

**FOSAF
KWA ZULU NATAL CHAPTER
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2018-2019**

It gives me pleasure to present the Chairman's Report for 2018 -2019 for the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Chapter of FOSAF.

The KZN Chapter committee met 3 times during the year and the committee remains active and vigilant to address issues of concern and promoting our sport.

The work is continuing on opposing the current problematic draft NEMBA Alien and Invasive Species Regulations and Lists. Donors are updated on progress being made and problems. An update was sent out recently giving information on the current status. FOSAF's case against the Minister is ongoing and we are hopeful that the matter will be argued in court later this year.

Although we have representation from the KZN clubs on our Committee, we have met once during the year to keep them informed and a further meeting is due to take place shortly. Fruitful discussions take place at these meetings both to communicate with club representatives but also to get their views and inputs on matters that need to be addressed.

Our hardy annual of trying to get more people of colour on board remains a real concern and we have not made any progress in this regard.

FOSAF remains a supporter of the Umgano project. The present negative national economic situation and the depressed price of timber continue to exert a negative impact on Umgano. This has resulted in lower returns from the plantation of the initiative and the rigid economy measures previously reported remain in force and are starting to show some positive results. While the initiative continues, it is on a maintenance basis. Just to compound problems, the newly appointed CEO, Zweli Baleni, son of the Nkosi Baleni, resigned. However, the Farm Manager, Mayford Jaca, who is well qualified, continues to exercise effective overall control of the initiative.

While the MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, has apparently accepted the recommendations of Nkosi Baleni's Mabandla Community for the higher lying portions of the project area, to be proclaimed, as a community nature reserve, the proclamation process has not yet been completed. However, when completed, the new protected area will have the

same status in law as any of the other provincial nature reserves. The area was proposed in order to protect the biodiversity in this portion of the internationally recognised Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Biodiversity Hotspot. Included is Umgano State Forest, first proclaimed in 1904. According to Adie, this is one of the, if not the best-conserved forests in the province. Fly anglers will be glad to hear that the new reserve will protect part of the headwaters of the Gungununu & Ngwangwane Rivers. It will also contribute (as a primary tourist attraction) to the community-based ecotourism plans of the Traditional Council. Accordingly, proclamation of this new reserve is likely to attract the attention of both nature conservationists as well as Eco tourists (including fly anglers).

Other good news is that the Traditional Council has formally appointed Zaninkosi Mtolo as the Field Ranger Supervisor. The initiative funded the training of Zaninkosi at the SA Wildlife College over two years, where he obtained both a Certificate and an Advanced Certificate in Nature Conservation. He is the first Mabandla Community Member to obtain such a qualification, and the first qualified person to be appointed to implement scientifically based biodiversity management of the area. This probably sets a new national record for the appointment of a local community member to not only attain such a qualification, but also to be appointed to manage such a community-based protected area, within the jurisdiction of his own community.

The endangered Maloti Minnow is a small minnow that has long been thought to be mainly present in that part of the Drakensberg Alpine Belt that lies in Lesotho. The type locality (where it was reputedly first collected) was given as the Mkhomozana River, in the Sani Pass in Kwa-Zulu Natal. This record is however, regarded as incorrect by some experts since the term "Sani Pass" is used loosely and local people tend to include Sani Top at least as far as the Sani River. The minnow, which has only been reliably confirmed as occurring in certain headwaters of the west-flowing Orange River, is known to exist there. Many searches have been made in the headwaters of KZN streams east-flowing rivers, and it had not been found in KZN, until late last year when staff members of EKZN Wildlife ("EKZNW") reported in a scientific paper, that they had rediscovered this minnow in the headwaters of a tributary of the Mzimkhulu River, in eastern KZN. This was a complete surprise, but it is a matter that has relevance for those of us who enjoy trout fishing. Purists have touted trout as an invasive predatory fish that threatens indigenous species such as the Maloti minnow.

Fresh information on the genetics of the fish that were found is not readily available and so there is little new to report on this discovery. However, the KZN Committee feels that it is of such significance that further searches should be made. Jake Alletson has developed a plan for this and is presently waiting for river levels to drop as winter approaches. He will then do a survey in the general area of the discovery and, if the fish are again located, will then expand the search area to look for new populations. In doing so he will investigate rivers that probably have never yet had any surveys done on them.

Good work continues to be done on clearing of riverbanks on the Umgeni and Firth Rivers by Andrew Fowler, current Chairman of the Natal Fly Fishers Club (NFFC) and his team. These rivers are indeed being developed into a prime fly-fishing area. The Natal Flyfishers club also this year negotiated with the amaHlube Community near Giants Castle for access to the Bushmans River for fly anglers. Suitable arrangements were set up for security and control of the waters. This is indeed a major breakthrough on prime fly fishing waters and it is open to the public thereby having the potential to bring much needed income for this community.

We continue to promote both fly-fishing and fly dressing at schools. It is however problematic as at some schools the teachers are very reluctant to introduce a further interest group, mainly because of learners being overloaded. Despite this interest remains high among scholars at some schools.

As reported previously we made many attempts over the last few years to restore the Freshwater Fishing Liaison Committee Meetings at Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife (EKZNW) so as to improve communication around freshwater fishing matters of interest and concern. With the current organisational resource, capacity and governance issues at Ezemvelo, this has not been pursued further at this stage. We are watching developments and as soon as we consider it appropriate, we will again make an attempt.

Many attempts have been made to gain access for fly fishing at the Spring Grove Dam in Rosetta but there is no further progress. As reported last year, until the land surrounding this dam is expropriated to allow access for the public this will not be possible. It is not seen as a priority by the authorities and is likely to take many years.

Two very successful trout festivals were organised; one in the Kamberg and another in the Boston area and these attracted anglers from all over the country.

The Natal Fly Dressers Society and the Durban Fly Tyers are two very active clubs promoting fly dressing. Monthly meetings continue to be held where fly dressers are given input from the more experienced fly dressers. Monthly social get togethers are also organised by the Natal Fly Fishers Club for fly fishers in Pietermaritzburg and also by group of fly fishers in the Durban area to promote fly-fishing and develop fly fishing camaraderie. This has been useful as it attracted quite a number of younger fly fishers.

FLYFISHING magazine has for many years been supportive of FOSAF for which we are indeed very grateful. The publishers announced recently that they would be closing down the publishing of the magazine. Fortunately three of our local Flyfishers namely Andrew Mather, Ian Cox and Andrew Savides have taken it over and continue to publish an electronic copy of the magazine. Like before they continue to be supportive of FOSAF and I would like to thank them sincerely for their efforts in this regard. They have indeed maintained the very high standard previously set by the publishers.

FOSAF EXCO decided previously that every year the FOSAF National AGM should be held in a different region. The 2018 AGM and Exco meetings were held in Pietermaritzburg. This decision by Exco was taken so that the different regions could also meaningfully participate in discussions at the AGM. Regrettably, we had an extremely poor turnout of members at the AGM.

My thanks to those who have attended the Committee meetings and made a significant contribution to the activities of the KZN Chapter. Also to Maxi Holder for looking after the secretarial work so well and Kevin Culverwell who has for many years done our work as Treasurer.

My best wishes to the incoming committee for the next year.

Jim Read
Chairman