



# South Coast Fly Anglers



## NEWSLETTER April 2023

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**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)  
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### Preparing to cast.

In this newsletter, we have the usual Events Calendar, this is only unfortunately, to the end of April; the committee will however, fill it up in May, when they have their next meeting. As has been said many times in the past, if you have any venue that you would like to visit, drop a line to a committee member and we will try and fit it in.

Three reports on various fishing outings for you to drool over and of course a report on the AGM, including details of your new committee, who will run the show for the coming year.

Enjoy.

### Events Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Time</u>
12th April	Fly tying Workshop	Neil's home	18h15
14th to 17th April	Trout outing	Wattled Crane	TBD
27th April	Monthly Meeting	Umtentweni Tennis Club	18h00 for 18h30
30th April	Saltwater outing	'Tweni Grannies Pool	07h00
3rd May	Committee Meeting	Pieter's home	18h00

### Coming Events.

At the **Fly-Tying workshop**, to be held at Neil's home on **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April**, we will tie the saltwater **Sal-Mul-Mac** and the freshwater **DDD**, this the colour of your choice.

**There is an outing to Wattled Crane from Friday 14<sup>th</sup> to Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April.** Mitch, Stan, Sakkie and Arthur and Neil are going. Grub and travel arrangements will be made at the fly-tying workshop on the 12<sup>th</sup> at Neil's home.

**The monthly meeting is, as usual, at the 'Tweni Tennis Club on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April at 18h00 for 18h30.**

**Be at the 'Tweni Grannies pool at any time on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April for the saltwater outing.** Bring sarmies and something to drink, as there are no braai facilities at this venue.

**The new committee has it's first meeting at Pieter's home on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May.** Dates will be sorted for meetings and outings for the next couple of months.

### Past Events.

**Trout outing to Wattled Crane. 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> March.** By Mitch Rorich.

Four members, Neil, Sakkie, Mitch and Dyllan made up the group for the outing and 51 fish in total were caught, with all but three safely released. Few of these approached the 1kg mark however and the fishing was generally hard going. Stockies galore!

The Monday morning session was fair, but a strong gusty wind and damp mist kept us off the water for a fair part of the afternoon.

Tuesday was pretty much the same, thus shortening the afternoon session.

Wednesday arrived bright and sunny and a fair day was anticipated. It remained so until about 3pm, when a short heavy downpour, followed by some hail caught Neil and Dyllan a fair way down the lake. No harm was done however and we were able to continue fishing until early evening.

A short spell on Thursday morning produced a couple more stockies, before packing to return home.



Papa Roach, a variety of olive and brown Nymphs, brown Montanas, various brown soft hackles and a Flying Ant pattern flies were used, with varying degrees of success

Thanks to Neil and Dyllan for meal and snack preparation etc. A good venue, good company and a pleasant outing, which I'm sure was enjoyed by all.

**2023 Rhodes Wild trout Festival. Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March to Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March.** By Dick Plaistowe.

Neil Scott and I participated in the annual Wild Trout Festival held in Rhodes from 16-21<sup>st</sup> March. We decided to arrive two days early so that we could get some unrestricted access to beats, that we particularly like, which is sometimes difficult over the Festival, as the popular beats can be fiercely competed for, always subject to the vagaries of the weather of course.

On that note, the weather in the Eastern Cape Highlands can change in a flash and a fine sunny start to the day can quickly end with gale force winds, thunder and lightning echoing around the valleys and torrential rain, turning the most tranquil of streams into raging torrents, necessitating a well-timed and hasty dash for cover or one's vehicle - woe betide anyone who gets caught on the wrong bank. The good news is that the storms are often contained within a single valley, which may not affect the other valleys, unless one is downstream of the storm, in which case high and dirty water is the order of the day, and maybe for several days.

We drove to Rhodes via Elliott and Barclay East on tar and then the 65 kms of fair to bumpy dirt to Rhodes, a total of 550 kms, taking 9 hours including a couple of nature breaks and padkos breaks. The alternative much shorter route of 380 or so kms, is to take the Rhodes signpost, 10 kms beyond Mont Fletcher and travel over the Pitseng Pass and then on to Naude's Nek and finally to Rhodes, taking around the same time as the longer route via Elliott. Spectacularly scenic it may be, but it can also be spectacularly slippery and slow, and not a good place to have a tyre blow out, which I've experienced in the past. Changing a wheel in wet, muddy, slippery, awkward, with no space under the vehicle, trying to securely locate a base plate and jack, sweating, and cursing is not fun - believe me, it can take hours !!!! Neil and I decided that we'll only consider the Naude's Nek route when the weather is fine and the roads dry and graded and maybe not even then.

Our first day's fishing was just 3 kms upstream from Rhodes, on the Lovedale beat, on the Bell river, a very convenient, picturesque beat with reasonable access by Rhodes standards. At least that was my impression getting to the start of the beat. The end of the beat was another story, firstly to find an exit from the river and not have to scale an embankment, then negotiate barbed wire fences, waist and sometimes chest high grass and reeds, and then an uphill lung busting slog to the Toyota. Thank God for my hip flask and the awe-inspiring views whilst recovering. The fish behaved themselves, but were more considerate for Neil than for me. Say no more ??

Day 2 found us on the Thirlstone beat on the upper Riflespruit, where the morning water was heavy and fairly turbid and the fish few and far between, fishing with a large dry and nymph dropper. The afternoon session couldn't have been more different; the water had dropped and was clearer. We fished dry flies for the most part and the fish were far more friendly with me than my fishing buddy - recognition at last and the progressive scores were essentially equal.

We decided to return to the Lovedale beat on the Bell on Day 3, with very different results compared to Day 1. Plenty of fish and a 37 cms. fish for Dick on a dry fly which turned out to be my best fish for the trip.

Day 4 saw us up the top end of the beautiful Bokspruit on the Brucedell beat, a drive of about 35 kms from Rhodes, on a very slow and bumpy district track and taking well over an hour. Brucedell is below the last and very long Gateshead beat. I must say that for me at least, the Bokspruit is as close to fishing heaven as one can get on a good day. Brucedell proved to be fast and furious from the previous evening's storm although the fishing picked up in the late afternoon, with moderate results on a dry/dropper, with Dick edging ahead of the competition, if you get my drift.

Day 5 proved to be our last days fishing because of the rains that evening, but the Knockwarren beat on the Bokspruit was a heavenly day, with an abundance of fish, all caught on dry flies and more than 50 fish between us. The final tally for the 5 days fishing was my personal best at Rhodes with 65 fish landed and many more hooked, fought and lost, modest by some people's standards (no names no pack-drill, and no photographs,) and I'm pretty sure that Neil feels the same way, with about the same total tally.



I might just mention the successful flies used - various dries/nymphs combos but mainly hoppers, which could carry the weighted nymphs, such as GRHE's, PTN's, Flashback Nymphs with 1 mm to 2 mm beads; dries included hoppers, spiders, caddis, Klinkhammers, parachutes, and Shaun Dickson's very own no-name fly that he tied for us at the last meeting.

Fly sizes: mainly small # 16 to # 18, but some of the guys used # 20's and smaller, which I can't thread, let alone tie; and a variety of similar, but heavily weighted nymphs, with a strike indicator, which is a last resort technique for me, but very successful for the competition fisherman with a camera (again no names, no pack-drill.)

The accommodation was a very nicely decorated, well equipped and comfortable, 3 bedroomed house, with two bathrooms at R 400.00 pppn and a minimum of R 1000.00 pn, which we rented through Fred Steynberg's wife, Jill of Rhodes Cottages.

Many of the guys were returning participants and it is for me always good fun having established friendships over the past eight Festivals. Many well-known and prominent fishermen attended, with perhaps the best known including: Internationally known fisherman and guide Mark Yelland, whom I first met around 1984 at Tom Sutcliffe's "Flyfishermen" shop in Maritzburg, when he "still had hair" as Mark reminded me; Peter Brigg, amazing fisherman, fly-tyer and author of what I believe, will become, if not already are, South African classic publications, such as "Call of the Stream" and "South African Fishing Flies," which he co-authored with Ed Herbst, Dr Jan Korrubel, Andrew Mather, Ian Cox, and Miles Divett.

I guess the Festival must rate as one of the most successful that I've attended. Whilst the water was a bit high and a bit more turbid than perfect, the results speak for themselves. Maybe after so many "training runs" we are eventually reaping the rewards, who knows. The Festival organisation was excellent, as was the food, and Dirt Road Traders came to the party for the third year in a row, as the principal sponsor, for which many thanks - I encourage everyone to visit their excellent main outlet in Pietermaritzburg.

A last thought about a SCFA Club trip which Neil and I discussed. The camp site in Rhodes is small and is vulnerable to flooding, being immediately adjacent to a small, normally a trickle, watercourse. There are ablution facilities, which I'm told are functioning and the camp site is well within staggering distance of the Rhodes Hotel and Walkerbouts, so there's no need for drunken driving.

**Paddock Bass Compo. Saturday 25 Match.** By John New.

When I got to Saxenholme dam at 6am, there were already at least 15 boats on the water. One guy had caught a 3.7 kg Bass, using live bait while it was still dark. (*This turned out to be the heaviest fish that was caught all week end. Ed.*)

I got on the water as fast as I could and fished floating and sinking lines using Flipper, Woolly Bugger, Jacaranda and my Go-To fly.

I landed about 30 fish, only 1 was of a reasonable size, all the rest I gave to kids, to build up their totals, or to guys that were pinning the little ones for big fish. The one guy got broken up by a big hit and he came kicking over, to see if I had any more small fish, so that he could try again; he had won the compo like that on a previous occasion.

I only fished on the Saturday, as the fishing dropped off during the day, so I thought Sunday would be even harder fishing.

**Annual General Meeting. Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March. Umtentweni Tennis Club.**

**Present:** 16 members. **Apologies:** Neil, Matt, Jaco. **Visitors:** Belinda Brand, who came along to give Steve a hand with writing out receipts for subs and money for hats and caps.

**Minutes of the last AGM:** These were taken as read, since Dick did not have a copy of last year's meeting.

**Chairman's report:**

John gave his report, in which he thanked the committee for their sterling work during the year and also thanked the members for their support of the many events that had been organised.

He said that the quality of fly-tying had shown a steady improvement and the members who had won the annual raffle of flies, had certainly received some very well tied examples of various flies.



As has been the case in previous years, members had done far better in the freshwater than they had in the saltwater.

He concluded by saying that he was sure that 2023 would again be a good year for SCFA and that members could look forward to a calendar full of salt and freshwater outings, and that these would again be well supported.

**Financial Report:**

Steve gave his normal very thorough report on the club's finances. Although we are slightly down on last year's overall figure, this is mainly due to his having purchased R5000.00 worth of hats, caps and badges and the costs of which, have not yet been fully recovered. All in all, the club's finances are still very healthy.

**Election of Committee.**

As has become the norm for the past many years, there were no volunteers or nominations for any changes to the incumbent committee, so the *status quo* remains as is and there will probably be no changes to the current duties either. Your committee is thus:

**Chairman:** John New. John joined SCFA in 2004, was elected onto the committee as Liaison Officer in 2008 and 2009, Secretary in 2010 and has been our Chairman since 2011. He was awarded Honorary Membership in 2017.

**Secretary:** Dick Plaistowe. Dick first joined in 2008 for a couple of years, left in 2011 for a spell in Jhb and re-joined in 2016, when he came down to the South Coast permanently. Dick was elected as Secretary in 2021.

**Treasurer:** Stephen Brand. Steve joined the club in 2008 and landed the job of Treasurer in 2010. Because he does such a good job, has been unable to shake off the shackles ever since. He was awarded Honorary Membership in 2017.

**Liaison and Records Keeping:** Pieter vd Merwe. Piet has been a member since 2004. He was elected onto the committee in 2013 as Scribe for 3 years, before assuming the role of Liaison and Records officer. He received Honorary Membership in 2023.

**Scribe:** Arthur Cary. Arthur joined in 1999 and has spent a total of 18 years on the committee, during which time he served as Chairman, Secretary, Liaison and Catch Records Officer and Scribe at various times. He was given Honorary membership in 2009.

**Member:** Neil Scott. Neil, our fly-tying guru, joined in 2010 and immediately picked up the pen of the Secretary and Records Officer in 2011 for a couple of years. He then took a break, until we managed to get him back in harness in 2019.

**Master at Arms:**

Arthur did not earn himself any friends, by dishing out fines to all those present. These were for various boo-boos that had been committed over the past 12 months. A total of just over R950.00 was raised, with some more to come in, from those who were absent, with or without permission!!

**Flies of the Month:** Judged by Belinda.

**Freshwater:** **Midnite Express:** Sean, Dick, Arthur and John.

**Saltwater:** **Epoxy Squid:** John, Sean, Arthur, Sean, Dick and Mitch.

**General:**

Sakkie had tabled a few CDs on fly tying, that were available for anyone who wanted to borrow these. There were also a number of flyfishing magazines available.

Some discussion centred around the proposed trip to Wattled Crane, scheduled for the middle of April. Pieter was asked to confirm if the cottage was available and members were asked to let him know who were interested in going on the trip. (Rates are now R300.00 per person per day and a once off cleaning fee of R200.00.)

The grub and travel meeting will be held at the fly-tying workshop on 12<sup>th</sup> April.

Stan mentioned that although the road to Mountain Lake is currently in good condition, the same could not be said for the accommodation. The cottages are totally unserviceable and the toilet facilities have also fallen into a state of total disrepair. If you go up there, take your tent and a shovel!!!!!!!!!!



**Fry, Fingerling and Stockie Stories.**



Subs are due. R110.00 for single membership and R 160.00 for family members. Many of you renewed your membership before the AGM, but there are still a number who have yet to do so. Please contact Steve to make the necessary arrangements. Those who have not paid by the end of April will be given the chop.



On the saltwater fishing front, there have been odd reports of a few shad coming out at selected spots north of the Umzimkulu River. These have been mainly where the odd spot of clean water could be found, so it may be worth a throw in your particular area, if these conditions can be found.



A reminder to Committee members that we have our annual Committee dinner at the Munchner Haus in St Mike's on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April at 18h00.

**Last Cast.**

Well folks, that's it for the first newsletter of the new SCFA year. Once again, thanks to Mitch, Dick and John for the articles on Wattled Crane, Rhodes and the Paddock Bass Compo. respectively and thanks to those members who contributed by way of the odd spot of information, which has probably been hashed out of all proportion.

Hope to see you at fly-tying, the next meeting or at 'Tweni on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

Cheers Arthur.

