



TFFC Newsletter October 2020

New Website

We are thrilled to let you know that the new TFFC website has gone live.

Please navigate to the site to have a good look.

www.tffc.co.za

Thanks to Brett Berry & Tim Shepherd (both TFFC members) from TimBerr Website Designs and Solutions for assisting in the new development and hosting of the site.

HOME

ABOUT TFFC

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GALLERY

CONTACT US

The Attempt to List Trout as Invasive

The TFFC has always been a strong supporter of FOSAF and virtually everyone in the club and the shareholder group subscribes to the nominal annual sub of only R150,00. One of the main reasons for this is that for at least the last 12 years FOSAF has been embroiled in a battle with government's attempt to list trout as "invasive".

Trout probably were invasive over 100 years ago when the climate was significantly cooler, and the rivers were still in a pristine state, but since then the areas where trout can still survive have become substantially smaller. And the fact that stillwaters must be restocked annually and any downstream movement is soon halted by high temperatures, pollution and habitat degradation means that trout's potential for invasion is virtually nil these days. What happens in practice is that landowners when denied a permit simply stock bass, bluegills or carp which are highly invasive; cheap, and it only needs one stocking.

In 2018 FOSAF realised that any further negotiation with the DEA (Dept of Environmental Affairs), now DEFF (Environmental Affairs, Forestry & Fisheries) had become fruitless and they decided to take the Minister to court based primarily on lack of consultation. It therefore came as a shock when, despite the pending court case, the department published new NEMBA lists and regulations on Sept 18 which included trout classified as invasive with a date of implementation of October 20. If the department is allowed to enforce this regulation inspections of all sites with risk assessments will have to be carried out, a range of additional permits completed while the provisions required for importing ova and rearing and marketing an invasive species becomes a nightmare for the dwindling number of trout producers. Expect high costs, delays and continual frustration.

FOSAF therefore asked the Minister to retract this listing by 20/10/2020 failing which they would approach the courts. This the Minister has done when threatened with an urgent interdict and the department has postponed the date of implementation for the enforcement until 01/03/2021 which at least gives FOSAF and its allies time to lobby support and inform the Minister that she has been badly advised by her officials.

Barbara Creecy, although new in the job has been badly advised by her officials and is likely to look favourably on the Phakisa agreement of 2014. This agreement stated that where trout already occur, no permit will be required. Outside this zone a full risk

assessment plus a permit will be required. Unfortunately, the department later reneged on this agreement and the result is the crisis which now faces the whole trout value chain worth billions of rands and many thousands of jobs.

The Mining Problem

You will have noticed that the mine near the Elandsfontein/Groenvlei crossroads is still in operation. This despite countless major contraventions of both the water and mining laws and some R180 000,00 spent to date by the consortium opposing mining in the area.

Unfortunately, there is a complete lack of will by both the Department of Mining (DMRE) and the Dept. of Water Affairs (DWS) to enforce the law. However, the consortium has not given up on this case and will continue to try and halt the operation and more importantly see that a proper rehabilitation is carried out.

We are also watching our neighbour on the western side who has given notice that he intends resuming his diamond prospecting. As the site is close to the white winged flufftail breeding area BirdLife SA has managed to involve the help of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEFF). The DEFF deputy director responsible has shown a keen interest in the case and has promised to set up meetings with the Mining Dept to try and resolve the problem.

On the positive side, the consortium has been successful in opposing at least 8 applications to prospect in the Dullstroom area over the last 5 years.

Farm Bookings

In line with national regulations concerning Covid, as a principle only 50% utilisation of facilities are permitted.

With this in mind, Ivana is only accepting bookings for 50% of the farmhouse however DTF have kindly offered the Shareholders accommodation in order to compensate for this.

Bookings for the Lapa and Cottage are as per usual.

As a gesture of thanks for the loyalty from members during the year DTF are not charging for the use of the cottage for the remainder of 2020.



AGM

Due to Covid, the AGM will be postponed until the new year.

A date will be announced once confirmed.

Club Champs 2020

Due to Covid, the Club Champs as we know it for 2020 will be cancelled, however we

would like to make up for the competition by having a new format mini-competition early next year.

Details of the format and date will be announced soon.

RIP Bryan Botha

We send out heartfelt condolences to the Botha family for the loss of Bryan in August this year.

To Alida and the family, we remember Bryan and his passion for the farm and fishing.

The Fishing

Once again, the summer rains turned up late and when they arrived, they still did not fill all the dams. It was only after Christmas in January when heavy downpours, sometimes measuring more than 90 ml in a day, transformed our waters. In late January the spillways of all our dams were overflowing strongly and at the time of writing they are still spilling over.

Water temperatures, especially during December were dangerously high and the odd floater was seen probably as a result of catch and release. Despite these problems the catch returns have been acceptable and at least we can look forward to a good autumn and winter with full dams.

Stocking

Although Middelpunt was closed for several months due to lockdown we had several stockings during this period to allow these fish to grow out and since then stocking has resumed on a regular basis. Up until 3 years ago we were unable to obtain brown trout, but since then we have been able to source this species for placing in all dams except 4 and 7. Originally we limited the stocking of browns to 1, 2 and 3, but more recently we have placed smaller numbers into 5 and 6 as large brown trout are more piscivorous than

rainbows and it is hoped that they will help control the bass.

Where possible we would prefer you to release the browns you catch (in Dam 1 it is mandatory) as they are more expensive than rainbows and they are longer living. They also have the reputation of being much wilier than rainbows and by now there should be some really large individuals in Dams 1 and 3. At this stage browns should represent half the population of Dam 1.



Catch & Release

This subject has been aired many times in former newsletters, but it is important as always now that summer and higher temperatures approach. Millstream which is not far from us estimate that 60% of fish released on their property are lost and looking at our figures we may not be far behind. This is why there are strict catch limits per dam, and we keep reminding you to use barbless/debarbed hooks.

Try and get them to the net quickly, ensure they are allowed to recover, keep them in the water and then released safely away from the weedbeds into cool water. Our predator population of cormorants and spotted neck otters has increased significantly, and any badly stressed fish has little chance of survival.

Dam 1 is a TROPHY DAM,
BUT from now on you are allowed One fish per day

Dam 1

Several years ago it was decided to designate this water a 'trophy dam' and limit the fishing to catch and release only. The result has been that this dam, which is the second largest has been underutilised, the pressure has been increased on Dam 3 which also has the ability to produce trophy trout. In addition, without some fish being killed and correctly weighed and CF calculated there is no way of measuring performance.

A compromise of one fish killed per person per day will therefore be allowed from now on. As in the case of all dams, once the kill limit is reached fishing on the dam must cease for the day.



Grass Carp & Bass

On rare occasions grass carp are caught. As the major part of our weed control programme these fish must be released.

All bass on the other hand must be killed. In fact, as we move into summer and the water warms up you can have a lot of fun targeting bass in Dams 5 and 6 with poppers etc and you will be doing our dam management a favour. And the larger bass are very good to eat.

Birds & Flowers

Middelpunt for many is much more than just fishing,. To judge by the number of mountain bikes brought to the farm, as well as members enjoying the walks on the property, or just chilling on the stoeps or at the braai. From the time the spring rains commence through to

about April, this area is well known as a hotspot for birding and wildflowers.

Sean Naude has updated the bird list on our website [here](#) and although it is pretty comprehensive he still expects to add species. You can contact him at sean.naude@gmail.com and what he will require if you wish to add a bird to the list is for the sighting to be confirmed by an expert birder or by the provision of a good photo.

The wildflower list is also on the website [here](#) and comprises some 50 species, but we believe that many more can be added. What we need is a good photo of the complete plant with the flower head which can be sent to Peter at mwardern@mweb.co.za. The local nature conservation officer, Frans Krige, who is an orchid expert will help us with the identification.

PLEASE NOTE: Johannes does not work on weekends at all, and 99% of the time leaves the farm to go to his family.

If any member or shareholder needs to get into the store room etc, arrangements need to be made prior to Friday afternoon before Johannes leaves for the weekend.

[Book to go to Middelpunt](#)

OR

Call Ivana on 082 521 5947



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