



Interim Fishery Report: June to December 2021

Introduction

We have a fair number of members who have only joined in the last year or so and therefore we deemed it necessary to update everybody on the fishing over the last 7 months and the outlook for 2022. Also attached is the Stocking/Catch record for this period.

Dams & Weeding

Heavy rains fell in early 2021 and the dams remained at a good level until Spring and then dropped substantially due to the late onset of summer rains. However, from late November through to the end of the year we recorded heavy falls (306 ml in December) and a total of 1062ml for the year. Our dams are full to the brim and overflowing strongly so the outlook for autumn and winter is promising. This especially as water temperatures are a couple of degrees below what one usually expects in mid-summer when trout often stress and even lose weight.

John Carter supervised two weeding parties, the first in the coldest week of July and the second in early summer. This weeding programme will be repeated this year with the first one in April/May when the banks have dried out a bit.

Stocking

The attached sheet shows that we have stocked 1143 rainbows and 290 browns during this period. We should add that Lunsklip also donated an unknown number of very small rainbows of 20cm or smaller and some of these smaller fish are showing up on your daily catch records. With regard to the brown trout stocking this species was in very short supply as a large consignment of eyed ova ordered by Lunsklip from Denmark perished at Istanbul airport when the government imposed the harsh lockdown in March 2020 and most flights to ORT were cancelled at short notice. We therefore had to purchase 100 x 22cm browns in June 2021 which were placed in Dam 1 and survivors of this stocking should be of good size by winter.

The last stocking of 2021 was on 13 December and stocking will only recommence on 10 March when water temperatures start to drop. This will be followed by another four stockings up to the end of April by which time all our dams will be well populated.

From May onwards we have placed orders for stocking at least at monthly intervals up to mid-December and these will include 3 batches of brown trout.

Recording your Catches.

Our expenditure on trout in 2021 at R150 000 and is set to increase for 2022 and is one of our major costs at Middelpunt. It therefore imperative that we have accurate catch records if we

are to manage the fishery correctly. This should preferably be done after each fishing session and not on the last day of your visit. It is imperative that both the dam number and the length is recorded, but the weight is not mandatory. However, if you can weigh your ungutted fish accurately, especially the older and larger fish this information is very valuable. Best to weigh ungutted fish on the scale provide at the clubhouse but if you have a scale of your own check, it against the weights provided at the clubhouse. Please do not weigh gutted fish for record purposes.



Grass Carp

Most of the very large grass carp you see, especially during the hotter periods, and particularly in Dam 7 are 30 years of age or older. Some of these have died of old age and others have migrated downstream. For this reason, we have been purchasing replacement stock over the last 7 years and stocking them almost annually as they are the most effective way of controlling excessive aquatic weed growth. 482 have been released since 2015 with more substantial stockings taking place since 2017. These fish grow out relatively slowly in cooler water and although they are starting to make an impact, they probably need another 2 to 3 years before they reach 4kg or more and start becoming really effective. In the meantime, we have to rely on the very laborious mechanical weeding.

We also have another 150 youngsters in the cages which will be stocked in 2023 to compensate for any future losses.

Fishing Outlook.

From now until at least early April expect fishing to be slow, especially January/February. However, the farm is looking glorious, there is an abundance of wildflowers, the birding is great, and the lower part of Dam 7 is ideal for swimming. It is also pleasing to see the number of mountain bikes brought to the farm. But if you feel like throwing a fly it will certainly help if you can try and reduce the population of bass in Dams 5 and 6. It is quite fun using a popper and if you are lucky enough to catch a big one, they are excellent eating.

In the seven-month period up to December the two largest trout recorded were browns, a 2,2kg from Dam 1 and a 2kg from Dam 3 but judging by the number of 50cm and 50cm + fish in the book, but not weighed these might not have been the heaviest fish kept.

Fishing can be often challenging at Middelpunt, and you often have to work for your fish, but as noted above we are very optimistic about the autumn/winter fishing conditions. Hope to see you there?

Rainbow Catch Schedule for 2021/22Season

Dam No.	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	Total killed 21/22	Total return 21/22	Kill 20/21	Return 20/21
1	0	0	2	3	0	0	2						7	104	1	36
2	5	1	6	0	0	1	3						16	76	22	34
3	11	2	16	3	4	4	11						51	136	42	141
4	6	2	1	2	4	3	1						19	26	18	25
5	10	4	2	11	9	1	3						40	100	39	84
6	5	3	0	2	5	2	4						21	41	12	6
7	7	6	15	12	3	9	5						57	84	56	119
Total 20/21	44	18	42	33	25	20	29						211	567		
Total 19/20	5	10	36	20	41	29	49								190	445

Brown Trout

	Stocking	Killed	Return
Dam 1	185	1	30
Dam 2	14	1	8
Dam 3	57		10
Dam 5	20	4	7
Dam 6	14		2
Totals	290	6	57

Rainbow Mean Length, Mass & CF to date

Length	CF	Mass
42.4	119	911

Angler Visits

	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	Total
Anglers 21/22	32	11	30	23	34	24	33						187
Anglers 20/21	11	12	21	39	27	27	32						169