



South Coast Fly Anglers



NEWSLETTER April 2024

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.

As SCFA is now officially in its 30th year of existence, we kick off with a note from inaugural member, Mitch Rorich, as to how the club started way back in 1995. We also have a report on our salt-water outing, as well as a couple of reports on fresh-water outings this month, together with a few notes on the very successful 29th AGM.

How South Coast Fly Anglers was launched.

The seeds of our fly club were probably sewn in mid-1995, when 3 local chaps, Dr. Chris van Wyk, (a prominent local vet,) Stewie Chapple and Mitch Rorich, who at the time were sneaking down to Shad Lane from time to time and casting fur and feather into salt water, not too successfully however.

At an odd coincidence the three of us happened to fish together and a conversation arose as to whether there would be any interest in forming, (as originally intended) a saltwater fly-fishing club? A couple more outings led then to a more serious discussion about the formation of such a club. We were keen!

Dr. Chris (Chris) agreed to place an advert in the South Coast Herald inviting interested parties to a meeting on a set date at the Port Shepstone Country Club to further assess general interest in the formation of such a club. Attendance at this first meeting was amazing!

A broad age-group-cross section attended, including an enthusiastic group of younger fellows, who had been salty fly fishing already for some time and were skilled casters and salt water fly tiers, keen on the idea of a club and the general consensus was very positive.

Chris undertook to contact the knowledgeable Jake Alletson for advice on drawing up a suitable constitution and a date for the next meeting was agreed.

At this second well attended meeting, an agenda was presented, including the proposed constitution, a list of potential members and a proposed subscription. A steering committee was elected and a proper set of minutes drawn up. Dr. Chris van Wyk was elected the first chairman, a position he held for some time, during which the club grew steadily, joined by a number of experienced fly fishermen. An asset indeed for the fledging club. And so, the S.C.F.A was launched.

The first planned outing was held at Impenjati, enthusiastically attended by both the skilled and "not so skilled" members and friends. A very promising kick-off!

Mitch Rorich.

Events Calendar

Date	Event	Venue	Time
10th April	Fly tying Workshop	Neil's home	18h15
11th to 15th April	Trout trip	Silver Streams	TBD
25th April	Monthly meeting	Umtentweni Tennis Club	18h00 for 18h30
28th April	Salt water outing	Pumula beach	Early
8th May	Fly tying Workshop	Neil's home	18h15
12th May	Salt water outing	Umzimkulu mouth	Early
26th May	Freshwater outing	Dunston's dam. Murchison	Early
30th May	Monthly meeting	Umtentweni Tennis Club	18h00 for 18h30
30th May	Grub 'n travel meeting	Umtentweni Tennis Club	After monthly meeting



Calendar of Coming Events.

At the **fly-tying workshop, to be held at Neil's home on Wednesday, April 10th**, we will tie the Deceiver and the freshwater Stimulator.

Neil and Dick leave for Silver Streams on Thursday 11th April, while John and Arthur will follow on the 12th. They return on Monday 15th.

We have our normal **monthly meeting on Thursday 25th April at the 'Tweni Tennis Club. The FotM, Deceiver and Stimulator will be judged for competition points, as usual.**

Special Note: Members who tie flies, are urged to tie any fly of their choice (as suggested by Mitch last year.) It can be a salt or fresh water fly. **Any fly, any colour.** Criteria for judging will be Proportions and Neatness (barbless hooks of course.) These flies will go towards the end-of-year raffle, but points for the year end competition will not be awarded. Come on, chaps. Let's see if we can have a bumper entry for this one.

Our **salt water outing on the Sunday 28th April is to the Pumula beach.** A few years ago, we had a very successful shad haul, half way along the beach towards Umzambe. Will history repeat itself?

Neil's home is again the venue for the fly-tying workshop on Wednesday the 8th May. The Salty bugger and the RAB are the FotM that we will tie.

A trout trip to Wattled Crane has been planned for early in June, so start getting your winter woollies out and tie some Woolly Buggers and Papparaoach flies in preparation for this trip. More explicate details closer to the time.

Past Events.

Salt water outing to 'Tweni Granny's Pool. Sunday 7th March. By Arthur Cary.

There were only 5 brave, (stupid???) members who challenged the weather forecast on this gloomy Sunday morning. Well done to Steve and Ken, who travelled all the way from the deep south, for a few hours in the wind and rain, unlike John, Warren and Arthur who had to travel only a few kilos.

We all gave the pool a few minutes to start with, but like the lone bait angler, we soon gave up the unequal task of hooking a non-existent fish and we gradually migrated northwards. Here, conditions were not as pleasant, with the steep beach resulting in a fairly vicious shore break, that threatened to up-end the unwary with every wave. John managed to find fishable water up near the Riviera flats; fishable, but alas, fishless as well, so he soon came back to join the rest of us back in the bay.

Here, a tiny pocket of Moonies had arrived, which resulted in John getting one on a small streamer type fly with a white tail and a red body, while Arthur winkled out three on a battered #10 orange Charlie.

The southerly breeze was gradually stiffening and bringing with it a very light, but thoroughly wetting fine drizzle, which penetrated every opening in our rain gear, so Arthur, John, Steve and Warren headed for the relative warmth of their vehicles, leaving the ever-persistent Ken to finish off with a total of 9 Moonies, all caught on a Surf Puff. He says that when he also eventually succumbed to the cold, 40 minutes after the rest of us had abandoned him, the fish were still on the bite.

Well, we certainly paid our school fees on this trip. Lesson No 1 and hopefully not to be forgotten, "Don't give up while the fish are biting."

Rhodes Flyfishing Festival. March 2024. By Dick Plaistowe.

Neil and I did our usual thing and arrived in Rhodes on Sunday 17th March, two days earlier, so that we could get some "quieter" fishing in before the Festival rush. At least that was the plan. As it turned out about twenty other participants had the same idea, some arriving on the Friday, however our fishing on Monday and Tuesday was not a problem, as plenty of beats were available. We all gathered for a pre-Festival braai on Monday evening at the small community Park adjacent the Bell river, good company and a great place to braai.

We targeted beats that we hadn't fished before, starting with the Mount Morne beat at the top end of the Riflespruit on Monday, then various beats on the Sterkspruit every day from Tuesday to Friday, including two consecutive days at Birkhall (the late Basie Vosloo's farm, now run by his son/s and wife, Karien), followed by Branksom and Belmore, finishing off the Festival on Saturday on the Lower Hilbury beat, on the Bok just below where the Riflespruit joins the Bok.

We are both in love with the Sterkspruit which has beautiful scenery, good access to the water, not as much fishing pressure as the preferred Bok and Riflespruit sections and generally fewer small fish, (less than eight inches) than the other rivers were yielding.



Nothing really large, I'm afraid to say, with the largest caught by Neil (surprise, surprise) around 16 inches or almost 410 mm. The water on all rivers was generally very clear, with low - flow conditions. With a few exceptions the fish were not rising freely, so that we could enjoy some good sight fishing, but with the clarity and low flow, the fish did not have to rise too far to take a fly.

So, to get the painful part over - Neil was in superb form, catching 55 fish in total, 35 trout and a commendable 20 smallmouth Yellowfish, whilst Dick caught 24 fish, including only 1 Yellow. The best bit for me was that I at last caught my first Smallmouth Yellow in the Rhodes system, on my ninth consecutive Festival, plus a few private trips. My preferred flies were the improved Woolf Spider, that we recently tied at the Club, Elk Hair Caddis, Hi Vis midge, Shaun Dickson's CDC fly and various Klinkhammer style flies that I tie.

The general consensus was that there were vastly more Yellowfish than in previous years, although no explanation was offered as to why this might be the case. I caught mine on a dry, although I had fished a heavier nymph when targeting the Yellows and Neil caught around half of his Yellows on dry, which is always more exciting fishing in my opinion.

On a concluding note, we were well pleased with the Lower Hillbury beat, which we fished on our last day. The access is slow and painful, bouncing along a rough farm track for about 2,5 kms, but the beat is very pretty, with runs and deeper pools, where we could clearly see the fish holding a depth.

The final good news is that we met the farmer's wife, who was working with some farm workers, clearing the camp site and chopping wood in preparation for a family Easter gathering of around thirty people. The site is exceptional with running water, a Donkey for unlimited hot showers, a long drop toilet, which I didn't check and a substantial cave, which provides shelter and which has numerous San rock paintings, some of which were damaged, sadly. Neil and I immediately thought that this could be a superb site for a SCFA camping trip. Let's discuss this and see who could be interested. *(At the recent committee meeting Neil suggested that January or February would probably be the best time for this. Watch this space. Ed.)*

Trout outing to Wattled Crane. 21st to 24th March. By Stephen Brand.

Steve, Mike and John left just after 6h30 on the 21st. Made our way up; taking the Booker detour. The road must be one of the worst I've been on; it took us an hour longer to get to the lake. We arrived around 10h30, unpacked and set up our rods and kick boats. Kevin dragged himself in at 20h30 after a hard day's work. John was on the water first. (Wind was blowing NW at 24 km/hr.) Fishing was tough, with a lot of on-off bites. John got 4, (two stockies and two of 48 cm) using a Zulu and a Green Woolly Bugger. Mike got 2 of 40 cm on a Green Paparoch. Steve got 3 of 30 - 48 cm on a Black Woolly Bugger with blue flash. Kassler, wors and salad for supper with baby potatoes.

22/03/24.

Woke to flat water and we fished until about 09h30. Kevin got 1 of 40 cm on a Purple Lady and Mike got 2 of 40 cm on a Black Woolly Bugger; Steve and John blanked. The easterly wind came up and started making the day very unpleasant. After lunch, Mike went out and got 2 of 40 cm on a Green Woolly Bugger. Kevin climbed the mountain and had to paddle back because his battery was flat, sort of. After 16h45 John and Steve went out and John got one stockie as he was coming in. Steve got 5 of between 30 - 50 cm on a Speed Cop. Steve was asked to come off the water at 18h45, something about Kevin trying to cook supper. Venison curry for supper.

23/03/24

We awoke to wind and most of us went out at around 9 and came back around 12. Only two fish caught by John and Mike. The wind picked up and it was pointless going out, but it was not for the lack of trying. Kevin picked up a bug somewhere, so was man down. He blamed it on the good food. Sorry for him.

24/03/24

We awoke to a howling wind of 40 to 58 km/hr. After coffee we packed up and left, taking Kevin's short cut, which was considerably shorter than the Booker road. **Total fish 22.**

29th Annual General Meeting. Umtentweni Tennis Club. Thursday, 26th March.

Members present: 17. **Apologies:** Mark, Kevin, Mike K, Jaco, Liam, Pat.

Minutes of the Previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2023 were read by Dick and accepted.



Chairman's Report.

In his report, John thanked the committee for their input during the year: Steve for the sterling work he does as Treasurer and for organising the prize giving, Dick as Secretary, Pieter for organising venues, Neil for organising the Cape Vidal, Sterkfontein and other long-distance trips and Arthur for co-ordinating the newsletter.

He also thanked the members for the good turn-outs that we have been having at our meetings and events. He appealed to members to attend the fly-tying workshops that were held and to submit flies for the Fly of the Month competitions.

He concluded by encouraging members to take advantage of any outing that is sponsored by the club. These events are intended to benefit everyone and not only the few regular attendees.

Treasurer's Report:

Steve thanked members for their enthusiasm and for the good attendance at outings and especially at the prize giving function. He reported that club funds were up on last year's figure, despite sponsoring both the stocking of Mountain Lake and the Silver Streams trip in November. Subs paid to date and money from the Master at Arms fines had also not yet been added.

There are still a number of SCFA caps and hats available, for those members who had not yet purchased one of these.

Awards.

Most of the trophies had been presented at the prize giving, but Steve presented Stan and John with the Foul Hook Trophy. Stan received this award in 2022, while John won it last year. (The trophy was made by Stan, who did not realise that he was actually a joint recipient!!)

Election of Committee.

As happened last year, there were no new nominations for the committee, so the whole committee was re-elected as a unit.

Chairman: John New, **Treasurer:** Stephen Brand, **Secretary:** Dick Plaistowe, **Liaison:** Pieter vd Merwe, **Scribe:** Arthur Cary, **Member:** Neil Scott.

Master at Arms.

Arthur once again took up the cudgels and dished out fines, left, right and centre, to all those present. (*Those of you who missed the meeting, with or without apologies, will get walloped when you do appear!! Ed*)

Members were extremely generous and an amount of over R 1800.00 was collected. Well done chaps.

(*Defaulters note that those present, contributed over R 100.00 each! Ed*)

General.

Dick gave a very brief report on a trip that he and Neil took to the Rhodes festival. (See report above.)

Toi reported that she had been practising with a Tenkara rod and was determined to catch a fish using this method.

A brief discussion took place on the art of catching trout by tickling them under their bellies. This was a method of catching trout in the UK many years ago, and may still be practised today.

Steve reported that the grass on the banks and spillway of his dam had been cut and members were free to fish there at any time.

The meeting closed and the usual very social gathering was held around Steve's braai fire.

Bass outing to Steve's dam. Easter Monday 1 April. By Stephen Brand.

Steve and Mike K. went down around 6 am using kick boats. We went around the dam trying all the spots. Mike was fortunate enough to catch one nice bass and he lost a few. Steve lost 2 in the weed and got 1 nice one of about 1,5 kg.

Mike S. and Toi came down and tried their luck to no avail. Toi did get 2 knocks on her Tenkara rod. There were no rises in the dam and the wind got up around 8 when we came off the water.

We cooked up a couple of egg and bacon rolls and had coffee and a short chat before packing up and going Home. Regards Steve.



Fry, Fingerling and Stockie Stories.



If you don't have the time or the money to visit Xplorer in Durban, Luckys in Port Shepstone is your best port of call, for your fly-fishing requirements.

Hoosan and Smiler have a good range of fly rods, Aqua Nova fly lines, Xplorer and Okuma reels, as well as 0X to 5X tapered leaders. There is a fair range of Partridge, Kone, Gamakatsu and Mustard hooks, as well as tungsten beads and dumbbell eyes from 2,0 mm to 4,8 mm.

They are a little short on fly tying materials, other than flash and dubbing, but there are a number of packs of good-looking Rabbit Zonker in pink, olive, and brown, as well as quite a few reels of thread. As usual they have some very nice fly boxes and a range of flies that will tempt anything from a bass, to a trout and a GT, under the right conditions, of course.

If you do visit them, a word that you are from SCFA and appreciate the sponsorship that we received for the prize giving, will earn you some brownie points and you may even get a discount on your purchases.



As SCFA enters its 30th year, we will certainly have to organise some form of celebration. Members are requested to give this some thought and to come up with suggestions. Drop a line to any committee member or bring it up at our regular monthly meetings or at an outing.



Subs were due at the end of March. If Steve has not received a call from you by the end of April, you will probably have to pay your entrance fee again. Give him a call ASAP. (083 543 7005)

Last Cast.

Well, here we are at the start of the 30th year of the existence of South Coast Fly Anglers. Who would have believed that we would still be flourishing, three decades after starting up? I am sure that inaugurator, Chris van Wyk, would be justifiably proud of what he began.

You members can also be proud of having added to get SCFA where it is today. Keep it up and long may the great spirit that exists in the club, continue.

I trust and believe that it is going to be a good year. Good, not only from the angling aspect, but more so from the camaraderie that members add to meetings and outings.

Cheers Arthur

