

# FOSAF adopts responsible policies on biodiversity

**F**OSAF's Kwa-Zulu Natal Chapter drafted a proposed suite of principles to facilitate the policies and strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of national freshwater fishery resources. These principles have been strongly supported by the Federation's EXCO and are, as such, a milestone in FOSAF's history, cementing beyond any reasonable doubt, the organisation's position as a truly responsible and serious champion not only of fly fishing, but of conservation.

Their position statement meets the need to conserve and sustain our valuable freshwater resources, but it also addresses the requirements of people who rely on fishing and aquatic resources for a range of cultural, social, recreational and economic purposes.

FOSAF believes that aquatic resources should be managed on four key principles: **sustainable development** (adopted from the *World Summit on Sustainable Development*), **sustainable fisheries resource management**, **integrated environmental management** and **integrated catchment management**. Based on these tenets, the following principles were accepted by FOSAF for the conservation and legal protection of rivers, freshwater bodies and aquatic plants and animals:

- ✍ An holistic, risk-averse approach for the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic systems and biodiversity resources.
- ✍ Sound and properly integrated management, development, and administration of inland fisheries.
- ✍ The protection of indigenous aquatic biodiversity resources as a priority, but with recognition of the role alien fish species play in recreation and commercial fishing. This implies that:
  - ✍ The conservation of indigenous fish species at risk will take precedence over any measures which might be designed to protect alien fish species.
  - ✍ The conservation of alien fish species is justified provided that any measures designed to protect them are not undertaken in ways that threaten the status of indigenous species.
- ✍ FOSAF recognises the importance of aquatic resources for recreation, tourism and commercial purposes, and as a source of food.
- ✍ FOSAF believes it imperative that national and provincial conservation authorities consult with all relevant stakeholders in formulating new legislation.
- ✍ FOSAF believes that recognition should be given to the rights of communal and private landowners to responsibly manage aquatic resources on or adjacent to their

land for their beneficial use while exercising “duty of care”.

- ✎ FOSAF believes that a **zoning system** for aquatic resources should be developed and implemented to delineate sensitive and non-sensitive zones, for the protection of threatened indigenous species, as well as important fisheries.
- ✎ FOSAF endorses that provision be made for legal protective measures to control the translocation and restocking of fish to prevent unauthorised stocking and the non-sustainable or wasteful use of aquatic species.
- ✎ FOSAF recognizes that aquaculture is becoming increasingly important commercially, with significant potential to have a negative impact on the aquatic resources. It believes, therefore, that it is necessary to establish the means to identify and control any adverse impact which could arise from aquaculture.
- ✎ FOSAF encourages the provision of an aquatic resource regulatory framework that is as uniform and consistent as possible throughout the country, while recognising the need to provide for any specific local circumstances.

This policy position puts FOSAF’s credentials beyond question. The challenge for FOSAF, at National, Chapter and individual level, is to really live up to these ideals. As a first attempt to cement progress, FOSAF will be motivating for a freshwater conservation conference to be held during March next year, involving all responsible stakeholders and, in particular, freshwater conservationists and scientists.

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