

**Statement issued by the Rural Fisheries Programme, of the Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science, Rhodes University with regards to the Vanderkloof Dam experimental fishery**

The Rural Fisheries Programme of the Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science at Rhodes University has been contracted by the Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to be the implementing agent for conducting an experimental fishery on Vanderkloof Dam for a limited period, using a single vessel and a variety of gears. The objectives of this experimental fishery are to assess the biological, economic and social viability of the potential to develop a small-scale community based fishery.

An integral part of the process was the formation of an Advisory Group (AG), consisting of all stakeholders and role players, including the fishers and relevant government departments (national, provincial and local). Over two years, in a process that we strived to ensure was transparent, inclusive and consultative, an Experimental Fishery Management Plan (EFMP) was developed with input from all stakeholders. During this process, all parties had opportunities to present their views and interests.

One of the focus areas of the EFMP was to deal with the environmental aspects of an experimental fishery. By consensus, agreed measures were put in place to ensure that no fish species is threatened through the experiment.

When the EFMP was completed and agreed by all parties it was then submitted to the Northern Cape Department of Environment and Nature Conservation (DENC), which is the provincial competent authority. DENC, using the EFMP and the agreed conditions listed within it, issued the exemptions to conduct the experimental fishery. Rhodes University is now in the process of implementing the experimental fishery, in accordance to the EFMP and the conditions of the exemptions.

The Advisory Group continues to exist and function to provide oversight to the experimental fishery

Qurban Rouhani, Director Rural Fisheries Programme, Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science, Rhodes University.

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