibbon has passed on to the Great Trout Fishing Grounds in the sky. Although John was a member of SCFA from 1995 to 2003, he was a loner by nature and preferred to go fishing with one or two mates at most, but remained an avid fly angler until 2024, when ill health slowed him down somewhat. A perfectionist in everything that he did, a true gentleman and a lover of the outdoors, John was a humble man, a tough consulting mining engineer, who when asked what his profession was, would reply, "I was a miner." The world is the poorer for his loss. RIP.



Derek Salzmann of Durban fly Tyers has advised that there is a Hunt, Fish, Fire Experience at the Westville Country Club on the weekend of 9th and 20th of July. Check out the website: www.huntfishfire.co.za and if there is sufficient interest a combined trip can be arranged, which will be co-ordinated by Pieter vd Merwe. Contact him on **083 543 7005**.



A scientific study by researchers has shown that fish suffer extreme pain after capture, especially if they are left out of the water for any length of time. Read the report under: <https://www.earth.com/news/fish-like-rainbow-trout-suffer-extreme-pain-when-killed-by-air/>

Last Cast.

Nope, I have nothing to add.

Cheers. Arthur.

