

Anchor Worm – Part 2

Dear TFFC Members,

A couple of weeks ago we advised you of the problem of this parasite which has had a detrimental effect on our trout during the late summer /early autumn period but has receded with the advent of lower winter temperatures. We also stated that we would be taking steps to counter the problem and needed some time for research and planning.

We are now in a position to advise you that the plan will be based primarily on draining each dam starting from the top, treating the remaining water and any other water in the catchment above, and then proceeding to the next dam below. As there is still an immense amount of water in the wetland above Dam 3 we will have to limit the draining to the eastern catchment starting with Dam 1 followed by Dam 2 with the goal of completing this by Christmas. We will then review the progress and plan for 2011 but it is unlikely that we will complete the programme for all dams before the end of 2012. At this stage it appears that the very large grass carp population we use at Middelpunt is acting as a host (they can probably tolerate the parasite well compared with trout) and are a major source of the parasite.

Draining of Dam 1 will commence late July/early August and completed by the beginning of October. We would therefore like to raise the following points:

1. Stocking of Dam 1 will now cease and the limit of 2 fish killed for this dam will be temporarily lifted. You may therefore take your daily limit from this dam alone if you so wish as there is no point in returning fish in 1. We wish to stress that affected fish are safe to eat but you should see very few of these until next summer.
2. The planned stockings for November and December have been brought forward to June and July and therefore following the heavy stocking of April/May we have doubled up on stocking over winter. This is to provide better sport over the cooler months and limit the number of trout which will be exposed to the parasite when it becomes active in summer.

Although it is disappointing to have to lose some of our precious water and reduce (or maybe even eliminate) grass carp there are a couple of positives to the programme:

- Most dams benefit significantly from draining if they are left to dry out for some time.
- A reduction in grass carp should result in improved water clarity.
- It will give us the opportunity to construct more jetties that have proved so successful in Dam 3.
- And we will have the opportunity to rid Dams 5, 6 & 7 of bass.

We will keep you posted as the programme proceeds but please do not hesitate to contact me at email mwardern@mweb.co.za with feedback or you if need further information.

Regards,
Peter