



Port Elizabeth Deep Sea Angling Club

The Conservation Minded Club

TEL. 041 – 5822701 (Office)
CELL. 084 284 1046 (Admin)
FAX. 041 – 582 1546

e-mail: denise@pedsac.co.za
website: www.pedsac.co.za
P.O. BOX 5674 - WALMER - PORT ELIZABETH - 6065

Newsletter – April 2015.

In this month's newsletter we will take a look at the fabled Brindle Bass that use to be quite plentiful in the North End area inhabiting all the old ship wrecks many years ago. We will also take a look at the art of light tackle angling. But before we get going with these exciting articles, we will look at all the club news and announcements from the past month.

Obituary

On behalf of Pedsac, the committee would like to pass our sincere condolences to the De Villiers family with the passing of Eric De Villiers.

Eric De Villiers was a Springbok angler and a prominent Pedsac member.

Our thoughts and prayers will be with Collin De Villiers and family during these difficult times.

Boats exiting and entering the Port

Pedsac recently received a complaint from Port Control regarding one of our vessels that ignored standard protocol to request permission to enter the port. This incident happened while there was shipping activity within the port.

Please be aware that the Port Authority views this transgression in a very serious light and holds Pedsac responsible for any such infringements by its members.

After investigating this incident, we also found that this vessel in question had an expired C.O.F. Skippers can be heavily fined, their boats confiscated and possibly face jail time in extreme circumstances when accidents are involved when operating a vessel without a valid C.O.F.

All boats must follow strict radio protocol and adhere to port regulations. Please note that Port Control no longer actively man channel 19 on the 29 Mhz radio system despite them still having this equipment available and in working order at Port Control.

All vessels must call Port Control on VHF Channel 12 to ask permission to exit or enter the Port. Please do not proceed under any circumstances without a clear instruction from Port Control. Port Control do not always answer calls while they are communicating with the Port Pilot or tug master during harbour movements and skippers will have to wait until such time Port Control can answer your request to enter or leave the harbour.

It is always handy to keep Port Control's telephone number saved on your mobile for emergencies. They can be reached on 041-5071909 in the event that you may experience radio trouble.

Inter-vessel radio communications.

Many recreational fishing vessels communicate with other vessels on channel 12 with total disregard to Port Control and maritime shipping activity. Please note that channel 12 and 16 is expressly reserved for port and emergency use only.

We request that all members only use channel 12 to call in and out of port. Please do not conduct private communication between vessels on Channel 12 and 16.

The following channels can be used for inter-vessel communication.

Channel 06: 156.300 Inter-ship / Yachts / Recreational.

Channel 10: 156.500 Common Simplex Working Channel.

Channel 68 is also a widely used channel that offers a long range in communication and is used by Pedsac for Tuna and off-shore communication.

BLG Logistics Tuna Classic

With the Tuna Classic literally days away, starting on the evening of the 29th April, the committee would like to invite all members to come down and support our anglers and the club in the afternoons for the duration of the event when the boats return from the continental shelf hopefully bringing back a few good fish to weigh.

Please note that the Pedsac bar will be closed for the duration of the tournament and that drinks will only be sold from the Tuna tent reasonable prices during the event.

Members that frequent the clubhouse pub must please understand that the Tuna Classic is one of our club's main fund raising events and profits realised has traditionally contributed towards the club's ability not to increase annual membership subscriptions over the last 3 years.

The Ford Broadbill Night Challenge will also be held for the first time this year. This competition will form part of the Tuna Classic with some boats remaining out in the deep to target Broadbill during the night when it is deemed safe and suitable for this purpose. Broadbill become more active at night and rise from the depths to feed near the surface. For any skippers and crew that might be interested, this challenge will be an organised event and therefore exemption on night rated skippers apply. This will be discussed in detail during the skippers briefing on the night of registration.

We have some huge cash and other prizes up for grabs and the incentive is worth the sacrifices to fish in this year's event.

Entertainment during the evenings have also been given a boost as Marulaboom will be in P.E. playing at the Tuna Classic venue on Friday, 1st May starting at 20h00 that evening. Be sure to get there early to find space in the party tent. Other performers include the ever popular Niven Marcus.

Selected E.P. Teams.

The following Pedsac anglers has been selected for various E.P. Provincial duties.

Tuna Nationals: Martin Gierz Wayne Gerber and Pierre Westerveldt.

Bottom Nationals team 1: Martin Gierz, Kevin Clark and Wayne Gerber

Bottom Nationals team 2: Richard Donaldson, Peter Dawson, Eugene Van Tonder.

All Coastal's: Richard Donaldson, Christopher Gerber and Peter Dawson.

We would like to congratulate all selected anglers and wish you success with the up-coming competitions.

Lee-Cat Inter-Club E.P. Leagues

Pedsac once again walked away with top honours during the Lee-Cat E.P. Leagues held in Port Alfred on Saturday, 11th April 2015.

Wayne Gerber, Kevin Clark and Christopher Gerber walked away with top honours fishing for the one Pedsac team entered and Peter Dawson, Pieter Kemp and Deon Sheare came third for the other Pedsac team entered.

Christopher Gerber won overall top angler during this league.

Congratulations to all participating anglers with this phenomenal team effort.

Light Tackle Angling.

Pedsac is blessed to have so many anglers actively taking part in so many different facets and affiliations of fishing and we will take a look at all these different facets over the next few months. Pedsac has a large contingent of light tackle anglers fishing with 4kg IGFA line. Many light tackle anglers have later achieved success in the Deep Sea Angling arena after first cutting their teeth and coming through the ranks in Light Tackle Boat Angling. Junior anglers who fished for E.P. Light tackle and progressed to earning E.P. Deep Sea colours include Carla Schmidt, Kyle De Vrey (Protea Light Tackle Colours) and Dannika Didloff (SADSAA).

Senior anglers who made the journey representing both disciplines include amongst others John Allen, Pieter Didloff and Richard Donaldson.

Pedsac members (Senior and Ladies) who achieved National Protea Colours in Light Tackle Angling include Madelein and Kenny Brown, Melany Niewoudt, Cuan Wright, Brett Wiehahn and Vernon Cerini (Springbok) only to name a few.

Light Tackle Boat Off-Shore (Bay League's) is a great place for young juniors to cut their teeth and prepare for making the transition to Deep Sea Angling when they are old and experienced enough.

Many traditional heavy tackle anglers don't realise the skill required to fight huge Diamond Ray's, Raggetooth Sharks, Spearnose Skates, Gulley Sharks and many other non-edible species for hours on end using only 4kg line.

The angler has to garner a great deal of patience and skill to wear the animal out before it manages to wear your 4kg line to the absolute breaking point.



My son (Jason Donaldson - 9 years old) was privileged to be selected to represent E.P. Light Tackle Boat in the U/16 division this year. They fished in the S.A. Ladies and Junior National Championships held in Mosselbay during the past Easter School Holidays.

I skippered for two U/16 juniors at this event and it was stressful to watch these young kids battle it out with huge skates and rays. We often witness a complete mental breakdown when they realise that they have a huge fight on their hands wanting to give up the fight after only a few minutes or so, to later on suffering from cramps and then all of a sudden getting their second breath to continue the fight when things settle down after they start taking control of the fight (This usually happens after some harsh words, promises and pep-talk from the skippers ☺) with fights often lasting between 30-90 minutes before landing larger fish.

The U/16 junior team consisting of Bradley Wiehahn, Jonty Wiehahn, Jason Donaldson, P.J. Ellis, Brett Wiehahn (Skipper) and Richard Donaldson (Skipper) walked away with Bronze team medals after leading the competition for the first 3 days, only to slip to 3rd position with poor catches on the last 2 days. Jason Donaldson scooped an overall gold medal for catching the largest edible fish out of all ladies, U/21's and Juniors during the tournament. The E.P. ladies consisting of Madelein Brown, Melany Niewoudt, Maryke Ellis, Helen Mothersole, Kenny Brown (Skipper) and Kobus De Vrey (Skipper) netted overall team gold medals.

Most of the anglers who participated in the Ladies and Juniors Light Tackle Championships are Pedsac members and we congratulate them on their achievement and stellar performances.

Tagging of fish.

We quite often catch tagged fish showing severe signs of advanced infection in and around the inserted tag. This subject has become a great area of concern amongst many anglers and many similar stories relating to tagging infections are doing the rounds on the internet and other fishing forums. Many anglers have stopped with tagging fish all together due to conflicting issues related to tagging and data collection on recaptured fish. Anglers are of the opinion that the data is not accurate as many tagged fish are taken by commercial and non-participating recreational anglers who do not participate and relay recapture reports back to ORI. Therefore, data released appears to be incomplete and not reflective of the actual state and health of our fisheries.

Please note that Pedsac promotes the conservation of our valuable fish stock and that we ask all anglers to release healthy breeding stock and only keep what you can eat. Please handle your fish with care when attempting to release. Never puncture the swim bladder as this will definitely kill the fish. Always keep a weight and a barbless hook rigged on a spare rod to help release bloated fish back to deeper water where they can equalise and recover from barometric trauma. There are many tips on Youtube on how to construct your own release kit to help sink fish to deeper water where they can equalise and recover from barometric trauma.

The story of the North End Brindle Bass

I recently read Gletwyn Rubidge's book on Spear fishing and Free diving, mostly to study all the interesting weighpoints and what species were documented around them. I then came across his observations made on diving around the old wooden boat wrecks that litter the North End area. To my surprise, he noted that at times they spot very unusual warm water species in and around these wrecks which include King Mackerel, Young Kingfish, Amberjack and even Natal Wrasse. He also observed Brindle Bass of up to 90 kg's frequenting these wrecks.

This jogged my memory back 15 or 20 years listening to story's from some old fisherman who said that they use to catch Brindle Bass and Rock Cod in great numbers in this area back in the good old days, which I can only assume to be in the 1940's and 50's judging by the age of these old bullets at the time of storytelling. As it would happen, a good friend of mine caught a Brindle Bass in 10 meters of water opposite the Post Office building 4 years ago. This fish weighed in at 14kg's. He gave me a call later that day and asked me to come take a look at the "Rock Cod" as he has never seen one as big before. He did not realise that he landed a highly protected species.



Picture of a young Brindle Bass weighing +- 15kg.



Picture of an older specimen weighing +- 160kg

Speaking to many an old angler that use to fish what use to be an extremely productive stretch of sea back in the old days, can vouch for the big catches of Kob, Basterman, Red Roman, Black Musselcracker and just about any other reef specie, including Brindle Bass, you can think of. Of particular interest, was the vast numbers of Rock Cod that use to be commercially caught in the area opposite what now is the Green Street off-ramp leading into the harbour. They also spoke of great reefs and pinnacles that use to be found all along this area, and this brings me back to the elusive and scarce Brindle Bass, as I can only imagine this particular area being their perfect environment in which to flourish back then before it gradually got spoiled by man and his uncontrollable hunger to destroy nature for economic advancement.

Naturally we assume that the building of the harbour and the extensions to the breakwaters in the late 1960's and early 70's, the erection of the Dolos barriers coupled with the North End Lake flood culvert that leads into the sea near the North End station lead to the irreversible damage of this once pristine habitat. All this development caused a gradual build-up of silt which eventually smothered the reef and pinnacle systems which is situated in this area.

This brings me to another interesting subject. Worldwide, it is the norm to compensate for destruction of natural habitat by installing artificial FAD's. In America, Australia, Japan and many other developed countries, authorities allow for artificial structures and reefs to be installed within a controlled manner so not to affect any other natural habitat nearby. This not only allow for fish congregation, but also for small fish to find a safe haven from predators and man. FAD's provide a congregation and breeding point for bait fish, shrimps, crustaceans and other food sources, which in turn provide for and feed larger fish to flourish

and grow. The Port Elizabeth shoreline has undergone a tremendous change over the last century, which has negatively affected natural reefs and structure, displacing many fish from their natural surroundings. The coastline stretching from Hobie Beach around to the Swartkops Estuary, including the newly built Coega Harbour, has been artificially affected in one way or the other and nowhere resembles the original shore line from over 100 years ago.

Gletwyn Rubidge is a well respected Spear Fisherman, Free Diver and writer and has encountered a few Brindle Bass inhabiting the wrecks along the North End area. There have been other reports of young Bass living in the harbour north wall caves and tunnels, but it is unclear what happens to them when they do grow a bit larger. It is quite possible that many young fish are taken by unsuspecting anglers or spear fisherman who do not recognise them and confuse them with Rock Cod at these young ages.

Many anglers would like to see some artificial structure and reefs be introduced along the Port Elizabeth coast in water depths ranging from 20 to 50 meters. This will definitely help encourage fish returning and populating these safe havens. This could potentially be extended to other parts of our coast as far as Sundays River as artificial structures would do wonders to providing safe spawning areas for Kob and other vulnerable species. It will be an enormous task with many pitfalls and red tape and I unfortunately cannot see something like this happening anytime soon.

As I mentioned earlier, there are quite a few wrecks dotting the North End coast, so let us take a look at the history of the wrecks that litter this area and the great gale of 1902 that caused all these boats to beach or sink. Sadly, many of these wrecks mostly lie half buried under the sand and silt along the North End coastal area.

Going back in history and scouring the history books, Port Elizabeth is associated with one of the worst single shipping disasters in the South African maritime history. On Sunday morning, 31 August 1902, 38 ships were riding at anchor in Algoa Bay under grey skies. As the day wore on, so the south-east wind picked up until it was blowing a gale.

There was no slackening of in its force by nightfall, if anything it began to blow more strongly. Huge waves tossed the ships about as if they were corks, before running, foam-flecked for the beach where they crashed down upon the sand. Through the night the storm continued unabated and shortly before midnight the first guns, fired as distress signals, were heard. The rocket brigade hurried to the beach to set up their apparatus and give assistance, but in the dark and with the howling wind in their ears and the great breakers thundering about them, there was very little that they could do. As day dawned on Monday, 1 September, a scene of absolute chaos was revealed. The whole beach was covered with shattered timber, beached vessels and sodden cargo. Whether ashore or still afloat in the bay, all the vessels were being battered by enormous breakers. Frantic efforts were made by the rescuers with rocket apparatus to get a line out to the stricken sailing-ships, but time and again the wind and waves prevented it from carrying to the desperate crews. Four courageous men, Frank GREGORY, A. I. MCEWAN, E. HAYLER and John MANNIE finally went out with a line to help some sailors, but their efforts ended in tragedy when the line broke and all were drowned. The wife of the captain of one ship, despairing of help, plunged into the waves with her baby. Miraculously she was able to grasp a plank with one arm while holding the baby in the other. The rolling combers brought them ashore to the cheers of the onlookers, but though the baby survived the ordeal, the mother died. Another mother who jumped into the sea together with her two children was brought safely to the beach, but her children were drowned. The weather began to clear on the Tuesday and by the next day all was once again calm. It was then that the funerals began. Among the mourners, led by the mayor, Mr. C. KEMSLEY, were town councillors, harbour officials, shipping agents and foreign representatives. Port Elizabeth came to a standstill as shops shut and thousands lined the route to the South End cemetery. Pall-bearers drawn from among surviving ship-mates carried the coffins. As the days went by, so more bodies were washed ashore and funerals became an everyday occurrence.

A large memorial was erected recounting the details of the tragedy. The memorial lists the names of 21 ships and of 18 captains and other officers who were drowned.

The ships lost is listed as follow:

Oakworth – a British cargo sailing vessel of 1242 grt was on route from Port Pirie with a cargo of grain;

Emmanuel – was a German sailing barque of 1147 tons under the command of Captain Tuitzer on route from Port Pirie with a cargo of grain;

Coriolanus – was a German sailing barque of 978 tons. under the command of Captain Gotting on route from Wallaroo with a cargo of wheat;

Hans Wagner – was a German iron barque of 938 tons under the command of Captain Millman was on route from Melbourne with a cargo of grain;

Agostino Rombo – was an Italian sailing barque of 827 grt, en route from Buenos Aires with a cargo of forage under the command of Captain Vassho (Captain Vassho is listed on the Memorial SE cemetery at Port Elizabeth);

Waimea – Norwegian owned ship was carrying a cargo of wood, with loss of Captain Oredorp and 7 crew on passage from Fremantle (Captain Oredorp is listed on the Memorial to the dead in the SE Cemetery of Port Elizabeth);

Arnold – was a German iron sailing barque of 854 grt under the command of Captain Ahlars and carrying a general cargo

Sayre – a British cargo sailing barque of 735 grt was on route from New York with a general cargo ;

Nautilus – was a German sailing barque of 745 grt that dragged her anchor in the great storm of the 1st September 1902 and was wrecked at North End Beach, Algoa Bay. She was under the command of Captain Assing and on route from Adelaide with a cargo of wheat. Captain Assing and 11 crew lost. Their deaths are listed on the Memorial SE Cemetery, Port Elizabeth.

Content – was a Swedish sailing barque of 547 grt. under the command of Captain Gustafsen. She was on route from Rangoon with a cargo of rice when she was wrecked on North End Beach, Algoa Bay on the 1st September 1902.

Iris – a transport schooner of 522 tons;

Kimara – I have been unable to find out anything about this ship;

Hermanos – was a Norwegian sailing barque of 498 tons under the command of Captain Gunderson which was on route from Banbury with a cargo of wood;

Thekla – was a German sailing 3 masted schooner of 350 grt on route from Mauritius with a cargo of sugar;

Constant – was a Norwegian sailing barque of 292 grt that was wrecked at North End Beach, Algoa Bay on the 1st September 1902 under the command of Captain Jacobsen when on route from Rio de Janeiro with a cargo of coffee.

Clara – was a British Steam tug of 139grt;

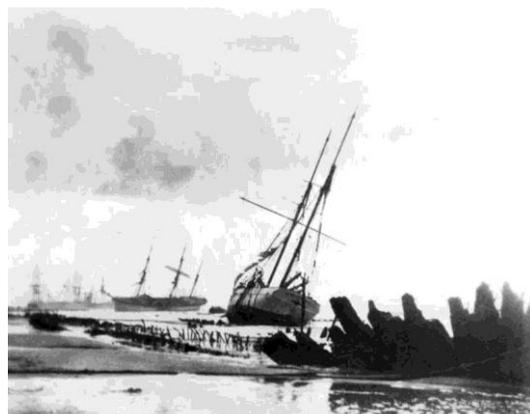
Gabrielle – was a British sailing schooner of 78 tons on route from St. Johns with a cargo of wood;

Scotia – was a British cargo steamer of the Clan Line;

Countess of Carnarvon – was a wooden British steam tug of 38 tons;

Cavaliere Michele Russo – was an Italian ship of 1,529 tons on route from Newcastle, Australia with a cargo of Grain. 17 crew members died;

Inchcape Rock – was British full-rigged ship under the command of Captain Ferguson on route from Portland, Oregon.



It also records the death of 18 men whose names were unknown. No one can say exactly how many lives were lost.

It is possible that, including the four rescuers, that more than 60 souls perished. Nearly 300 were rescued.

Of course there have been other terrible tragedies along the South African coast since then, but never again on quite the same scale as the Great Gale of 1902.

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.