

## Eastern Cape Chapter Reports for 2021

### Bankberg Trout Fisher's Club Chairman's Report 9 November 2021

What a year it has been! We stocked at what could have been the worst possible time of the year, February, under duress, as the hatchery was having a nightmare keeping the fish alive, even if it meant stocking at 2am in the morning. As it turned out, it was a success. However, the drought continues to tighten its grip on our waters as we are down to three reliable waters, two marginal waters, (holding thumbs as it is raining as we speak, and we have 50mm predicted) with one of the four of our pieces of river also being marginal that are still fishable. Three of our pieces of river we have not stocked seriously since 2014 as the fountains have either stopped flowing or are just too weak. On the positive, the quality of the fish that have come to the net has been exceptional, so a HUGE note of thanks to Martin Davies for working his magic. Having been without Municipal water in Somerset east for the past two weeks because of complete incompetence, coupled with stage 4 load shedding, I do not know how Martin keeps producing such quality fish. On that score, Martin has been planning to use the modern technology to ease the pain and frustration of running his hatchery by going solar, installing batteries and inverters, our club has donated R10 000 to this cause, as have other clubs and private individuals, no hatchery = o fish supplies.

Our main fishing water has produced good fish both rainbows up to 57cm and a brown of 58cm, so the bigger fish are there, but it is not always about size, the quality of fishing during prolific insect hatches still makes Mountain dam a stellar water to fish.

Sadly, we do not see the same sentiments from members, from our average of about fifty-five members annually, only twenty-eight paid their subs for the year, definitely, a covid trend and a worrying one, as people just expect there to always be quality fishing available, without their assistance.

We look forward to a positive year ahead.

#### **UPDATE:**

The year ahead has arrived bringing rain to most parts, but not sufficient to make fountains flow consistently, our predicament of only having a few waters to fish, albeit, thankfully, in some full dams continues.

Thanks to a host of people and clubs we raised R67 500 as a donation to Martin Davies for the upgrade of technology to the 11 Hare Street Hatchery. We will be installing an inverter, gel batteries and the necessary links to include the generator to make the power supply consistent and reliable, early February. Sadly, including solar panels to be completely off the grid is a bridge too far, financially. We hope everyone has a great 2022, not only personally, but successfully doing business and being able to escape to fish now and again and the clubs thrive, so that we can contribute next year to help the 11 Hare Street hatchery become independent and off the grid, to secure our fish supplies.

#### **Amatola Fly Fishing Club - Ed Truter**

A brief chairman's report for the Amatola Fly Fishing Club: The Amatolas having had significant and regular rainfall so far this summer, all our waters are now at 100%. Annual stockings of rainbow and brown fingerlings took place in December and January respectively, and all stockings rolled out like finely tuned clockwork. The cool temps and lots of cloudy weather during this summer have also resulted in some good fishing and the summer doldrums had not kicked in at the time of writing. We also took delivery of four new boats, to be used at Gubu and Mnyameni, for club member use, and that has been very well received. The club also continues to grow in member numbers, even in the semi-post-COVID situation, which is encouraging. Re. the Wolf River rehabilitation work, after COVID hold-backs, this project got underway in late 2021, and the first funds that were received (from FOSAF-EC) are being used to remove alien timber adjacent to and blocking the main channel (causing bank erosion, channel widening, loss of depth, and

similar stream integrity issues). There is still a very long way to go on this project, but the progress is noticeable and the fish numbers remain healthy.



## ***Eastern Province Freshwater Fish Conservancy***

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020/2021**

As you are all aware, we have had to again cancel our 64<sup>th</sup> AGM due to the Corona virus and all of the risks and restrictions that goes with it. Several AGM regulars expressed their concerns about holding an AGM and we have to accept and respect their views. Hopefully we can get back to normal next year, especially if most of us can get vaccinated by then.

Our current paid up membership stands at 101, including 5 Honorary members. About the same as for last year.

#### 1. Condition of Waters

General – With the exception of Churchill dam, all of our other waters are 100 % full, to overflowing and are looking great. This is mainly due to the consistent good rains in the Elands and van Stadens River valleys, which feed our Club waters. Not so for the main Port Elizabeth supply dams Impofu / Churchill / Kougha. Their catchment is a long way West of here. Their combined total is 12.4 % of capacity, as I write this.

##### 1.1 Bulk River Dam

The 3100 RB Fingerlings stocked in December 2019 are starting to show themselves and several fish in the 2.5 – 3 lb class have been caught recently. Not bad for a fish that is not yet 2 years old, but typical of Bulk. We stocked again in December 2020 with a further 3000 RB Fingerlings plus 400 Browns in January this year. I am particularly excited about the Browns, they typically live at least twice as long as Rainbows and can grow really big if you practice catch and release.

Some of you may think that this is overstocking, but remember that Fingerling survival rate is seldom higher than 20 %. There is a new catch return box and book mounted against the shed where Queenie the dog lives. A reminder that she enjoys a treat and is particularly partial to a Russian sausage that you can get from Uncle Freddie's on your way out to Bulk.

The entire dam area has been re fenced and the locked gate is now situated just below the workers houses.

##### 1.2 Upper van Stadens Dam

The restocking of this water in December 2019 and again in 2020 has also worked and a good many fish were caught earlier this year. This seems to have tapered off a little and the lily pads remain a problem due to the generally shallow nature and the crystal clear condition of the water, allowing plenty of sunlight penetration. There is also a metal box and record book mounted on the tower near the wall, just watch out for the beehive in this tower.

There have been a few security problems at UVS with poachers, this has hopefully been sorted out now. The main gate near the Culturama turn off is kept locked and we have our own padlock, together with the Municipal and Forestry padlocks. These were damaged recently by some idiot (not a Club member) who found himself locked in. They have been replaced. The other gate at the start of the slip road to the dam is also locked with our padlock – one key fits all.

Scenically, this water is spectacular, with a lot of interesting history behind it. The dam wall was completed in 1893 and was guarded by a garrison of British Troops during the Boer War of 1899 - 1902, after General Jan Smuts and his raiding Kommandos had threatened to blow it up. The British forts can still be seen on

the heights overlooking the dam. Old Jannie revealed later that he never actually planned to blow it up, he simply wanted to keep as many Rooinekke as possible out of the fight. The Waterfall pool below the dam is also worth a visit, particularly on a hot Summers day.

### 1.3 Sand River Dam

The Sand River dam area has also been re fenced for security and the locked gate is now situated a little lower down the slip road to the dam, with the Catch Record book still in the hut next to the old gate.

This remains as our most popular water, with easy access and easy Bass fishing – you are guaranteed to catch something every time that you visit. Not to mention the great scenery.

### 1.4 Churchill Dam

As mentioned earlier, Churchill is low at +\_ 17 % of capacity, with no fishing reports from anyone in the Club. There are some huge Bass in Churchill and we need to use this water more often.

### 2. Condition of Boats & Moorings

The Aluminium boat at Bulk is leaking again, after I spent a lot of time in trying to repair the damage around the transom area. It is now leaking somewhere in the bow area. I think that this riveted boat needs to be replaced, it has never been the same after taking a plunge over the wall a few years ago.

All other boats and moorings are OK.

### 3. Finances

We have again not been able to get our books formally audited this year, our designated Book Keeper emigrated to Holland rather suddenly before she could give us a report. I can confirm that we currently have +/- R 26 K in the Bank with half of our members still to renew their subs. Costs have been confined to stocking and Maintenance and have been kept to a minimum. We are exclusively using Internet Banking now, if anyone would like to view a list of our expenses and payments made, I can arrange this for you

### 4 Functions/Outings

There were again no Club outings during this past year, and it looks like it may remain this way for a while unless Old Cyril relents and changes the lock down rules somewhat. Once this happens, we will start holding outings again.

These events are the lifeblood of any Club.

### 5. General

Not having held an AGM again this year, there was obviously again no election of Office Bearers, so the current 2020 / 2021 Committee will need to remain in office for another year.

If any current non Committee Member thinks that he or she can make a contribution and would like to assist, get hold of me with your motivation and we can arrange to have you co opted onto the Committee. The last thing that I want, is for these election delays to stifle any ones enthusiasm to improve the way that we do things.

In closing, I would again like to thank the Water Division personnel at the NMBM for their ongoing support and cooperation, in allowing us continued sole angling rights to our waters, which we have enjoyed since 1957.

BRIAN CLARK  
CHAIRMAN

30.08.2021

## Queenstown Fly Fishing Club

### Chairman's Report 2021

The year has been an excellent year for the club. The dams have fished well and some great fish have been caught.

#### Stocking.

All dams have been stocked with Martin Davies trout and the abundance of stockies bears testimony the health of the fish. These will grow into the trophy fish for which our waters are renowned. There are sometimes questions raised about our stocking policies. In consultation with Martin we continue to keep our dams well stocked. If the catch returns from Thrift are any indication we are doing well.

We have this week stocked two large dams in the Steynsberg area. These are 8 and 9 metres deep and have well established reed beds and abundant insect life.

Early this year we stocked the following dams with Browns: Pine Grove, Birds River, and Snowdon Trophy Dam, and George Smiths Dam. The fish have grown well and will provide excellent fishing for years to come.

We hope to continue stocking browns in the New Year.

I need here to compliment Charles for his hard work in getting the stocking equipment to work and for travelling vast distances to collect from both hatcheries.

Also to express our very grateful thanks to Gary Mr Afrox who sponsors the oxygen for the stocking. Also thanks to Rudi who sorts out the gas supplies for us.

#### Hatcheries

We are extremely fortunate to have two local hatcheries, Ventnor and Hare Street in Makandla. To support Martin Davies and his need to get off the grid we have donated R 20,000.00 to this project. Several Eastern Cape clubs have donated similar amounts.

This week we stocked 20,000 small rainbow trout to the Steynsberg dams to relieve congestion at the Ventnor hatchery. I believe it is very important to keep being supportive of both hatcheries. We are the biggest club in the Eastern Cape and are able to meet our needs from these hatcheries. Hence we have over the last two years paid deposits to both Hatcheries when the eggs are harvested. These deposits are to ensure there is cash available to run the hatcheries and to secure the fish we need. Both hatcheries have expressed their gratitude for this support and in return we have been able to stock some outstanding fish.

To Larry King at Ventnor and Martin Davies should go a bottle of the best for all they do to keep the water flowing and the fish fed ready for us.

#### Gathering 2021

The Gathering was moved again this year for obvious reasons. So we held a Spring Gathering over the first weekend in September. Aloe Grove was as always welcoming, accommodating and the food top quality. We had a great bunch of entrants from all over the country. Some withdrew due to testing positive for covid and other personal challenges. However, those who paid and could not come are booked into the next gathering. So we have some 5 entrants fully paid up which is an excellent start.

As always we had a very supportive response from local businesses in sponsoring our prize table. Explora also gave generous prizes as did several from the professional fly fishing world. **Dates for 2022.** July 7 – 9 th.

#### Members

The list of members continues to hover around the mid-80s and there are regular sign ups during the year. Our thanks to Eric and Carol for handling the membership department.

#### Catch Returns and Booking dams

Andrew Junior continues to keep the returns coming in and does a fantastic job of booking the waters for both members and day ticket people. He is a mine of helpful information for those enquiring about where to fish and what flies work best. He is amazingly committed to this vital aspect of the clubs work. Our grateful thanks for all he does.

#### National Trials

This year has seen Darren Boucher, Gerhard Cloete and Stephan involved in the trials as both managers and competitors. All have learnt a great deal and have made great progress. As a club we have sponsored some of the participation.

#### FOSAF and High court

The government continues to peruse the trout world with tenacity. No sooner had the High Court handed down a very carefully reasoned and thought through Judgement against the Department than the Department decided to appeal. The appeal has little chance of success especially as the Judge awarded costs against the Department. So next year we will see how the appeal goes.

The case was brought to challenge the department's failure to follow due process in publishing the alien and invasive list which now includes both rainbow and brown trout. The judgement declared the list to be invalid. Now we wait.

#### Landowners

We are blessed with very generous landowners who support our passion for casting a fly at a fish which sometimes is attracted but which often swims by without a flicker. So to Pete and Jane Cloete, Hugh Smith, Ed and Kim Clarke, Johan Wege, Marianne and Freddy Boucher, and Dylan Thompson our very grateful thanks for keeping us going as a club.

However this last year has been saddened by the death of two special people; Dave Boucher who ran Snowdon and Jeremy Thompson who owned Oakley. In their own way they made our management of their dams simple. To Marianne and Michelle go our love and prayers and grateful thanks.

#### The Committee

My thanks for a good year where everyone has contributed to the success of the club. Being in the chair is a fairly easy task with such support.

Reg Morgan, Chairman 2021