

# AMATOLA FLY FISHING CLUB

Incorporating the Frontier Acclimatisation Society and the Stutterheim Trout Angling Club



## NEWSLETTER – SPRING / OCTOBER 2016

Spring is a busy time for the club and sometimes I feel like a male weaverbird at nest-building time, fussing and faffing and squawking and scolding until it's all done, which it is now. Right in the beginning (the first weekend in September) there was our fundraising social competition, where Ricky Goldsmith's 2.2kg rainbow from Maden netted him the grand prize of a trip to Tourette Fishing's Makhangoa Community Camp in Lesotho. Club stalwarts, Brendan Croney and Glenn Raath showed that local knowledge is king; their fish placed them 2nd and 3rd respectively. Harvey Carr, Brenton Freeman, and Sean Swart were also on the board. We had thirty entrants and a whole crowd of extras. Rob Scott won the bet in the predict-which-fly-catches-the-biggest-fish-and-state-the-weight competition (and guess what, it was an olive Woolly Bugger). We raised R15400, which makes a dent in our stocking costs. It was a fun weekend, with the usual mix of crazy weather and similar characters; everyone caught fish, some caught a whole bunch of fish and the catering was spot-on. (Someone left a headlamp in the clubhouse after the weekend, send me a mail if you're missing one.)

After that there was the AGM, the minutes went out already (and are always on our website), and then a few weeks later, our annual stocking on the weekend of the 21st October. Maden got 3210 mixed-sex rainbows and Gubu, 13216. The fish averaged 5.6g in weight and were around 8cm long, but typical of mixed-sex batches, the size was quite variable. Some were double the length of others and over 10cm. I would like to thank everyone who came to help in one way or another with the stockings: Justin Thackeray, Brenton Freeman and laaitie, Sean Swart, Victor and Noah Krull, Gordon Smith and Codie, Craig Rance and family, Scott Blair and family, Belinda and Kayla Enslin, Devin and Mandy Isemonger, Marco Olivieri and Jo, Andrew Pautz, Martin and Ryan von Holdt, Justin Du Preez, Eric and Loriana Higget, Francois Sparks, and a special thank you to Ryan Smith and Karl Krull who went to extra trouble and expense to bring their boats so that we could distribute the fingerlings far and wide. Karl got the youngsters involved in the stocking and took some of them to catch their first trout afterwards, which investment in the youth is critical, especially for the kids themselves. Also a big thank you to Grant Wylie and his team who do a very slick job each year and provide of their equipment, services, and time at no charge as well as a very attractive per-fish price.

Deciding on how many fish to stock is an inexact science. I've been working on developing a model that uses measured growth-rate/productivity to help determine the numbers, and

this year when I plugged the figures for Gubu into the model it told me 19364 fish was the number to stock. That took me by surprise at first, until I looked closer and realised that it was because the stocking we did four years ago was 21000 fish, and the remainder of those fish will be nearing the end of their lives over the next year. Gubu Dam is currently only at 94% capacity though, so I took that into account, assuming a linear (negative) relationship, which it isn't I know. A lower dam level may even be a positive factor as deeper areas become exposed to light, who knows? Then I dropped the number still further to accommodate the hopefully 3000-5000 brown trout we hope to get next year if all goes according to plan. So that's how the number was determined. What I didn't factor in was the loss of shallow-water cover due to the lower dam level, and so even though the stocking was extremely broad and the most fragmented yet, some of the fingerlings regrouped in small schools in open water and got visibly hammered by the resident fish. But Nature is Nature and time will tell. The day after the stocking I saw a monster of a fish chasing down a fingerling, the scale of the chase had me thinking I was looking at an otter. It just shows that they (a few really big fish) are amongst us.

On an irksome note, some poachers bumped into us while we were stocking at The Drift. Seemingly well-to-do folks who had not bothered to buy day tickets but were happily partaking of the fishing. I gave them a talking to, but remember, when you meet folks on our waters that you don't recognise, ask them (nicely at first) if they're members or day-ticket holders. Apparently this fellow owns a tyre business in Stutt (but it's not Donny Kemp). I suggest you just walk in there and help yourself to some tyres free of charge the way he was doing with the fishing.

What has been good to see is that the condition of the fish in Gubu has improved markedly since the summer months. This is an indication that their being skinny earlier in the year was more a case of the hotter and longer than average summer conditions keeping the trout out of the prime feeding areas rather than a case of overstocking. That said it will be interesting to see how this year's more conservative stocking plays out in the longer term, though I suspect that the happy medium, assuming constant 100% dam levels, and stocking the way we have been, will be around 15000 fish per year.

The FOSAF Eastern Cape Chapter's AGM is at Gubu Dam on the weekend of the 5th November, for those interested in hearing what's all happening behind the scenes, proceedings will start early-ish on Saturday morning.

Our club relies a great deal on the generosity of others, please look at the list I've compiled at the end of this newsletter, which is the "thank you" list for 2016, and remember these names and brands, and I've dropped in a few pics too.

Here's to hoping for no summer doldrums and maybe even a trout-y Xmas,

Edward Truter

## Sponsors, Helpers, & General acknowledgements 2016

Alex Mcleod @ Omnispool - prize sponsor

Amathole Forestry Company / Rance Timbers - general support and assistance

Craig and John W. Rance, Craig Warren, Francois Sparks, Ian Taylor - general support and assistance

ANCA Foods - catering sponsor

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Colin Levy - records clerk and general assistance

David Marais - constitution and legal assistance

Devin and Mandy Isemonger - catering and general assistance

The Dugmore's @ Forestway Outdoor and Outreach Centre - general assistance

Hylton Lewis - fishery management and general assistance

Greg Thompson @ Distell (Hunter's Extreme) - starter pack sponsor

Glenn Raath @ Debonairs Oxford Street - prize sponsor and general assistance

Johan Van Der Merwe - assistance with the history of the FAS

Justin Thackeray - website and general assistance

Karl Krull @ Krull Meats - catering sponsor and general assistance

Malcolm Klein & team @ CB4 Retail - printing, signage and stationery

Marco Olivieri - catering sponsor and general assistance

Pedro de Abreu @ Criterion Supermarket - catering sponsor and general assistance

Reg Morgan and Andre Naude @ Queenstown Fly Fishing Club - prize sponsor

Rob Wilson @ Powercap/Minx Marketing - prize sponsor

Grant Pledger @ Rapala VMC - prize sponsor

Ricky Goldsmith and Jacqui Mauer @ Price Waterhouse and Coopers - prize sponsor

Robin, Ronald, and Mark (in the house on the hill) - general assistance

Gordon Smith @ RV Smith - general assistance

Ryan Smith @ First Class Power - starter pack sponsor and general assistance

Grant Wylie @ Sandile's Rest - prize sponsor, hatchery owner/operator and general assistance

Arno Laubscher @ Scientific Fly - prize sponsor

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Sheena Carnie @ Africa's Original Fly Fishing magazine - prize sponsor

Dean Stoltz @ Target Line - prize sponsor and general assistance

Tourette Fishing - prize sponsor

John Geils and Dayle Mack @ Xplorer - prize sponsor and general assistance

Kayla Enslin, Tanya Rhind, Petrini Govender, and Greg White - competition catering



Some of this years competition entrants and prizewinners.  
(Pic: Mrs. Carr)

Stocking Maden. Ryan Smith and Brenton Freeman and co. off in the distance spreading the fingerlings, the rest of us are watching water flowing  
(Pic: Wang Xinmin)



Mandy Isemonger and Kayla Enslin each with their first trout. Karl 'Hot-Dog' Krull was the guide and photographer.