

FOSAF WESTERN CAPE REPORT (2021)

1. Trout waters

FOSAF Clubs report for The Cape Piscatorial Society for 2021 (Prepared by David Karpul, former CPS chairman)

2021 on the whole was a good year for The CPS, with a strong recovery in membership, the resumption of activities and the hosting of various events.

Waters

Sadly, the year started with a hard lockdown, specifically forbidding access to nature areas. This resulted in no fishing in either Lakenvlei or the Cape Streams, resulting in a reduction in membership over a fairly critical period. The lockdown also ironically resulted in the streams being overrun by thousands of illegal visitors without permits, who caused massive damage to the Lemietberg reserve in the absence of Cape Nature control. This appears to now be the norm over the summer period, as this last summer has also been particularly bad from a reserve-abuse point of view. The CPS continues to engage with Cape nature in regard to the management of the rivers, but has little to show in terms of outcomes.

In general, Lakenvlei's current stocking program is paying off, resulting in increasingly good fishing. The rivers cannot be said to have had a bumper year, with highly variable conditions and unusual weather, but the populations on all streams appear to be healthy. The JDT's continues to provide special fishing for those who are lucky enough to fish there. The Witte has been closed to access for more than a year due to road works. During the short period it was open, browns continue to be spotted in the upper reaches of the river, while illegal water extraction remains a huge problem for the ecosystem.

Events

The CPS had a significantly more active year in terms of events. We hosted our an in-person committee meeting for the first time since the pandemic started, we hosted a ladies development day, Youth Nationals, Masters Nationals and Ladies Nationals on our waters, and we hosted river clean up. Finally, and most significantly, we hosted our 90th birthday Gala dinner, where we raised more than R80 000 for charity through auctioned items.

Club Management

The CPS also had significant changes in staff with a new secretary in January, and a second replacement in July. Further we've had the sign up of several new committee members, while others have moved on after many years of dedicated service, most

notably Herman Potgieter has moved back into the Chairman's seat. Through the efforts of one of our committee members, a detailed custom booking system is on the cards as a welcome step just as our existing system began to fail us. The CPS has seen a good financial recovery through stringent controls on membership, various austerity measures, a recovery in membership numbers, and increased income from the hosted events in the last year.

2. Indigenous fish projects

Saving Sandfish

The Saving Sandfish project has built up a lot of momentum over the past two years, which is a positive spin-off as these were very challenging years due to Covid-19 travel restrictions (limiting field work) and the economic crisis (limiting funding). While milestones were achieved in fish rescues (lead by Dr. Jeremy Shelton) and establishment of several new fish sanctuaries in a desperate attempt to conserve sandfish offspring, the project is also creating great awareness about the endangered Clanwilliam sandfish and other indigenous fish species with a sensitive conservation status. The project managed to secure sufficient funding to run for another year in 2021 - FOSAF has already played an important role in donating money to this project and it would be great if FOSAF could remain involved in this project and possible future freshwater fish projects that could stem from this initiative.

That said, several other research and conservation projects are also in the pipeline. These include early actions to get formal projects similar to Saving Sandfish going for the Berg/Breede whitefish, the Twee River redfin (Twee, Middeldeur, and Heks Rivers in the Kouebokkeveldt) and the Doring River fiery redfin (in specifically the Breekkrans River, Cederberg). The giant redfin has also seen a lot of groundwork, in which case populations were confirmed to exist in several new areas (tributaries of the Breede system) and awareness campaigns have also been launched to get public involved.

3. National Freshwater (Inland) Wild Capture Fisheries Policy

We are under the impression that the new National Freshwater (Inland) Wild Capture Fisheries Policy was also forced through without completing a formal public consultation process (same as what happened with the NEMBA regulations)? If that is indeed the case, it would be much appreciated if FOSAF National would consider countering the publication of these regulations as it did with NEMBA, based on the principle that these regulations were implemented unlawfully.

Yours sincerely,

FOSAF Western Cape