

TFFC (Middelpunt) Fishery Report for the 2020/2021 Season

Summary

Although the season, which started in June 2020, kicked off with dams at a reasonable level these dropped appreciably until abnormally heavy rain fell in late January/early February 2021. Our membership numbers also dropped until 2021 and we are now happy to report that since earlier this year we are fully subscribed at over 120 members. To cater for this, we have increased our stockings, and this is bearing satisfactory results, but the declining recapture rates remain a problem. There is no doubt that predation due to both white breasted cormorants and spotted neck otters has had a significant impact on the fish population in the last 6 years.

2288 rainbows and browns were stocked during the season with 366 killed and 982 released.

For the new season, we believe that we will be able to obtain adequate numbers of rainbows but there are no browns available in the 500g - 1kg class as fish farmers are holding back stocks for breeding purposes. Older post-bred browns are available, but these old fish do not adapt well to waters where no supplementary feeding is practiced.

This report also includes a summary of the grass carp stocked to date (section 8) in order to control the excessive weed growth in the dams except Dam 7.

1. Rainbows stocked vs. captured: 1994 - 2021

Season	No. stocked	No. killed	No. C&R*	% killed	% killed+C&R.
1994/5	3206	1923	454	60,0	74,1
1995/6	2684	1730	373	64,5	78,3
1996/7	2523	1864	518	74,1	94,4
1997/8	2599	1784	454	64,3	93,8
1998/9	2518	1188	708	47,2	75,3
1999/00	3352	1394	715	41,6	62,9
2000/01	3035	1778	1360	58,6	103,4
2001/02	2746	1714	1477	62,4	116,2
2002/3	2455	1454	850	59,2	93,8
2003/4	2349	888	576	37,8	62,3
2004/5	2400	1236	1063	51,5	95,8
2005/6	2480	1019	1142	41,1	87,1
2006/7	1495	715	860	47,8	105,4
2007/8	1861	861	1159	46,3	108,5
2008/9	1498	767	992	51,2	117,4
2009/10	1926	705	1014	36,6	89,3
2010/11	1844	802	1209	43,5	109,1
2011/12	2066	709	1374	34,3	100,8
2012/13	2064	677	1362	32,8	98,8
2013/14	2000	657	1282	32,9	97,0
2014/15	2200	780	1375	35,5	98,0
2015/16	2520	496	893	19,7	55,1
2016/17	2308	435	847	18,8	55,5
2017/18	1964	432	891	22,0	67,4
2018/19	1634	357	946	21,8	79,7
2018/19 to March	1394	302	741	21,7	74,8
2019/20 to March	1238	292	597	23,6	71,8
2020/21	2074	356	837	17,2	57,5

*C&R = Catch & Release

2. All trout (rainbows + browns) stocked vs recapture rates: 1994 – 2021

Season	No stocked	No. killed	No. returned	No. killed + C&R
1994/5	3206	1923	454	2377
1995/6	2684	1730	373	2103
1996/7	2523	1864	518	2382
1997/8	2599	1784	454	2238
1998/9	2590	1188	708	1896
1999/00	3403	1417	766	2183
2000/01	3235	1807	1454	3261
2001/2	2891	1766	1622	3388
2002/3	2625	1516	940	2456
2003/4	2349	901	594	1495
2004/5	2521	1260	1131	2391
2005/6	2455	1050	1231	2281
2006/7	1645	732	941	1673
2007/8	2064	879	1178	2057
2008/9	1713	789	1072	1861
2009/10	2080	726	1047	1773
2010/11	1928	810	1248	2058
2011/12	2122	716	1414	2130
2012/13	2104	685	1378	2063
2013/14	2000	657	1286	1933
2014/15	2200	780	1375	2155
2015/16	2520	496	893	1389
2016/17	2308	435	847	1299
2017/18	1964	436	938	1374
2018/19	1853	358	979	1377
2018/19 to March	1486	302	763	1065
2019/20 to March	1470	298	670	968
2020/21	2288	366	982	1338

C&R= Catch & Release

3. Avg. length, CF & mass plus total mass killed (Rainbows): 1996 – 2021.

Season	Avg. length	Avg. CF	Avg. mass killed	Total mass killed
1996/7	41,5 cm	122	852g	1638 kg
1997/8	41,1 cm	117	824g	1426 kg
1998/9	41,5 cm	119	815g	968 kg
1999/00	39,7 cm	118	735g	1024 kg
2000/01	41,1 cm	122	841g	1495 kg
2001/2	41,8 cm	123	901g	1544 kg
2002/3	41,0 cm	120	837g	1216 kg
2003/4	40,2 cm	124	806g	706 kg
2004/5	40,5 cm	129	852g	1053 kg
2005/6	40,9 cm	126	860g	876 kg
2006/7	42,0 cm	126	936g	669 kg
2007/8	41,1 cm	119	818g	704 kg
2008/9	41,1 cm	121	836g	641 kg
2009/10	40,9 cm	123	842g	594 kg
2010/11	43,0 cm	119	955g	766 kg
2011/12	41,0 cm	127	879g	623 kg
2012/13	40,0 cm	130	832g	563 kg
2013/14	41,4 cm	126	899g	591 kg
2014/15	41,5 cm	126	898g	700 kg
2015/16	42,0cm	122	896g	444 kg
2016/17	40,6cm	122	850g	370 kg
2017/18	41,3 cm	126	890g	384 kg
2018/19	41,2 cm	122	850g	303 kg
2019/20 to March	42,5 cm	122	898g	262 kg
2020/21	42,0 cm	128	846g	301 kg

4. Four largest fish in 2020/21

Mass	Angler	Month	Dam	Species	CF	Length
2500g	Luke vd Merwe	Nov	1	Brown	200	50
1950g	Jan Fourie	Feb	2	Rainbow	111	52
1864g	Brad Wooley	Sept	3	Rainbow	125	53
1749g	H. Human	Dec	3	Rainbow	132	51

Although several trophy sized fish longer than those recorded above were caught these were not accurately weighed and therefore, could not be included in this section. Moreover, the largest fish recorded this year with a CF of 200 possibly indicates a fault in the scale used or an inaccurate measure of the length.

5. Breakdown of 2020/21 results by dam: No. Stocked vs. Killed & C & R* (Rainbows only)

Dam	Stocked	% of Stocked	No. Killed	Killed as % Stocked	No. C&R	C&R as % Stocked	C&R + Kill as % Stocked.
1	123	5,9	4	3,3	58	47,2	50,4
2	148	7,1	40	27,0	65	43,9	70,9
3	620	29,9	77	12,4	276	44,5	56,9
4	178	8,6	34	19,1	47	26,4	45,5
5	419	20,2	64	15,3	162	38,7	53,9
6	111	5,4	18	16,2	28	25,2	41,4
7	475	22,9	119	25,1	201	42,3	67,4
Totals	2074	100	356	17,2	837	40,4	57,5

6. Brown trout results. 2020/21

Dam	Stocked	Killed	Returned
1	85	2	86
2	21	0	3
3	64	5	29
5	27	2	15
6	17	1	12
	214	10	145

It should be noted that until late 2020 Dam 1 was a “C & R/No Kill” dam so especially in the case of this dam some of the fish recorded in this last season had been carried over from the previous year.

7 Number of members compared with number visits (a visit = a record form completed)

Year	1998/9	1999/00	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
No. Members	90	91	91	95	95	95	100	100	100	110	110	110	110
No. Visits	500	542	617	623	603	439	479	476	388	453	432	394	446
Year	2011/2	2012/3	2013/4	2014/15	2015/6	2016/17	2017/18	2018/2019	2018/2019 to March	2019/20 to March	2020/21		
No. Members	110	110	110	110	108	109	108	98	95	95	120		
No. Visits	424	405	435	416	340	347	361	314	261	252	329		

8. Triploid grass carp stocking.

Dam	Oct 2015	March 2017	Feb 2018	Feb 2019	Jan 2020	Feb 2021	Total
1		46	34	51	32	22	185
2	40		20		11	22	93
3	5	16		19	25	23	88
5		10	5	5	10	15	45
6			20	20	15	16	71
Total	45	72	79	95	93	98	482

In about 2009 we commenced with a project to remove grass carp from our dams, starting with Dams 1 and 2, as these fish were known to be carriers of anchor worm. Subsequently, this parasite almost disappeared from our waters, with only the occasional trout being found to be affected. As aquatic weed became a major problem in not only Dams 1 and 2 but all the other dams, except for Dam 7 which is overgrazed, we began restocking all our dams except 4 and 7 with triploid grass carp which we reared in cages to a size of 35cm to 42cm before stocking. In addition to Dam 7 No. 4 was not stocked as grass carp from Dam 3 tend to move down after heavy rains. Due to slow growth, it probably takes at least 3 – 4 years after stocking before these fish have a significant impact on the weed. In addition, large numbers are lost due to predation in the initial years post stocking. Although there are signs in a couple of dams that these young fish are starting to control weed to an acceptable level, we possibly need another 2 years before the control is deemed to be satisfactory. In the meantime, as we have been warned that no further triploids will be available after 2021, we have placed a final order for 150 x 20cm for our cages to be delivered in August this year. In our Middelpunt dams we estimate that we need about 15 to 20 grass carp 5kg or larger per hectare to control aquatic weed.

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