



The Conservation Minded Club

The Chum Bucket

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



December 2015

Now that Jingle Bells and Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer tunes are the songs of choice at all the shopping malls (thank goodness Boney M thankfully disappeared from the play lists), we know that the festive season is truly upon us. The kid's excitement is growing and they are trying their luck at anything to get Father Christmas to bring them the latest Play Station, I-Pad, Bicycle or whatever catches their keen eyes in the advertising posters flooding our mailboxes of late. It is also the time for dad to sharpen his skills with the roast leg of lamb, Gammon or Beef Roll that awaits his keen attention just before Christmas day. The Pedsac Committee and Staff wish all our members a Merry Christmas and prosperous new year.

Catch reports has still been sporadic due to the persistent easterly winds and not many boats venturing out to all the good spots. I still hear of occasional reports of some nice catches of big Yellowtail and some decent line fish from the Wild Side. Some nice Kob are regularly caught along our coast and around the islands.

The weather should improve during December and so hopefully more boats will make it out to our traditional fishing grounds.

Club Matters and News

Members

We will formally announce all the new members with our next newsletters and formally welcome them into our ranks.

This is unfortunately also the time of year when we bid farewell to a few members who regrettably have resigned for various reasons ranging from retirement to another town or city to economic circumstances. We are always sad to see members resign, but would like to remind them that our doors are always open to welcome them back some day.

Please remember – to all those members who will NOT be renewing subscriptions, please make sure that your letter of resignation gets sent to the club before the 1st January 2016 – those members who do not resign, or renew by paying the subs invoiced, and allow their membership to lapse will be added to the defaulters list. Re-joining is not looked upon favourably should any member have left the club not in good standing.

Annual Subs

The annual subs are due before or on the 1st of January 2016. It is extremely important to notify Denise at denise@pedsac.co.za should any person need to make arrangements to settle their subs after the cut-off date. Please note that we prefer cash, EFT or card payments instead of cheque payments due to the high bank charges.

Boat Surveys

Keith Schmidt will only be available until the middle of December to survey boats. Please make sure to contact Keith on 041-5816648 or 0721789806 to book in advance. Please insure that your survey fees and 2016 subs are paid before booking the survey.

Pedsac Office

Denise will be taking leave from around the 15th December. The Pedsac office will officially be closed until January 2016. Dates will be advertised via our messaging service. Please make sure to load your fuel requirements in advance. Please pay via EFT or card in advance. Glen will assist with loading fuel purchases when he is available to do so during the holiday period.

Holiday Closure times for Marlin's Head bar:

24th December – closure at 14h00
25 December (Christmas Day) – CLOSED
26th December – open from 14h00 onwards
31st December – closed from 16h00.

All other days normal opening times apply.

Kiddies Bank Fishing Competition and Spit Braai

The kiddies bank fishing competition was a huge success and had 42 kids participating. We thank all the parents and organisers in helping to make the day special. The club was well supported and the spitbraai ensured a nice and mellow ending to a hectic morning running after the kids to weigh their fish. A special thanks to Commercial Marine, Up The Deck and Load Mass Crane Services for sponsoring some small, but meaningful prizes for the kids.

Kiddies Christmas Party

The annual kiddies Christmas Party is scheduled for Saturday, 5th December 2015. It will be hosted by the Algoa Bay Yacht Club this year and will incorporate the NSRI and Pedsac.

Invites to all members and their friends have been sent out; should you still require a ticket, please contact Denise before 12pm Friday 4th December.

PEDSAC Steak Night

Our next steak night will take place this Friday, 4 December 2015.

We are planning a big screen music video night. The playlist will include great old and new numbers performed "Live" on the big screen and tv's in the club. You can look forward to performances by ZZ Top, Brian Adams, Queen, Michael Jackson, Blondie, Great White, AC-DC and many more just to name a few.

Tickets will cost R80, which includes your steak, sides and salad, with R20 of the entry going towards the attendance cash draw. Information will be sent out via sms and email shortly.

Super 6

The second super 6 was scheduled last Saturday and was unfortunately called off due to the persistent easterly winds. All the prizes was given out in a lucky attendance draw and some folk walked away with nice meat hampers, half lambs, cooler boxes and many more.

The super 6 leagues is a club event open to all members to participate in. Non-club members are welcome to enter and participate by fishing on a club member's boat. Entry fees are R70 for adults and R30 for U/16 juniors. Super 6 round 3 will be fished on the 30th January 2016. Entry and skippers briefing will be on the Friday, 29th January.

Christmas Classic

The Christmas Classic will be fished from 27-30 December 2015. Registration, skippers meeting and clarification of the rules will be on the 26th December starting from 16:00. This is a 10 Species competition and some magnificent cash prizes will be up for grabs. Tickets cost R150 / angler.

Chairman's Yellowtail Challenge

The R10,000-00 challenge was called off and postponed due to bad weather. We will re-schedule this challenge in the new year when better weather can be expected.

The Australian Snapper – Fisheries in New Zealand.

I often came across some photos on the internet of fish caught in New Zealand that is strikingly "identical" to our Basterman (Santer) found here in South Africa. They refer to these fish as Snapper. But when I search the internet, I only find reference to a fish called the Australian Snapper which is caught in most of the Indo-Pacific region, including New Zealand. These fish however look like a cross between a Daggerhead, Scotsman and a Basterman. So I am left a bit confused and have corresponded with an ex-pat pal of mine living in New Zealand and who fish for these species extensively during their season to find out a bit more about these apparent two different species found there, but called by the same name. I will hopefully have some answers by the next issue. But for now, look at the picture attached, followed by the article about their conservation efforts on this species and judge for yourself – Richard Donaldson.



Picture of a 14,155kg Snapper? Caught in New Zealand.

The recent furore over snapper fishing in the Hauraki Gulf should serve as a wake-up call for recreational fishers.

This is not a David v Goliath story about big business squashing the poor little fisher.

It is a symptom of an outdated approach to recreational fishing, held in place by an ignorant belief that recreational fishers can't cause any damage with a hook and line.

In reality their impact is huge.

First, a quick bit of history.

Our snapper fisheries got devastated in the 1970s by poorly managed commercial fisheries.

This changed in 1986 when commercial fishing was severely restricted under the Quota Management System, and since then most fish stocks have been recovering slowly.

Cuts were made to the Snapper 1 commercial quota and recreational bag limits in 1997, and since then it has been slowly recovering. Anecdotally the fishing has become better in recent years.

The trouble is this is that the fish stock is still a long way from where it should be. It is still only about 19-24% of the un-fished stock. The Ministry of Primary Industries has, in quite a correct move, increased their target for most stocks to 40%. This target is partly for the good of fishers – more fish makes fishing easier – but also for the good of the environment. Snapper should be everywhere in the Hauraki Gulf, they are the centerpiece of the ecosystem. So to achieve the new, higher target, further cuts to fish takes are needed. Who should bear the brunt: recreational, commercial or customary fishers? This is where our fisheries management system, supposedly a world leader, descends into farce.

Everyone wants someone else to take the heat, and the Minister is left in the unenviable position of sorting it out. Side with the recreational fishers against industry and they will be taken to court. Side with industry against recreational fishers and they will lose votes. No wonder the politicians drag their feet. The trouble is that since 1997 when the last cuts were made, recreational fishing has continued to grow.

Recreational fishers now take around half the total catch in the Hauraki Gulf. How then can someone like Matt Watson come out claiming that commercial fishers are causing the real damage? A dead fish is a dead fish. The plain fact is that there is no effective cap on recreational fishing. Bag limits don't cut it – increased population, more leisure time and better fishing technology all mean that more and more fish get caught by recreational fishers. This will only get worse as the baby boomers look to see out their retirement on the waters of the Gulf. The problem is that there are more people, but there aren't more fish. Over the same time commercial fishers have faced a strict fishing limit under the quota management system. They are killing the same amount of fish that they were back in 1997 when their quota was last reduced.

The same cannot be said for recreational fishers.

Commercial fishers have shown that they can work together to manage fisheries well when left to their own devices – in other words when there are few recreational fishers involved. Most fish stocks are now well managed, particularly offshore. Inshore it is a different story because commercial fishers are still racing recreational fishers to catch the fish. Of course commercial fishers are not perfect – there are claims that some commercial operators throw fish overboard (an illegal practice known as high grading) to maximize the value of their catch.

This is a good reason to improve video monitoring of commercial vessels. But the real question we should be asking is why should commercial fishers stick to the rules and restrict their catch when the growth in recreational catch will suck up any fish they leave behind?

This current stoush is merely the latest manifestation of a festering sore in our fisheries policy – the lack of effective limits on recreational fishing. It won't go away because of simple mathematics. There are not 'plenty more fish in the sea' – we have already gone past the limits of the natural bounty.

Commercial fishers have done their bit and restricted their take for decades now. Yet there are more and more recreational fishers out fishing, and together they take more fish. Something has to give. This simple math's leaves us a simple set of solutions.

One is that we fish all the fish from the oceans, which clearly isn't acceptable. The second is that as our population (or number of fishing days) increases, the recreational bag limit will fall.

Recreational fishing groups are yelping about this now, but they can expect a lot more in the future.

The third option is that we allow commercial fishers to catch fewer and fewer fish over time. Expect a court case, because that is effectively nationalizing their quota, which is considered an asset.

The final option, which [we proposed in the book](#) *Hook, line and Blinkers*, and really the only sane one we can think of, is that recreational fishers get together and buy the quota off commercial operators over time.

That way as population increases, the commercial take can be reduced in an orderly fashion.

This could be easily afforded for a modest licensing fee. This fee would also finally allow for decent representation of recreational fishers, which is currently left to a rag tag mob of do-gooders. It would also get recreational and commercial fishers working together to improve fish stocks.

Maybe then our fisheries management would deserve the 'best in the world' moniker that we are only too eager to award ourselves.

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.