

AQUATIC INVASIVES SEMINAR . . .

By F. Croney

When the Foundation for Research Development of the CSIR in Pretoria and JLB Smith Institute of Ichthyology in Grahamstown got together to present in September a two-day symposium in Grahamstown on the management and control of invasive aquatic animals, trout anglers were expecting yet another official onslaught on their sport.

After all, it was a symposium in Grahamstown in April 1986 which culminated in legislation by the Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation removing all control and protection of trout in the province.

But trout played only a minor role in the September seminar at the 1820 Monument where the debate ranged on invasive aquatics from parasites, plants, insects, molluscs, birds and many species of fish, particularly aquarium exotics, other than trout.

Lack of proper communication by the Research Development Foundation and JLB Smith Institute meant that the Federation of East Cape Trout Angling Clubs was unable to be officially represented on the agenda. Nevertheless, the Federation was formally represented at the symposium by the chairman Ron Pitt and two officials, Giles Westcott and Bill Schattenberg, and also by FOSAF president and FECTAC hon. president Fred Croney, and was able to take part in question and answer debate.

Also, a striking illustrated poster setting out the views of the Federation and trout anglers in general was prominently displayed in the main foyer of the seminar venue and attracted a lot of attention. A written paper was informally circulated among delegates with a direct



Tom Sutcliffe (guest speaker) makes a point to CPS President, Dr Frank Bradlow at CPS annual dinner.



Councillor Eulalie Stott and the Director of the Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation, Dr Johan Neethling, listening to Tom Sutcliffe's speech.



Bert Jansen (right), winner of a gallon of whisky raffled at the CPS annual dinner dispenses a wee dram for a grateful Stuart Torrance.



Heather Smithers (right) who won the raffle gets her prize from Stuart Torrance, Lucy Lehr and Tom Sutcliffe.

interest in trout legislation.

Of the three papers specifically on trout and officially presented for discussion, only one, by Dr. Paul Skelton of the JLB Smith Institute, had reservations about the role of trout in South Africa. Yet even Skelton admitted that one "could not point a finger and say the trout was the culprit in the demise of endemic species" but that bass played a greater role in this respect.

Pro-trout papers were presented by Martin Davies of the Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science at Rhodes, University, and by Peter Jackson of the JLB Smith Institute. Davies stated that there had been a six-fold increase in the numbers of flyfishermen in the Cape in the past five years, and while recognising that there had to be control on "exotics" asked who was going to enforce them.

Jackson also stressed that "exotics were part of the scene and were here to stay and had to be properly managed".

He said there should be no ban on imported trout ova as, like the importation of thoroughbred racehorses, this would improve the quality of the South African product.

However, what for trout anglers amounted to the most important statement of the symposium came from Dr. Kas Hamman of the Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation.

Summing up the proceedings in the final session, and presenting a paper jointly with C.J. Kleynhans of the Transvaal Provincial Administration and O. Bourquin of the Natal Parks Board, Dr. Hamman said that the eradication of aquatic invasives – and *inter alia* trout – even by selective means, was "just a pipe dream at this stage".

He emphasised the point with these words: "There is a place for these (aquatic invasives); they are there; and there is no way you are going to get them out."

Ways and means of control and consideration of future legislation were subsequently discussed at a two-day closed workshop, details of which will not be known for some time. But the four main aims of the workshop which, according to Tony Ferrer of the Foundation for Research Development, would be "applying science to the real world", were: (1) Education; (2) Research; (3) Policy development leading to legislation; and (4) Implementation.