



Port Elizabeth Deep Sea Angling Club

The Conservation Minded Club

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Newsletter – February 2015.

This year really took off with a big bang and many of us are feeling the pressure at work in getting things done before the financial year end this month.

The same can be said about Pedsac as our calendar is bumper-packed with many events, competitions and social gatherings all happening within a very short space of time which I will cover in this newsletter.

As we have been making some nice sporadic catches of Geelbek, we will also cover some tips for fishing for Geelbek in this issue.

New Monthly Steak Evenings

Our first steak night was held on Friday, the 6th of February. A good crowd turned out for the inaugural evening. The rump steak was sublime and we were served what was truly an excellent value for money meal. Leon Coetzee won the Valentine's Hamper of Wine, Chocolates, Nougat and Up the Deck meal voucher – all worth R650. Kelly Evans walked away with the night's jackpot draw valued at R960-00 in cash. A good crowd stayed on after the draw and partied into the early hours of the morning. The combined atmosphere and positive mood of the crowd convinced the committee that this monthly steak night will only grow from strength to strength and we are hard at work busy planning the next one for the 6th of March 2015. Expect a bigger crowd and a bigger jackpot draw.

We will also be having a popular live band entertaining the crowd for the evening.

Entry tickets are R80 which includes your steak, chips and salad, as well as a R20 contribution to the Jackpot draw for that evening.

We thank all who attended the first steak evening and hope to see you all come back with more friends to an even bigger event next time.

Lapa and Braai Area.

1. It has come to our attention that members often leave the braai area at the Lapa in a dirty state after using the facilities. Fish skin, skeletons and un-eaten meat is often left on the braai grids and stinks the next day. Please note that it is your responsibility to dispose of all left-over's and garbage in the bins provided.
2. We will shortly start with some renovations and upgrade the braai's as they are looking a bit tatty with some brickwork and concrete cracking. Zane Zurcher and Pierre Westerveldt organised a pre-cast slab from Shakuma Pre-Cast Products and will be used to place across all three braai's in one length thereby creating more space and work surfaces. Dawid Joubert from Joubert Construction will undertake the work at no cost to the club and we sincerely thank all for their contributions.

Up-coming Events

Super 6 Round 4: 28 February 2015.
Steak Night: 6 March 2015
Over's and Under's: 7 March 2015
Lee Cat E.P. League: 21 March 2015 (Port Alfred)

Lee-Cat E.P. Inter-Club League.

The next LeeCat E.P. Inter-club league will take place on the 21 March 2015 at the Port Alfred Ski Boat Club. All Pedsac club members who wishes to represent the club must please download the nomination forms from www.pedsac.co.za and submit the completed form to Pieter Didloff before the 28th February 2015. Teams selection will take place on the 10th March and notifications will immediately be sent to the selected anglers.

Moorings.

As you all know, we suffered some huge damage to the moorings with the huge easterly storms we experienced last year. The repair process is not as simple as many would think and would like to explain some of these processes and matters to all our members and mooring owners to give you some insight into the matter as well as the challenges we are currently experiencing.

Over the years, there has been a gradual build-up of silt making the mooring area considerable shallower. Some of the original anchor blocks laid down when the moorings were constructed is in some places far in excess of 1 meter below the silt with some not even reachable. With the swells and surges entering the harbour, the wave and surge action gets amplified when it reached the shallow waters at the moorings greatly multiplying the surge which ultimately lead to these catastrophic break-up of the mooring spines and fingers. As the repairs will cost a lot of money, we are trying to address the root problem before we proceed and waste money on a problem that will persist if not attended to. We are currently engaging the port authorities to find out about the viability of dredging the mooring area and we are waiting for their further response to the matter. Our last resort would be to pull the moorings out to deeper water and will require a complete new set of anchoring blocks and chains that has to be strategically placed to ensure secure anchoring of the moorings. The project will also entail the replacement of many sections of the main spine and buttress joints. Temporary repairs will take place shortly and we are waiting for specialist under-water divers that can cut some of the steel and chains to free up the sunken fingers and spines.

John Allen has been instrumental in the detailed planning and drawing up of corrective action plans to address the cause rather than the symptom and we thank him for his dedication and effort he has put into this matter.

Operation Deep Clean – Scrap boats and other items.

Transnet is increasingly placing more pressure on Pedsac to comply with their request to remove all scrap boats and other items from their property adjacent and across the road from the club. They are also tasking all their other tenants and this appears to be directive from their head office to enforce down to all their tenants to comply with the national framework provisions regarding Environmental, Health and Safety compliance amongst others. The Pedsac committee has been summoned to meet with Transnet early next week regarding their ongoing requests and we therefore emphatically ask those boat owners to remove their stored and scrap boats from Transnet property to avoid serious action and consequences. Office number: 041 5821546. Mail: denise@pedsac.co.za

Members Subscriptions.

All members who have not paid their subscriptions, and who have not resigned must please contact Denise to state their intentions, or to make the necessary arrangements to settle their due subscriptions. Those members' tags will be deactivated until such time the office has been contacted and arrangements made.

Tuna Classic

Planning is well under way and we will guarantee all an epic event as we are introducing a couple of changes and improvements to the usual format. Marlin, Dorado and Bonito's / Skipjack Tuna will become official species of the competition with their own guaranteed prize money. Furthermore, we are planning to incorporate a night session out on the continental shelf, under controlled safety conditions to target Broadbill as an additional bonanza prize should the weather permit. Targeting Bonito, Skipjack Tuna and Dorado will appeal to many anglers who are not geared up to target the larger Tuna and Marlin species and this will make the competition more accessible for those who wish to enter and target these species with the lighter tackle and gear.

We appeal to all members to pass on any valuable leads regarding any sponsorship, no matter how big or small this may be. Any assistance with cash, goods or any items that can be used in the anglers goodie bags will greatly be appreciated.

All those who help and become involved with sponsorships, will be acknowledged and will receive recognition in and during the hosting of the event.

Contact Richard Donaldson on 0722150038 or Pierre Westerveldt on 082 446 9663 for any sponsorship related business.

This year, will also see the last of the 3 years that BLG Logistics has sponsored the main prize money and we sincerely thank Shane Gerber and his team from BLG for coming along at a critical stage of the Classic, enabling us to turn its fortunes around and elevate the tournament back to the top echelons of Tuna Tournaments in South Africa. Shane Gerber was also instrumental in securing the Ford sponsorship consisting of the top of the range Ford Ranger 3.2 4x4 Double Cab Bonanza Prize in association with Eastern Cape Motors.

All of our anglers stand in deep gratitude to you for your contributions to the Tuna Classic.

Geelbek – Information and fishing for this species overleaf.

Information on Geelbek (SASSI)

Geelbek (*Atractoscion aequidens*) is a member of the Sciaenidae family, which includes Kob, Geelbek and Baardman. It is a migratory shoaling species in which the adults tend to migrate from the Western and Eastern Cape towards KwaZulu-Natal, where they spawn during spring. Adults tend to form spawning aggregations in well know localities in KwaZulu-Natal, where they are often targeted by commercial and recreational line fishers. It is an important seasonal species to commercial and recreational line fishers throughout their distribution. By 1997, Southern African spawning stocks were thought to have collapsed with spawning stocks depleted to approximately 6% of their unexploited populations. Current assessments show that this species is still overfished although there may be some evidence for slight recovery on the east and south-east coasts.

Geelbek are mainly caught in the traditional commercial line fishery which operates from small skiboats within the inshore zone along most of the South African coastline. They are also often targeted by recreational line fishers and sometimes by trek netting in False Bay. They are also taken as by-catch in the inshore demersal trawl fishery in the Southern Cape. Line fishing is a relatively selective fishing method which has few impacts on the marine environment and is carried out with either a rod and reel or a handline. There is generally very little bycatch or habitat damage caused by this fishing method. However, some species targeted by this fishery are over-exploited or collapsed because of their specific life history characteristics.

There is a TAE (total allowable effort) system in place for in the traditional commercial linefishery based on scientific advice, so there is control on the line fishing effort. Various other regulatory measures are also implemented in this fishery such as minimum size limits and daily bag limits for recreational fishers.

The minimum size limit is 60cm TL for recreational and commercial fishers and there is a daily bag limit of 2 fish per person per day for recreational fishers

Geelbek Fishing (Content from various sources.)

Geelbek is sometimes caught all year round, but they do have specific periods where they are usually more prevalent and caught in huge numbers.

EVERY year, any time from the end of March, it starts. It's like a second sardine run, only this time the species is geelbek — aka Cape salmon. After the first proper catch by the commercials, the news spreads like wildfire through the fishing community — its fish fever all over again.

From that first night onwards, it's all about rods bending, sore backs, aching arms and a reel which one battles to turn. And so it goes on for the next few months — tired mornings and getting to work with bloodshot eyes, and not because of a drink or two too many. Indeed, many fishermen brave the cold, the dangers of fishing at night and the chance of bumping into a whale — all just to catch two geelbek each.

So, is it all worth it? Yes — it's worth every bit of the effort.

The geelbek — *Atractoscion aequidens* — is one of South Africa's major edible line fish species. It is caught along the entire South African coast, from False Bay to the KZN border with Moçambique, and is caught in big numbers on occasions due to the geelbek's tendency to go on a "feeding frenzy".

Rudy van der Elst, in his book *A Guide to Common Sea Fishes of South Africa*, says that the geelbek is a common shoaling fish inhabiting waters as deep as 200 metres. It is frequently found near the bottom, but despite its often demersal habits, this carnivorous fish voraciously pursues surface baitfish.

The migrating pattern of these fish is extremely interesting (see "What do you know about coastal fish migration?" by Marc Griffiths of the Dept. of Ichthyology, Rhodes University, in *SKI-BOAT*, Sept/Oct 1989), and we have reproduced a migration chart alongside.

Catching these fish is a bit of a hit or miss affair. You have to run from one pinnacle to another, wrecks included, to find where they are feeding — and then the game is on. Sometimes they are there, but won't feed at all, and then suddenly the green light comes on and you have one hook-up after another.

Geelbek are sometimes found in shallow water, but most often in water 50m and deeper. They normally shoal around pinnacles or ledges and at wrecks as well.

Note!! We caught Geelbek in 170 meter water in Durban during the 2014 bottom fishing nationals – Richard Donaldson, Wayne Gerber, Kevin Clark.

In reality, catching this prized species only represents part of the exercise. The hook-up, fighting and boating of a specimen does not include any targeting strategies. What was needed is an overview of how to "target and catch" geelbek.

NON-SPECIFIC TARGETING

The reason for the misconception, I realised, is that in P.E. sport fishermen normally don't target geelbek specifically. The standard *modus operandi* for catching bottom fish is to visit the known reefs and then catch what's available. This normally consists of yellowtail, kabeljou, geelbek, red and black steenbras, red stumpnose, roman and Basterman, to mention a few. If there are any geelbek around — and, most importantly, on the bite — you simply catch your allowable bag limit of two per person and then move on.

I therefore had to do a bit more thinking and also discussed my subsequent notes with some fishing friends, including some commercial fishermen who specifically target the species.

GEELBEK BEHAVIOUR AND FEEDING HABITS

The geelbek is a demersal migratory species, a carnivorous shoaling fish preying mainly on pilchard, mackerel, squid and maasbanker. Being essentially an offshore species and usually keeping close to the bottom of the ocean floor — normally near structures such as pinnacles and shipwrecks — it is generally found in depths of between 15- and 200 metres.

Despite its demersal habits, it is frequently captured well off the bottom, often close to the surface, especially when the shoal goes into a feeding frenzy. The geelbek is not territorial and follows the baitfish shoals, moving around all the time and covering great distances.

Our main fishing grounds are within the Algoa bioregion, located on the continental shelf better known as Algoa Bay. Fishing is normally done in water varying from 15- to 50 metres. Specific GPS marks are generally a well-kept secret, but areas that are frequented are the Ryi Banks located some 14 miles offshore, the Wild Side, the South-West Grounds (An area about half way between Ryi Banks and Bird Island) and the Wild Side from Cape Recife to Maitlands.

There are some great geelbek fishing off Cape St. Francis and Kenton-on-Sea as well.

EQUIPMENT

First of all, you are going to need the following tackle to start with proceedings. The set-up is generally the same for Geelbek and larger shoaling Kob.

A rod with a strong backbone, preferably a 15 to 20kg rod with a nice soft/medium tip to absorb the head-knocks of a big Kob or Geelbek.

The rod must be, for a jetski and kayak no more than 7ft and for a ski boat, anywhere from 7ft to 8ft long. The reel of choice would be a 8 inch KP (Koellie Pulley), or a decent multiplier such as a Daiwa Saltist or Saltiga Lever Drag, Shimano TLD 25, Penn Legend or similar. The reel must be stacked with either 60 to 80 pound braid and 80 pound leader or 70 pound monofilament line. You will need no smaller than an 8/0 circle hook with a number 2/0 crane combi swivel or a powerful three way swivel, an 8 to 10 ounce sinker depending on the current and some glow beads or glow skirts which you will place at the base of hook for added attraction. Remove the beads and skirts if the fish are skittish. To catch bait you'll need a few packs of sabiki jigs and a 4 to 6 ounce sinker and the recommended live bait will be shad, mackerel, maasbanker or a pinky for the more adventurous and the tried and trusted Pilchard and chokka if you do not want to try the more adventurous route. What I normally do is if I'm fishing monofilament line (not braid), I will attach the main line to the swivel and then the sinker line will be directly below the main line on lighter line, maybe 30 pound, so that if the sinker snags on something at least I'll only lose the sinker and not the fish and trace. Then the hook snoot goes on the part of the swivel that lies to the side (only evident on crane swivels), the line used for the hook snoot must be at least 10 pounds heavier than your main line. The sinker snoot must be a metre long and the hook snoot must about a metre and a half to two metres long when fishing deeper water. These lengths may vary as per personal preference and conditions. When hooking on the live bait, make sure you thread the hook through the hard part of the live bait's nose or through the nostrils. I spoke to Bruce Mann from ORI with regards to tackle and what tackle we can use that will have the least affect on the fish and or the

Eco-system and he had this to say: My suggestion is to fish with barbless hooks which makes it much easier to release the fish (and if swallowed tends to come out much quicker). If you know you are going to be releasing the fish you catch, then use a large, barbless, circle hooks as these are seldom swallowed and very easy to remove from the fish's mouth. Also if fishing in water deeper than 20m, have a rod or rope rigged up for releasing fish back down to the bottom as quickly as possible. This trace is ideal for basic bottom fishing and can be adjusted according to the fish you are targeting. This trace is perfect for Dusky Kob and Geelbek.

Bait fishing is more straight forward and a 10'o hook is usually par for the course. Depending on the fish's feeding patterns, the following baits should work well

- Large long strips of chokka on it's own.
- Long strip of chokka with a pilchard hooked through the eyes.
- Whole pilchard hooked through the eyes. (With or without a glowing skirt.)
- 2-3 pilchards hooked through the eyes on an 11 or 12'o hook when not feeding properly.
- Front halve of the pilchard hooked through the eyes on an 8'o hook when skittish and sizes are generally smaller.

As it was said in the opening of this article, fishing for Geelbek is a hit and miss affair and takes a lot of dedication and hard work to master the art of finding the shoals and catching them regularly.

Practice makes perfect.

Closing.

Please feel free to mail any photo's of any significant or good catches to denise@pedsac.co.za or richard@lmcservices.co.za and we will post them on our website and Facebook pages. All members are welcome to send us contributions for the next news letter and this can be mailed to the same email addresses provided.

Tight Lines

Richard Donaldson.