



South Coast Fly Anglers



NEWSLETTER December 2023

Chairman: John New (078 203 4549) **Treasurer:** Stephen Brand (082 551 9010) **Secretary:** Dick Plaistowe (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.

The Christmas “silly season” is once again upon us. I sincerely hope that all readers have a Happy and Holy Christmas. Enjoy a good rest and come back refreshed in 2024. Safe travels to those who are going away and for those wise ones, who will be staying at home, “Stay safe.”

We begin 2024 full of hope that it will be a good year; remember, no matter how bad things may appear, there are good spots to see, even though these may be a bit camouflaged at times. Keep looking for the bright side, take advantage of any good events that become available and you’ll have a great time. Cheers Arthur.

Events Calendar for the start of 2024.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Time</u>
7th January	Saltwater outing	Mzamba or Southbroom	Early
17th January	Fly tying Workshop	Neil's home	18h15
21st January	Bass outing	Dunston's or Oasis Dam	Early
25th January	Monthly meeting	Umtentweni Tennis Club	18h00 for 18h30
7th February	Committee meeting	Arthur's home	18h00

Calendar of Coming Events.

Keep an ear open for the SMS from Steve, advising where the 1st saltwater outing of the year will be held. The Mzamba weather has been so unkind to us in the past, that we have a second string to the bow this time and the venue may change at the last minute , if we are going to be blown out once again. **This will be on Sunday 7th January.**

Neil’s home is the venue for the fly-tying workshop on Wednesday 17th January. Note the date change. We will be tying the Improved Montana and the Maxi’s Dog’s Breakfast. Recipes will go out in January.

Sunday 21st January, should see us chasing bass at either Dunston’s Dam in Murchison or at Oasis dam in Paddock. If you are unsure as to where these dams are, give me a shout and I will send directions.

The 1st monthly meeting of 2024 will be on Thursday, 25th January and as usual will be at the ‘Tweni Tennis Club. Again, no change to the catering. BYO and Steve will have the fire ready.

Committee meeting at Arthur’s home on 7th February.

Past Events.

Matatiele Trout Compo. Mountain Lake. 4th to 5th November. By Sean Tharratt.

Sean, Dean and a friend of Dean’s, Ernst went up for the Matat compo. We left around 10am and took a relaxed drive up, as no fishing is allowed on the Friday. It was hot and slightly windy when we got there. Dale went up just before we got there to set up and we went and greeted him and then set up our camp site and greeted everyone as they arrived and had a few beers with everyone in the evening and then off to bed.

Saturday morning the compo. started at 5am, but only a few anglers managed to be up early to start fishing at that time; the rest got onto the water a few minutes after that. The morning was cool and overcast with a slight breeze. Sean caught a rainbow after about an hour of fishing and went and weighed it in, which was the first fish to be entered; a 1.42 kg fish. Not a size to brag about, but better than nothing, with bites being scarce.

Conditions were the same as back in September, when the club had an outing here. You didn't know where you were going to get a bite; just had to keep covering water. Later in the morning the wind picked up and by mid-day, the wind was a lot stronger. A few fish were caught in different places in the lake, but nothing to brag about. They were either stockies or fish in the 1.1kg to 1.4kg range which weren't many.



On Saturday afternoon the wind dropped down a bit and everyone went back out for an afternoon session, but within 30 minutes a huge wind came through, making big waves, which chased everyone off the water, which was a good thing, as a big storm was near the lake. You could see the blue clouds and then some lightning. At around 6pm, it rained lightly for a few hours. We had a good supper which was a nice sheep spit braai and a few beers and everyone went to bed a bit earlier than the previous evening....

Sunday, we were on the water by 5am. Sean got one fish of 47cm and lost one, after being on the water for about 15 minutes and then it went dead across the lake. People were packing up just after 8am and by 10am the rest of us had had enough of the fish's lock-jaw and we got off the water, packed and attended prize giving.

The winning angler was a lady from Maclear with a 1.8kg rainbow. Sean managed to get 5th place out of 31 anglers. Dean won a small braai/smoker as well as a Daiwa rod and reel combination in the lucky draw and his mate got a free one-year membership to the Matatiele Angling Club.

Trout outing to Silver Streams in the Southern Drakensberg. 22nd to 27th November. By Dick Plaistowe.

In this topsy turvy messed up country, that we love and remain living in, we are so blessed to have such extraordinary world class venues to fish, hike, camp and socialise at, or whatever pushes your buttons. Silver Streams is an absolute gem, that we should be going to at least twice, if not more, every year, rain or shine, hot or cold, wind or snow notwithstanding. How's that for waxing lyrical and trying to do the place justice !!!

So, Neil, Sean and Dick arrived on a cloudless, boiling hot Wednesday midday, set up camp, then visited Miles Divett down the river at his farm, which has several kilometres of the Ngwangwane River running through it - how lucky to have a farm where "A river runs through it." (How many of us have watched the fabulous Brad Pitt movie?) Miles is recovering from a painful hip replacement and over a couple of drinks, was a fund of information about the Ngwangwane and the Boesmans rivers. We also have an invitation to fish there, when we visit Silver Streams, in exchange for a bottle of good Red and a chat.

Stephen, Arthur, John and Mike arrived Friday mid-morning, followed by Kevin, who was surprisingly early this time. The fishing "village" was very impressive by the time they had set up tents and gazebos. Camping trips are a pleasure in the company of people who have all the kit and know what they're doing.

Different strokes for different people, I guess - fishing for some guys is about the camaraderie, being in the great outdoors, the birding, the scenery, the fresh air. But for some it's about the number of fish that they catch, so for the record, Sean caught a whopping 110 fish ranging from some candidates for a magnifying glass to a very respectable 250 mm (not inches, because mm is a bigger number you know). Sean has developed into a very competent fisherman, of whom the Club members can be proud, he is always available for advice and a fly, particularly if it's a beaded, jig hook, nymph. The also rans were Neil 26, Dick 15, Mike 10, Stephen 7, John 7, Arthur 4, Kevin 2 - my apologies, if I've not recorded all the fish; complaints to the South Coast Herald please.

The purists fished dry-fly, for which the conditions were almost perfect with clear, steadily flowing water which was not too deep. Some members fished nymph-style, more effective maybe, but the adrenaline rush of enticing a dry-fly-take, is just so much more rewarding.

Before I forget, Sean was requested to keep four of his "large" fish which we wanted to smoke in Dick's smoker, with oak-red-wine-barrel-wood-chips. Well, the fish were gutted, de-headed, de-boned and butterflied; beautifully done, but they really were rather small by that time. We recommended that next time they just be gutted. The smoked result was tasty, but was only a morsel each. We'll give it another shot at Mountain Lake, with a large beauty, with rich orange flesh, which will give everyone present, a decent serving.

Many thanks to all the cooks and a special note for Arthur's snacks which as always, hit the spot.

Monthly Meeting. Umtentweni Tennis Club. Thursday 30th November.

Members present: 10 **Apologies:** Mike S. and Toi, Steve, Mike K, Kevin, Warren, Liam, Mark, Sakkie, Jaco, Ken, and David.

Flies of the Month: Judged by Matt.

Salt water: Grunter Charlie: Sean. Neil, Sean, John, Arthur.

Fresh water: Jacaranda: John, Neil, Mitch, Mitch, Arthur, Sean, Sean.

General:

Dick tabled a number of the books that have been donated by the late Pieter Viljoen via John Neaves. These are to be raffled and the proceeds will boost club funds.



Dick also mentioned that Xplorer has a super range of elk hair in various lengths and colours.

Dick hopes to persuade Protea angler, Sean Dickson and Chris Shuttleworth to pay us another visit for the February meeting on the 29th. They will give a fly-tying demonstration, so don't miss this one.

Matt gave a very comprehensive account of his exploits on the Umzimkulwana River, a month or 5 weeks ago. Black dry flies were the order of the day and he found that the Scalies would take a fly, even when the water was heavily discoloured. The action over the last week has however, quietened down. He also mentioned that he had caught a number of bass and tilapia on a dam in the Uvongo area using a hopper pattern.

Sean gave a report on the recent trout trip to Silver Streams (See report by Dick Above.) He came in for some serious ragging, as his boots came apart and he had to do a "MacGyver repair job" on these.

Pieter mentioned that Liam, who is currently guiding in the Seychelles, had his first clients during the last week of the month. Up to now he has been busy preparing the boats for the fishing season. Trigger fish and GTs galore!!


End-of-year-bass-outing to Steve's dam. Sunday 3rd December. By Stephen Brand.


Mike, John and Arthur arrived before 6 and Neil, Sakkie, Dave, Ken, Marion, Dick, Stan and Francis, Sean and Stacey, Belinda and Kevin. Weather was perfect for fishing, slight breeze swirling around the dam.


Mike 8 bass, Dick 0, John 10, Neil 3, Arthur 2, Sakkie 2, Steve 3, Ken 2, David 0, Stan 0, Sean 5, **Total 35**
We all sat under the tree and braaied afterwards, Dick auctioned off a couple of books donated by John Neaves and the club made R 810.00.


Regards Stephen Brand.


Fry, Fingerling and Stockie Stories.

 A timely reminder to members that your list of flies to be tied in 2024 is now due. Please submit ASAP to Arthur, as these are required for the February committee meeting.

 The latest edition of The Mission magazine, (Issue 42 Nov/Dec) has an article on our home-grown Liam. See what blows his hair back regarding life in general and flyfishing in particular.

 Congratulations to David, who has just obtained his 2nd Dan in karate.

 Books, donated by John Neaves that were not sold at the Christmas Bass outing, will be added to the prizes for our annual prize giving in February.

 An interesting comment made by a New Zealand fishing guide:

People often ask me, "How do you decide when you have reached a satisfactory level of fly-tying?" I do not know the answer, or if indeed there is one, but you'll know that you're on the right track, when you find yourself opening your fly box and confidently choosing one of your own flies, rather than a store-bought one.

Last Cast.

There is just sufficient space for me to once again wish SCFA members and all our readers a very Happy and Holy Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

As always, it has been a pleasure producing the monthly newsletter this year. This task would be extremely onerous, nay, it would be impossible without the contributions by members; these come in the form of articles, the odd snippet of info and a lot of much appreciated advice. Thanks chaps, keep it up.

A big thank you also goes to June, my proof reader, "par excellence." Without her corrections, believe me you would struggle to make sense of my corrupted English.

Cheers Arthur

