

REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR 2015-16

The main activity of the Environmental Committee during the past year has been to provide technical support, when needed, to our Chairman, Ilan Lax, and Ian Cox, who worked tirelessly with others in Trout SA, in their deliberations over the place of trout in the SA economy and aquatic systems, with representatives of both the Departments of Environment Affairs and of Water, Sanitation and Forestry. These deliberations, were, of course, regarding the regulations of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, on Alien and invasive species. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Ilan and the others in the Trout SA alliance for the favourable dispensation that it seems they have achieved on behalf of us all.

In anticipation of regulations that meet most requirements for the balanced approach that we have been advocating for a long time, we recently reviewed the FOSAF 2003 Policies and Objectives document. The balanced approach, which forms the core of the Policies and Objectives, both caters for the need to conserve indigenous aquatic biota on the one hand, while at the same time, catering for the needs of the trout industry on the other. This equates to the sustainable development concept, as advocated by the United Nations).

The review addresses the amendments that are likely to be needed to harmonise with the new dispensation, which will be incorporated in the regulations. This was a preliminary review which will have to be up-dated when the regulations are published.

In conclusion, the following quotation by de Moor & Bruton (1988) is included in this report, to illustrate the apparent return, after a great deal of (unnecessary?) debate), to some semblance of logic.

“Trout ... are well established in the upper reaches of many South African river systems. An important recreational angling industry has developed around the two trout species, which also provides healthy recreation for a large number of people. Trout farming is also well established in South Africa and has the highest yield of any one species in the aquaculture industry (Safriel & Bruton, 1984). Clearly trout have a permanent place in the economy and ecology of South Africa. We must not, however, lose sight of the fact that they are alien fishes, and that it is our unique and primary responsibility to safeguard the future of our own indigenous fishes.”

Bill B

Dr W R Bainbridge,

Chairman

March 2016