

# AMATOLA FLY FISHING CLUB

Incorporating the Frontier Acclimatisation Society and the Stutterheim Trout Angling Club



## NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN / MAY 2021

Hello All,

It has felt to me that winter is coming early, but that's not a bad thing I suppose, especially where trout are concerned. Anyways, here's some news and updates ....

Most importantly we need to start with some big thank yous:

>> Mark and Kurt Andersen from the Glenara (Hogsback) hatchery: for various elements related to our supply of rainbow fingerlings, getting them stocked, and also providing their vehicle, fish transport tank and other precious resources, especially when we recently needed to get our brown trout fingerlings to Mnyameni Dam.

>> Recent stocking teams: Scott Blair, Ryan Phelan, Patrick Fletcher, Rob Scott, Devin Isemonger, Sean Swart, Herman Van Lill, and Thomas Warren. Ryan Phelan also made his boat available for the rainbow (December 2020) and brown trout (January 2021) Gubu Dam stockings. And, Scott Blair and Sean Swart took care of things pretty much all on their own for the respective rainbow and brown stockings at Maden Dam. Many of these folk also made some of their own staff available on the stocking days.

>> AFFC planning committee: the current committee, who have been having regular meetings in EL, mostly to take care of the planning for our annual fundraising event, but who have also been putting their heads together for important financial and club policy decisions: Richard, Cindy, and Heath Field, Devin and Mandy Isemonger, Rob Scott, Scott Blair, and Belinda Enslin.

>> Wouter and Natasja de Lange who have helped us out financially in the last while, particularly to help with stocking costs and maintenance and upgrades to the Gubu clubhouse. Wouter and Natasja are quite new to the club and our waters (though not new to fishing), when you meet them on the water, please share your trout-catching wisdom with them.

>> Belinda Enslin and Penny Niemand, owners of The Property Shoppe, also made a very generous and helpful cash donation towards the new braai area. These donations have been especially important this year as we were not able to have our fundraiser in 2020.

>> For the continuing maintenance, upgrades and hard labour at the Gubu Clubhouse: Glenn Raath, Marcus Hoffman, Anton Swanepoel, Barry Wade and always tirelessly driving the whole show in the background and foreground, our treasurer, Scott Blair.

>> For donating a significant number of extra brown trout fingerlings to our fishing cause (and stocked into Mnyameni Dam), Devin Isemonger.

>> For donating materials to the new braai area: Wouter de Lange, Brendon Croney (personally donating the cement) and arranging for Stutt Group's Craig Braun to donate the sand, stone, and clinker bricks, and Darren Hoft (for 5 cubes of stone).

>> My sincere apologies if I've forgotten anyone from the list above, I'm sure I'll hear about it though and make it right next time.

Coming back to the earlier mention of our annual fund raising event. If all goes well and COVID doesn't put another leak in our waders, we should have an event over the first weekend in September. And as I said above, there's a proper team of planners on it this year, so the result is going to be something other than the backyard planks and nails that I've previously knocked together.

The western parts of the Eastern Cape and eastern and central parts of the southern Cape are still in the horrid grips of a crippling drought. Thankfully, most of our trout waters are in a much better state. Gubu rose from 60% in October to 89% at the moment, and Mnyameni and Maden Dams are full.

The added good news is that at Gubu, the rising level, meaning an input of nutrients through the inflowing water and the flooding vegetation and cow manure along the banks, has coincided with our rainbow and brown trout fingerling stockings. In more detail, Gubu was stocked with 17317 mixed sex, rainbow fingerlings of around 2g / approx. 5 - 6.5 cm on the 2nd December 2020. These fish were a bit smaller than we like to stock with but due to the onset of high summer temperatures they had to be got out of the Glenara (Hogsback) hatchery before the risk of losing them got too great. To compensate for the smaller size, and therefore the greater losses to predation, we upped the number from around the 13500 7-8cm rainbow fingerlings we have been stocking with the last few years and which number has seemed to work out well as we try to optimise our Gubu fishery. The Glenara fish were sourced from wild-caught brood stock in the Hogsback dams, which included a mix of Molapong Aquaculture/Sandile's-origin fish and Martin Davie's fish. Reports are that the stockies are doing well. On the 19th of January 2021, Gubu was stocked with 3600 browns of approx. 6g / 7-12cm, which came from Danish ova just as our two earlier stockings of browns. Just a reminder, that our 'first' re-stocking of browns was in January 2017, which means those fish should all be solidly big by now, and even the browns that went into Gubu in July 2018, are already proper-sized fish.

From the same batches of rainbows and browns described above, Maden got 3500 rainbows and 300 browns. Mnyameni got 603 browns. Remember that Mnyameni has a self-sustaining, wild-breeding population of rainbows. On the subject of Mnyameni, Devin Isemonger reports that on the 16th May, they (2 anglers), caught 25 rainbows and 7 browns (2 of which were over 40cm). See at the end of the newsletter some of the browns that Devin has caught in Mnyameni of late.

Re. the January-stocked browns, they appear to be doing well and I've had reports of fish from Gubu and Mnyameni that they're currently in the 20-25cm class.

Our new financial year starts 1st June, and at the same time we are instituting a number of club policy changes, the most notable being:

We are implementing something similar to the old STAC system whereby new members required to be nominated by current members. The new system requires that someone wishing to be a member must first apply by filling out an application form (downloadable from our website). The form requires completion of a number of somewhat personal questions and that a reference is supplied, which reference will be contacted by myself or another committee member as part of a vetting process.

Secondly, also going back to another erstwhile STAC rule, from now on the Gubu clubhouse and clubhouse grounds (for camping) will only be open to paid-up members and the guests accompanying them. In other words, any non-member/s must always be accompanied by a member, which member will be held accountable for their guests. That said, interest groups (e.g. other fishing clubs, school groups, etc.) or social event groups who would like to use the clubhouse can apply for consideration there-for by sending an e-mail to the club address [stac.trout@gmail.com](mailto:stac.trout@gmail.com). Also, it

seems to have been forgotten, all non-member (included non paid-up members whose membership has lapsed past the 31st August grace period), regardless of their relationship to the hosting member must pay accommodation and fishing fees.

All of the above is in the updated Club Rules as appears on our website and the 2021-2022 membership certificates.

Included with this e-mail is a subs renewal form. We last raised membership fees five (5) years ago and we've had to raise the fees again. However, instead of a blanket increase across the various categories we took a more careful look at the fees relative to value offered and made adjustments that way, as some categories were seriously undervalued. So some categories have increased significantly, while the main category, being a local member between the ages of learner and pensioner, has only gone from R960 to R990. Interestingly, I calculated that increases relative to inflation over the last five years are still below inflation across the same period.

We also have to raise the Gubu Clubhouse electricity token fee. Our treasurer, Scott Blair has been working on the numbers, and he reports that the current cost to the Club per unit from Eskom is R3.53 while we are only charging clubhouse users R2.72. This is not including Eskom's "fixed" (line/supply) charge, which averages about R1140 per month. The Club will still absorb the largest part of the fixed fee, but in order to lesson the overall blow we will have to increase the token fee to R80.

And one more thing on the admin side, remember, one now requires a key for the Gubu clubhouse grounds, obtained from the club bailiff's house behind the clubhouse, upon payment of a R200 refundable deposit and signing your name in the register.

And that's that, wishing everyone a great outdoors-y winter.

Ed Truter



*BEAUTIFUL MNYAMENI DAM BROWNS, PICS COURTESY OF DEVIN ISEMONGER.*