

FRESH  
WATER

# Fishing

at the

CAPE





## THE CAPE PISCATORIAL SOCIETY



Founded November, 1931, in succession to the Western Districts Game and Trout Protection Association constituted in September, 1902. Granted official recognition by the Cape Provincial Administration in terms of Section 14 of the Inland Fisheries Ordinance. The main object of the Society is to encourage and extend the culture and protection of trout and other desirable freshwater fish in the Cape.



Enquiries are welcomed from visiting anglers, to whom all possible help will be given.



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# FRESHWATER FISHING

*in the*

## Cape South Western Districts

SOUTH AFRICA

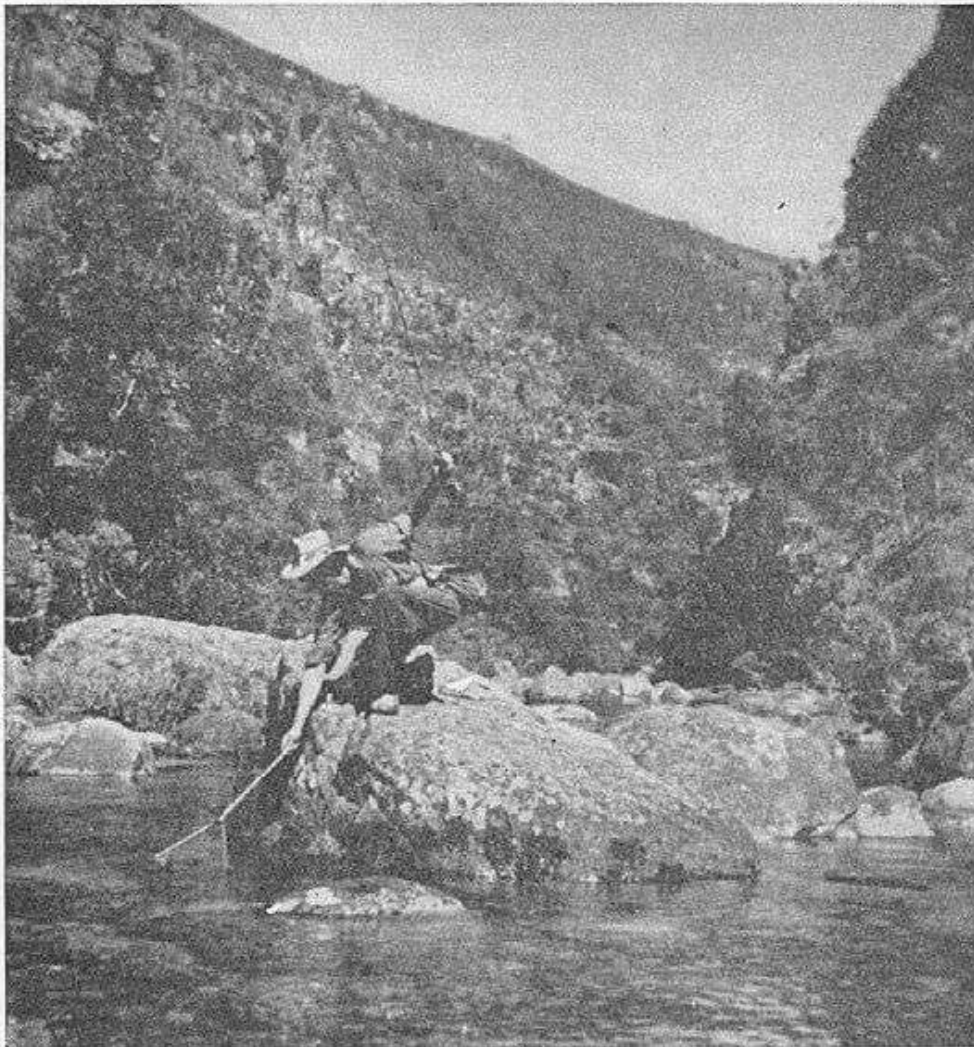
(WITH NOTES ON THE EASTERN CAPE)

*by*

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*Cover Design and Sketches by Wren Sargent*

*Published jointly by the*

CAPE PENINSULA PUBLICITY ASSOCIATION

*and the*

CAPE PISCATORIAL SOCIETY

CAPE TOWN

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SEE SUMMARY OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS—INSIDE BACK COVER.

# FRESHWATER FISHING AT THE CAPE



## PART I.

### CLIMATE.

The trout areas of the Western Cape Province are all within daily motoring range of Cape Town, in a region of winter rainfall and mountainous stream sources, where trout thrive at low altitudes and even at sea level. Rains and cold weather extend from about the middle of May to the early part of September, a period which coincides with the breeding season of trout in the southern hemisphere.

The best months for trout fishing in this western region are September, October, November and December. Thereafter, the lower parts of the rivers get very low in the normal summer drought and from the abstraction of water for irrigation, but there is still interesting fishing in the upland valleys. A general revival of fishing usually takes place after the autumn rains in April, until the closing of the trout season on May 15.

By contrast, in the Eastern Cape Province the trout streams are at higher altitudes and the rains fall in the summer months, when the rivers are often too strong and discoloured for fly fishing. Trout breed prolifically in the dry winter months when the streams are low, clear and cold. The best trout fishing in this eastern region is in the spring months, September and October, before the summer rains commence, and again in the autumn after the floods have run off.

Black bass breed when the water begins to warm up in early summer, and their close season is from September 1 to December 14. As they are usually found in enclosed waters and the lower parts of the large rivers, the bass fishing in the south-western Cape is at its best during the warm months when the water is clear, although the open season extends through the winter until August 31.

### INLAND FISHERIES LAWS.

Trout and black bass are protected by law in all inland waters in the Cape Province, wherever they occur. But in addition to this, all the principal rivers and large enclosed waters are proclaimed either as "Trout Areas" or "General Fish Areas". (These are indicated by the initials TA and GFA in Part II.)

*Trout Areas.*—No person may fish in a proclaimed Trout Area unless he has a licence entitling him to take trout. No fishing may be done except with rod and line and artificial non-spinning flies. All fishing must cease during the proclaimed close season, which is generally from May 16 to August 31. It should be noted that these restrictions apply to *all fish* which occur in a Trout Area, i.e. if bass or coarse fish are there, they are covered by the same laws as trout.

*General Fish Areas.*—A large number of waters in the Cape Province are scheduled as General Fish Areas, and contain bass, carp and indigenous fish. The legal requirements are that the angler must possess a licence; an "A" trout licence will cover him, otherwise he must obtain a "B" licence. All fishing must be done with rod and line, but any form of lure

or bait may be used. Some of the General Fish Areas are closed to all fishing from September 1 to December 14.

*Angling Licences.*—These are required by the Inland Fisheries Regulations, and are issued by all Receivers of Revenue in the Cape Province—in Cape Town, at Revenue Building, Caledon Street. In most country towns the licensing office is attached to the Magistrate's Court. The licence fees are as follows:—

*Angling Licence "A":* This is the complete licence, covering the holder for all fish and all areas, including trout: Male Persons of 16 years and over, annual £1, monthly 10/-, weekly 3/6. Male Persons under 16 years and Female Persons, annual 5/-.

*Angling Licence "B":* Male Persons of 16 years and over, annual 5/-. Male Persons under 16 years and Female Persons, annual 2/6. Although this is an incomplete licence, it is sufficient for large areas of the Province where trout do not occur. It is necessary for bass (when the "A" licence is not held) and for fishing in General Fish Areas.

Whilst the regulations do not state that a licence is required for carp and indigenous fish, when these fish occur in a proclaimed area a licence is necessary, as it is required for the taking of all fish in the area.

All angling licences expire on August 31 in each year. Annual angling licences are current from September 1, or the day of issue, until August 31. Monthly angling licences run from the date of issue to and including the day immediately preceding the same date of the following month. Weekly angling licences cover seven days including the day of issue, and can be obtained for two consecutive weeks. An angling licence may be used in any part of the Cape Province, but not in other Provinces.

An angling licence does not authorise the holder to enter or fish on private land without the owner's consent: it is not transferable, and must be produced on demand to the Police, an officer who shows his written authority or the owner of the fishery.

*Forest Department Fishing Permits.*—In addition to the Cape Provincial angling licence, it is necessary to have a fishing permit from the Forest Department for the forest reserves. The fees are as follows:—

Season permit 10/-, daily permit 1/-, three consecutive days 2/6.

Members of recognised angling societies, season permit 5/-.

The season forest reserve permit entitles the holder to fish on any forest reserve in the Union which has not been specially closed to fishing. In Cape Town these permits can be obtained from the District Forest Officer, C.T.C. Building, Plein Street.

In the western trout region near Cape Town, a number of the best fisheries are on forest reserves, and are therefore of importance to visiting anglers. Maps of the forest reserve trout fisheries in this area can be obtained from the Cape Piscatorial Society.

*Permits for Fishing on Native Reserves.*—In some of the trout fisheries in the eastern part of the Cape Province, Europeans are required to have permits from Native Commissioners (Magistrates) for entering native areas for various purposes, including fishing. The following charges are made:—

Per day 1/-, per week 3/6, per month 10/-, per year £1. Members of *bona fide* angling societies 15/- per annum. No charge for juveniles under 16 years.

*Open Seasons.*—September 1 is the general opening day for trout fishing in the Cape Province. The final closing day is June 1, but the open season is subject to modification by proclamation. In the western region the trout season usually closes on May 15. Variations are noted against the river systems mentioned in Part II.

The open season for bass fishing is from December 15 until August 31.

All kinds of fish in proclaimed Trout and General Fish Areas are subject to the close seasons scheduled for such areas.

*Size and Daily Bag Limits.*—The general size limit for both trout and bass is 10 inches, measured on a straight line from the tip of the snout to the extreme end of the tail. The daily bag limit for trout, including all kinds, is twelve per day; and for bass, including all kinds, also twelve per day.

In some rivers the size limit for trout is 9 inches, notably in the Eerste, Lourens, Dwars (Groot Drakenstein), Little Berg, Elands (Villiersdorp) and Smalblaar rivers. Other variations in size and bag limits are scheduled for some defined areas. The limits for yellowfish are 12 fish per day, of not less than 12 inches long.

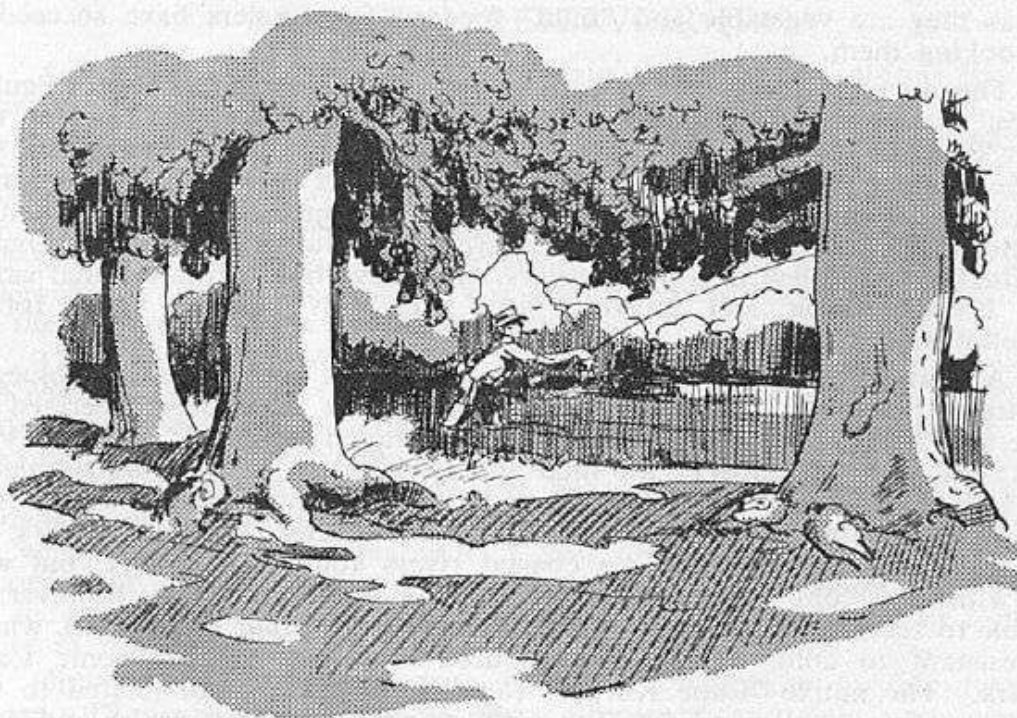
*Methods of Capture Permitted.*—Trout may only be taken by angling with rod and line with non-spinning artificial flies, dressed on single hooks not exceeding the size "2/0" (i.e.  $1\frac{1}{8}$  in. in length of shank). This restriction applies to all kinds of fish in a proclaimed Trout Area.

Bass may only be taken by angling with rod and line, but any form of artificial fly, lure or bait may be used (except in Trout Areas, where "fly only" is the rule). This also applies to all fish in a proclaimed General Fish Area.

The hook size limit of 2/0 is very large, but it is provided mainly in connection with discoloured rivers in the eastern area. Most anglers use smaller flies.

Landing nets may be used, but the opening may not exceed 18 inches in greatest diameter. A number of methods of taking fish are prohibited, viz.: explosives, poisons, fish kraals and traps, spears, grains, gaffs, clubs, etc., propelled missiles and hooks used for "snatching".

*Condensed summaries of the Cape Inland Fisheries Laws, including lists of the rivers and other waters scheduled as Trout and General Fish Areas, can be obtained from the Cape Piscatorial Society.*





PART II.

FISHING AREAS  
AND  
ANGLING NOTES

### CAPE TOWN.

Many of the best trout and bass fishing waters can be reached on good roads or by short railway journeys.

In the Cape Peninsula there is freshwater fishing in the various lakes of the Cape Flats, mainly for the introduced carp which grow to a large size in this climate. The dominating presence of carp has indeed prevented the establishment of largemouth bass in most of these waters. Nevertheless, the carp are a real asset to many bottom-fishers, various kinds of paste being the usual bait. Two public waters are open to all comers: Princess Vlei on municipal lands alongside the Prince George Drive to Muizenberg, and the larger Zeekoe Vlei. The latter is a proclaimed General Fish Area and an angling licence is required, but there is no close season and carp are not covered by size and bag limits. In lakes and farm dams where carp have not taken over the water, largemouth bass do well.

There are no large indigenous freshwater fish in the Cape Division, but the grey mullet or "springer" (*Mugil cephalus*), an estuarine fish which establishes freshwater colonies, is a permanent inhabitant of suitable water near sea level. These springers grow large and cause spectacular swirls, but as they are vegetable and "mud" feeders, few anglers have succeeded in hooking them.

The mirror variety of the carp, with only a few large and irregular scales, is the usual kind taken; but some are almost scaleless, and at the other extreme some are fully covered with normal scales—having reverted to the original type of the Common Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*). Various kinds of fish of the carp family were introduced in the nineteenth century, including the Crucian Carp (*Carassius carassius*); and domestic Goldfish (*Carassius auratus*) have escaped into open waters, often reverting to the original carp-like bronze colour and growing large. Hybrids between these forms sometimes occur.

At various times European perch and tench and American bluegill sunfish, largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass have been liberated in waters of the Cape Flats, and may be encountered in some. At Sand Vlei (Lakeside and Muizenberg), the mud-bream or kurper (*Tilapia mossambica*) has been introduced. This fish, which has become famous in the Far East for its adaptability to culture in both fresh and brackish waters, is indigenous in the Indian Ocean coastal rivers above Algoa Bay, but will not withstand cold water. Near sea level on the Cape Flats, however, it is able to survive the winters. A smaller species (*Tilapia sparrmanii*), which is resistant to cold, has been introduced with success into some Cape waters. The native "Cape Kurper" (*Sandelia capensis*), not related to the foregoing, is a small perch-like fish with rounded tail, large scales and dark radiating stripes on the cheeks, very common in streams and lakes in the southern part of the Cape. Interesting small forms are the scaleless *Galaxias*, a minnow-sized freshwater species found at the southern tip of



Africa; and a silvery sprat or "whitebait", an estuarine form which has become established in some Cape Flats waters.

### LIESBEEK RIVER (TA).

Cape Town became quite notable a few years ago for the remarkable catches of rainbow trout which were made in the Liesbeek River, right in the built-up areas and at the bottom of suburban gardens. This river actually has all the attributes of a good trout water, rising as it does in various gorges of the mountain above the National Botanical Gardens at Kirstenbosch, and receiving much of the high rainfall from the Newlands slopes, and flowing over a clean, rocky bed in its upper reaches. It also gets water from the Newlands Spring. At one time pollution put the river out of favour, but this was cleaned up by the City Council. A small lake was constructed in the lower reaches at Observatory, for balancing the flow, and when stocked with rainbow trout in 1946 astonishing results quickly followed.

When the trout fishing opened in September 1948, several of these trout were caught in the lake and higher up the river which had attained the weight of 3 lb. and over in a little over two years. Remarkable catches were made in the river and lake for some years after this, and it was proved that rainbows were breeding in the gravels of the river in the vicinity of Bishopscourt; but the matter became too public for the stock to be allowed to remain in such numbers, and they are soon reduced by illegal fishing. Those in the lake were eventually crowded out by the inevitable increase of carp, which followed an introduction from unknown sources—carp of over 30 lb. being caught which could not have been more than 7 years old.

The Liesbeek River remains a proclaimed Trout Area down to the Durban Road bridge at Mowbray, and a fair number of trout are taken each season, mainly in early spring and after the autumn rains. The part below the bridge is now a General Fish Area, including the lake, where bait may be used throughout the year. Although its temporary glory has departed, the stream is well worth a try when the water conditions are favourable, and quite a few of the younger generation of trout anglers had their noviciate there.

### STEENBRAS RESERVOIR (TA).

An upland valley behind the mountain ridge above Gordons Bay was dammed to form this large reservoir of the City of Cape Town. The result was the creation of a beautiful lake of over 800 acres in magnificent surroundings, well worthy of a visit whether one fishes or not. There are two entrance gates, one at Steenbras Siding over Sir Lowry Pass, and the other at the filtration plant at the top of the City Council's road pass from Gordons Bay. A tarmac road connects the two gates and runs along the reservoir for about five miles. The distance from Cape Town to either of the entrance gates is about 40 miles.

The amber-coloured water of Steenbras Reservoir is not suitable for the natural breeding of trout, but fingerlings introduced from the hatcheries thrive and grow rapidly. In recent years a very generous stocking programme has been carried out by the Department of Nature Conservation in the public interest. The reservoir has an abundant standing crop of aquatic insects, principally "glassworms"—the larvae of a harmless midge, on which trout become sizeable at a year old, and two-pounders in their second year. In 1956, brown trout up to 3½ lb. and rainbow trout up to 4½ lb. were taken. The American Eastern Brook Trout grows to 2 lb. or more in this reservoir.

Unlike the trout, smallmouth bass breed naturally in this type of water. They are plentiful in Steenbras Reservoir and fight very gamely, but their growth is rather slow, although fish of 2½ lb. have been taken.

All the angling is done from the banks and many fish are taken on fly, but the lack of boats for covering the water is partly compensated by



Steenbras Reservoir.

permission to use spinning lures in this particular water. ("Fly only" is the general rule in Cape trout areas.) Thread-line outfits are therefore popular at Steenbras Reservoir, and a successful lure is the Swedish "Abu" spinner in various sizes.

Steenbras Reservoir is closed to all fishing from August 31 to December 14 in the breeding season of the smallmouth bass, but both trout and bass may be taken for the rest of the year.

Angling tickets for Steenbras Reservoir are issued by the Cape Piscatorial Society, on behalf of the City Council, to holders of "A" Angling Licences, at the rate of 2/- per rod per day. Entry permits for car and driver at 2/- per day, and passenger permits at 1/- per head are also necessary, and these can also be obtained from the Society as well as at the City Hall.

Maps showing the areas open to fishing and copies of the angling regulations for Steenbras Reservoir are issued with the tickets.

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In the western Cape Province there are many parts of the trout streams and bass dams which provide good fishing, but as they are on private property they can only be fished on the invitation of the owners. The following notes are therefore intended for general guidance, stating where possible the waters which are open to visitors.

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### EERSTE RIVER (TA).

The Eerste River rises in the mountain basin above Stellenbosch and skirts that town, passing down the farming valley through Vlottenberg, Lynedoch and Faure on its way to the sea in False Bay. It has long been noted for its rainbow trout fishing and has produced better bags than any other river of its type in the western Cape. Moreover, it is one of the few South African rivers where trout thrive right down at sea level, and where there is a small but definite migration to and from the salt water of the estuary and open sea. *The size limit is 9 inches.*

The upper reaches are on the Jonkershoek Forest Reserve and can be fished by holders of the Forest Department fishing permit, who should report at the office of the forest station before going higher up the valley. The forest roads give access to several miles of the upper river. The mountain scenery is grand, and the river is clear and flows in a rocky bed. Small rainbow trout are very numerous, but there are better fish to be found in the deeper pools, with a few brown and brook trout. The Inland Fish Hatchery of the Department of Nature Conservation is situated at Jonkershoek.

Below the Jonkershoek Reserve the river passes through private farms, and permission to fish must be sought from the various owners. In the

valley above Stellenbosch the river bed is clean and stony and the banks are shaded by poplar, oak, wattle and indigenous bush, but the pools hold rather larger trout than the higher waters. Part of the river is on municipal land. Below the town the pools become larger, with soft bottoms between rocky runs, and hold bigger trout. In spring and early summer the food supply is very rich and the condition of the rainbows is high, and in every season numbers from two to four pounds are caught. The wooded banks serve to keep the water cool, but unfortunately the fishing is liable to end abruptly by mid-summer when most of the flow is diverted into irrigation furrows for the fruit farms. Fishing is resumed in April after the autumn rains.

The lower part of the Eerste River holds silvery rainbows of the coastal type, but this section rarely clears for fly fishing until mid-October and is liable to dry out almost entirely in the summer drought. The river bed is sandy and the fishing is all on private lands. *The lower Eerste River, below Lynedoch road bridge, is open until June 1, to allow for fishing for sea-run rainbows after the autumn rains.*

Whilst it is readily conceded that small flies on fine points will take trout anywhere, visitors should note that in spring and early summer in this part of the world rainbow trout are usually taken on a rather large fly (size 8 or larger), fished wet and downstream. Most of the fancy patterns are suitable for this type of fishing, local favourites being *Invicta* and *Mountain Swallow*. There are times when the angler will not see a rising fish all day, but will find that the wet fly fished deep into likely places, and even drawn with a jerking movement against the flow, will take trout. The fact is that the trout are feeding on fairly large food items on or near the bottom or borne down by the current, and examination of stomach contents will reveal small river crabs, dragonfly larvae, grasshoppers, tadpoles and small frogs, all of which may be imitated by some phase of the movement of the large sunken fly. At other times, of course, and particularly in clear and low water, smaller flies and other tactics can be employed with advantage.

#### **LOURENS RIVER (TA).**

The Lourens River passes through Somerset West and goes to the sea near the Strand. It is a short rocky river, with rapid run-off after rains, and wooded banks. It contains numerous rainbow trout, rarely exceeding 12 oz., and some brown trout. All the fishing is on private properties. *Size limit 9 inches.*

#### **BERG RIVER SYSTEM (TA).**

The Berg River system provides some of the best and most diverse fishing near to Cape Town.

##### **UPPER BERG RIVER.**

The main stream of the upper Berg River comes from a mountain basin surrounded by towering crags, which forms part of the Fransch Hoek forest reserve and is separated from the fruit-farming valley by a series of wooded hills. The entrance to this reserve is at the village of La Motte on the road to Fransch Hoek from Klapmuts or Paarl. The Forest Department fishing permit should be shown at the forester's office near the gate. Good forest roads go up the valley for about eight miles to Assegaibos, the highest forest settlement, and the main river can be followed on foot from this point. Below Assegaibos the river can be fished at many points near the road, and there are a number of pools and runs containing rainbow and brown trout, some of the latter growing large in this river.

The smaller Fransch Hoek stream, which is crossed by a bridge to reach the forest office at La Motte, contains trout, but mostly on private farms. It joins the main Berg River at the lower end of the forest reserve which extends downstream to near the road and railway bridges.

## WEMMER RIVER.

The Wemmer River joins the Berg River a little below the bridges, and the lower part is on private farms. This river has a large catchment area, including the Zachariahshoek forest reserve and the properties of the Cape Town City Council, where the rainfall is one of the highest in the Cape Province. At the time of writing, the state of the Wemmer and the part of the Berg below its confluence is uncertain, as the construction of the huge earthen dam in the Wemmershoek valley has inevitably caused much discoloration of the water and silting of the bed. Previous to the beginning of this work the Wemmer was noted for its extremely clear water and the abundance of both brown and rainbow trout, and the best parts could be fished on the Forest Department permit.

## GROOT DRAKENSTEIN.

From its confluence with the Wemmer, the main Berg River flows through the fruit-farming districts of Groot Drakenstein and Simondium towards Paarl. It continues to be a proclaimed Trout Area down to the Government Experimental Farm, "Bien Donn ", but its course includes many large deep pools, fringed with palmiet rushes and connected by stony runs. Such pools may contain the indigenous coarse fish, the "witvis" (*Barbus andrewi*), which will sometimes take the artificial fly and give fair sport. This part of the river holds trout, but their number is limited by the competition of other fish and the high water temperature in summer, although years ago it was noted for producing some of the largest brown trout to be caught in the Cape Province. Smallmouth bass are plentiful.

The Dwars River, which flows from Banhoek to join the Berg River in the Groot Drakenstein district, is somewhat similar to the upper Eerste River in character, holding rainbows and some brown trout. The record river-caught brown trout of 8½ lb. was taken in a large pool of the Dwars River in April 1932 by the late Mr. Donald Swan. All the fishing on this river is on private properties. *Size limit 9 inches in Dwars River.*

## LOWER BERG RIVER TRIBUTARIES.

Two lower tributaries of the Berg River are also Trout Areas, viz.: the Klein Berg River, Tulbagh, and a stream known as "Twenty-four Rivers" in the Porterville district. The fishing is mainly on private farms.

## BERG RIVER (GFA).

The Berg River from the lower boundary of the trout area at "Bien Donn " right down to tidal water is a General Fish Area, with close season from September 1 to December 14. A good deal of fishing is done for bass and witvis, but there are no eels in this river, as it flows to the Atlantic coast. In Paarl and Huguenot, parts of the Berg River are on municipal land to which the public have access, and there are many other fishing spots on private lands between Paarl and Wellington and further downstream in this long river.

## BREEDER RIVER SYSTEM (TA).

### SMALBLAAR RIVER.

The Smalblaar River in Du Toits Kloof is one of the most productive trout fisheries in the western Cape, particularly as some of the best parts are open to fishing by holders of the Forest Department permit. The bed of this river is strewn with rocks and boulders which form innumerable holding places for trout, so that they can be taken in fast water as well as in the pools.

The national road to the north, between Paarl and Worcester, sweeps upwards in bold curves cut in the slopes of the Klein Drakenstein Mountains to reach the gateway of Du Toits Kloof at an altitude of 2,690 feet. The road then drops down the mountain valley holding the small northern stream of the Smalblaar system, which is on private property. The road tunnel is situated on the boundary of this property and the Forest Reserve, and it pierces a rocky bastion above the deep twisting gorge by which the river leaves the upper valley. The road emerges from the tunnel on to a neck of forest land about half-a-mile wide which connects two large forest areas lying to the northward and southward



The following waters can be fished from this point on Forest Reserve: the main Smalblaar River for about half-a-mile from the Chasm Pool below the tunnel to a point a little below the junction of the Elandspad; the Krom River tributary about a quarter of a mile below the tunnel, coming from the northern part of the Forest Reserve; and the Elandspad River coming from the southern part of the Reserve. The road bridge crosses the Elandspad, and this tributary has good pools extending up for about two miles, after which it becomes precipitous. A little below the Elandspad bridge the main river passes onto private properties for a distance of about 2½ miles, at the lower end of which the Du Toits Kloof Hotel is situated. There is then another stretch of about 2 miles of Forest Reserve water, containing some of the best pools on the river. The boundaries of the Forest Department are indicated by notice boards.

The Smalblaar River holds many rainbow trout, and some brown and brook trout have been planted in recent years. *The size limit for trout is 9 inches.*

### HOLSLOOT RIVER.

Another long tributary of the Breede system, the Holsloot River in the Rawsonville district, is a very good rainbow trout fishery. It is reached by turning off the national road on the Worcester side of the Du Toits Kloof pass and going through Rawsonville (where there is an hotel) for a short distance over the bridges of the Smalblaar and Holsloot to the turn-off of the gravel road to Louwshoek. The Forest Reserve on the Holsloot is about 10 miles in from this turn-off and the boundary board will be found just over the second high road-cutting. The forest stretch of fishing extends for three or four miles up to the Worcester reservoir at Stettynskloof.

### WITTE RIVER.

At the top of the Bain's Kloof Pass, about 8 miles from Wellington, the upper valley of the Witte River provides brown trout fishing amidst wild mountain surroundings. Good accommodation can be had at the hotel situated on the crest of the road pass. The river valley is separated from the main road by an escarpment, which is crossed by a mountain road turning off before the hotel is reached. In the clear pools of the upper valley the brown trout are extremely wary, but skilful stalking and presentation of the fly can be well rewarded. Brook trout have also been introduced to the river. The season closes on April 15, to allow for the earlier spawning of these trout. From the back of the hotel, Forest Reserve extends upstream in the gorge for some miles to the boundary of the mountain block "Oostenberg", owned by the Paarl Municipality and rented for fishing by the Cape Piscatorial Society. Visitors' fishing tickets can be obtained from the hotel.

## CERES.

In addition to its many other attractions as a holiday resort, Ceres is one of the best centres for trout fishing in the western Cape. It can be reached by first-class roads, but has the great advantage that visitors can go there by train, stay at one of the hotels or guest-houses and be within easy walking distance of the fishing. Another good point is that much of the trout fishing is under the control of the Municipal Council and visitors can obtain a permit from the Town Clerk, Ceres, on production of an "A" Angling Licence, and payment of 5/- per fishing season for the Ceres permit. The Ceres municipal water extends for about 14 miles of river and is a great asset to this beautifully-situated country town.

The Dwars, or upper Breede River, which flows through the Ceres town area, produces many good bags of rainbow trout each season, and the rocky pools in the Michell's Pass gorge below the town yield brown and rainbow trout and smallmouth bass. The river rises some 15 miles north of Ceres on the Witzenberg Vlakte, or plateau, between the Witzenberg and Schuurfteberg ranges, but the upper waters are small. The Ceres water supply comes from the Koekoedouw kloof, a mountain valley behind the rugged escarpment which separates it from the course of the Dwars River. The whole of the Ceres municipal catchment area, including the Arch Dam which supplies the hydro-electric and domestic pipeline, above the "Governor's Pool" at the foot of the Koekoedouw kloof, is closed to angling, but in any case it is mainly a spawning area and nursery for the trout. This water supply also feeds the canal leading to the famous "Reflection Pool" (where fine trout can be admired, but not caught!) and the open-air swimming bath in the municipal Pine Forest parklands, and to the town irrigation furrows along the streets. The continuation of the kloof stream from the Governor's Pool down to the junction with the Dwars River and much of the river passing through and winding around the town can be fished from municipal lands.

The town water includes many fine pools which yield good rainbow trout, but in summer it is best to fish early in the morning and in the evening. The condition of large rainbows taken in the town waters is usually excellent. Many fish of 1½ lb. to 4 lb. are taken.

The Titus River, which joins the loop of the Dwars River on its left bank on the southern boundary of the town lands, comes from private farms.

Ceres, at an altitude of about 1,500 feet above sea level, is situated at the extreme south-western corner of the fertile Warm Bokkeveld plain, from which the gorge of the Dwars River is the only water outlet. The road and railway ascend this gorge from Wolseley to Ceres and this way of approach is known as Michell's Pass, and this name is usually applied to the trout waters extending for about 6 miles in the river bed below the road. The large rock pools at the head of the gorge, under the waterfalls of the river's break-through, are below the railway tunnel on the border of the town and can be reached by hill paths, and easier descents to the river can be made further down the pass. The Michell's Pass water, down to and including the Witels River, can be fished on the municipal permit, but the stretch of about 1¼ miles above the White Bridge at the bottom of the pass is on forest reserve.

## WITELS RIVER.

For the more active angler, who likes some wading and scrambling in wild mountain kloof, where progress reveals rocky pools of clear water which must be approached with the utmost care to avoid scaring the trout, the Witels River tributary will offer fascinating prospects. This river comes down a longer gorge to join the Dwars River on the left bank about 3 miles down the pass from Ceres. It is noted for the great numbers of brown trout in its upper waters, sections which can only be reached by parties of anglers who are organised for "swimming" their gear, supplies and equipment through long chasm pools. The lower reaches, however,

can be covered in the course of a day's rather strenuous fishing. (Visitors who are interested can obtain a series of reports on this river, published in PISCATOR as the result of exploration by members of the Cape Piscatorial Society.)

### WORCESTER.

The rainbow trout fisheries on the Hex River can be seen from the train and the national road, extending for about 6 miles from Sandhills station down to De Wet station at the bottom of the Hex River Pass. The open season on the Hex River, and its two tributaries, the Amandel and Sanddrift rivers, above the farm bridge at Sandhills is from September 1 to May 15, and below that bridge from October 1 to May 15. The Hex has a deservedly good reputation as a rainbow trout water. The upper portions are in the hands of private owners. Below Sandhills the fishing is under the control of the Worcester Trout Anglers' Association, Worcester, and local restrictions apply. The Association issues visitors' tickets, under certain conditions, on and after November 1 at the rate of 7/6 per day.

### VILLIERSDORP.

The Elands River, flowing past Villiersdorp from the valley above, is a clear trout stream although it joins the peat-stained Sonderend River below the town. It is also in the Breede River system. It contains rainbow trout, on which there is a size limit of 9 inches.

### THE BREEDE RIVER SYSTEM (GFA).

The whole of the Breede River system, below the White Bridge in Michell's Pass and including all tributary waters which are not Trout Areas, is a General Fish Area with close season from September 1 to December 14. In common with the Berg River system, it contains the indigenous witvis or baardman (*Barbus andrewi*), but unlike that system it receives a population of freshwater eels from the Indian Ocean. It has many non-indigenous fish; a few trout and numbers of largemouth and smallmouth bass and carp. There is smallmouth bass fishing on forest reserve in parts of the lower Witte River on the Ceres side of Bain's Kloof pass and in the main Breede River for some distance above the Darling Bridge. Fishing places, mainly on farms, extend all the way down this long river through the Divisions of Worcester, Robertson and Swellendam to tidal waters; and there is a good deal of bass and bottom fishing in the Brandvlei irrigation lake (Lake Marais) near Worcester. Sections of the Breede River near the national road bridge at Swellendam are good smallmouth bass water. The long peat-stained tributary, the Sonderend River, also holds bass and witvis.

### THE OLIFANTS RIVER SYSTEM (GFA).

Although there are several proclaimed Trout Areas in the mountainous sources of this river system, they are on private properties and too remote to be of interest to most visitors. The remainder of the Olifants River system, including the long Doorn River, is a General Fish Area but without a close season, except for bass (which may not be taken from September 1 to December 14).

It is one of the most interesting river systems in the Western Cape Province, both on account of its size and its comparative wealth in species of indigenous fish. It is the largest river system draining to the Atlantic Ocean south of the Orange River and contains at least seven species of freshwater fish found in no other river.

The Olifants River yellowfish (*Barbus capensis*) is the largest indigenous freshwater fish in the western Cape Province and a very game species as well. It is closely akin to the Orange River yellowfish (*Barbus holubi*), but is definitely a distinct form found only in the Olifants River system. The genus *Barbus* has many species large and small, widely distributed in Africa and southern Asia; represented in Britain by the river barbel and in India by the mahseers. The Olifants River yellowfish is plentiful, but



**Oliphants River Yellowfish, weighing 13 $\frac{3}{4}$  lb., taken with a bass rod and plug, played for fifty minutes.** *Photo: D. Roth.*

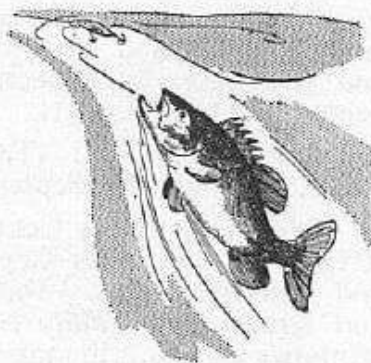
not always easy to catch. It can be taken by bottom fishing with baits, but the sport that it gives at times on artificial lures has entitled it to be classed as a game fish. In clear streams or runs of the main river it will give good sport to the fly rod; but the larger specimens are usually taken on spinning tackle in the pools. Spoons, minnows, plugs and spinners of all kinds have all given good results, and on occasions baiting with smaller indigenous fish has proved deadly. Large yellowfish take a lot of killing on light tackle. They are reputed to grow to a length of four feet, and fish of 20 to 30 lb. have been reported. Big fish are sometimes known locally as "kalwerkop" (calf's head), and others with peculiar mouth development as "rubber lips". Rod-caught yellowfish of 7 to 15 lb. are caught each year in this river system, often in the months of September, October and November when they prey on the smaller fish massed below the rapids; and the best specimen preserved in the South African Museum weighed 18 $\frac{3}{4}$  lb.

Another Olifants River species is the "saw-fin" (*Barbus serra*), locally known as the "freshwater snoek" or "witvis" (although it has no teeth in the mouth and is distinct from the witvis of the Berg and Breede rivers). It does not grow as large as the yellowfish, but gives fair sport; it has a long head and dark patches on the body and the back fin has a serrated spine like a carp. A third sizeable species is the "sandfish" (*Labeo seeberi*), a rather slender fish with small scales and a sucking mouth, which feeds mainly on vegetable matter and may grow to a length of about two feet. There are several small minnow-sized species of *Barbus* confined to this river system, but they are mainly of interest for bait or to collectors.

The Olifants is a good smallmouth bass river and many fish up to about 4 lb. are caught, but the fishing spots have to be selected, as long stretches of the bed are covered with white sand and are unproductive. Some largemouth bass are also present, particularly in the large irrigation dams on the river at Clanwilliam and Bulshoek. A largemouth bass of 7 lb. 11 oz. was caught in the Clanwilliam Dam on a spinner in August 1951. A rocky section downstream of the Bulshoek Dam is known as the "Cascades" and is a good place for spinning and bait fishing for large yellowfish and bass. Here visitors should be wary when fishing from isolated rocks in the gorge, in case the barrage sluices are opened enough to cause a rise in the water level; but, on the other hand, such an artificial spate may have a stimulating effect on the yellowfish.



There are good hotels at Citrusdal and Clanwilliam, and visitors will be able to obtain information about the local fishing places. The district is liable to be very hot in the mid-summer months.



Unfortunately, the many brown, peat-stained streams along the Garden Route are of no interest to the angling visitors, as this kind of water is unsuitable for trout, nor have bass become established to any extent.

### **GROENVLEI LAKE, KNYSNA (GFA).**

Groenvlei Lake, alongside the Garden Route national road between Sedgefield and Knysna, is the only purely freshwater lake in the Wilderness chain and one of the best natural bodies of water in the Cape Province. In the absence of any sizeable native fish, this water has been taken over by the introduced largemouth bass and bluegill sunfish and become a famous fishery. In 1955 largemouth bass of 6¼ lb. and 5½ lb. were taken in this lake, and the bluegill fishing is exceptionally good and these sunfish attain a weight of about 2 lb. in this water. This lake has a special close season from September 16 to November 14. There is an hotel on the lake and boats may be hired.

## **TROUT AND BASS FISHING IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE.**

For the benefit of visiting anglers, the following brief notes on freshwater fishing in the eastern part of the Cape Province are appended. The main trout fisheries are in the Border district in streams from the Amatole Mountains, and in the rivers flowing from the Drakensberg range.

*Alice:* (TA) Rainbow trout in Tyumie River on Native Reserve. Open season September 1 to May 15.

*Keiskammahoek:* (TA) Rainbow trout and some brown trout, in Wolf and upper tributaries of the Keiskamma River. September 1 to May 15.

*King William's Town:* (TA) Upper Buffalo River, brown and rainbow trout; best fishing in Maden Dam, tickets from Town Clerk. Also rainbows in Rooikrans Dam. September 1 to May 15. (GFA) Buffalo River below Trout Area, including Laing Dam, bass, carp, eels. Season December 15 to August 31.

*Cathcart:* (TA) Klipplaat River, rainbow trout, September 1 to May 15. (GFA) Cathcart municipal dams, bass, December 15 to August 31.

*Stutterheim:* (TA) Upper Kubusie River, rainbow trout, September 1 to May 15. (GFA) Kubusie River below town, bass, no general close season.

*Barkly East:* (TA) Rainbow trout in Longkloof and Kraai Rivers and tributaries, season September 1 to June 1. (GFA) Kraai River below junction with Longkloof, yellowfish, Orange River system, no close season.

*Indwe and Elliot:* (TA) Rainbow trout in upper reaches of Tsomo River and tributaries of the Bashee River system. Season September 1 to June 1.

*Umtata:* (TA) Rainbow trout in upper reaches of Umtata River on Kambi forest reserve. September 1 to June 1. (GFA) Umtata River below Kambi Falls, smallmouth bass, season December 15 to August 31.

*Idutywa:* (GFA) Bass in Nqabara River, December 15 to August 31.

*Maclear and Ugie:* (TA) Famous centres for rainbow trout fishing, angling hotels and help to visitors from angling association. Tsitsa River and tributaries Wildebees, Mooi, Pot, Little Pot, Tsitsana, etc. Season September 1 to June 1.

*Mount Fletcher:* (TA) Rainbow trout in upper Tina, Luzi, Tinana rivers, etc. Season September 1 to June 1.

*Matatiele:* (TA) Centre for rainbow trout fishing in upper Kenegha River and tributaries Ceyata and Mabela, and Mvenyana River. Farms and native reserves. *Daily limit 9 trout.* Also for upper Umzimvubu and Krom rivers, *daily limit 9 trout of 8 inches and over.* Large river rainbows up to 7 lb. taken in this area. Hotels and angling associations. Open season September 1 to June 1. *Mount Frere,* on national road, is also a centre for Mvenyana and Kenegha rivers.

*Mount Ayliff:* (TA) Centre for rainbow trout fishing in Umzimhlava River and tributaries, September 1 to June 1.

*Bizana, E. Pondoland:* (TA) Umtamvuma River on Natal border, trout, *8 per day,* season September 15 to May 15.

*Kokstad:* (TA) Rainbow trout in Umzimhlava River, and centre for East Griqualand rivers, Umzimvubu, Ibisi, Gungununu, etc. September 1 to June 1. Trout in Cape Province on Natal border rivers, Ndowana and Ingwangwana, *10 trout of 8 inches and over,* season September 15 to May 31.

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## FLIES AND TACKLE

*Trout Flies.*—The choice of a fly is very much a matter of personal preference, and an angler is likely to do best with a pattern in which he has confidence, as much time can be consumed in making continual changes instead of persisting in fishing all likely spots.

Whilst there are few "local patterns" and attempts at exact imitations are seldom necessary, the visitor will wish to know what types are used by experienced anglers. The trout of these rivers take a great variety of food (see page 9) and rarely specialize on any kind of surface fly. Method of presentation and size of fly may count more than pattern. The following are some of the wet flies favoured by anglers in the western Cape Province: Invicta, March Brown (silver and rough bodies), Mountain Swallow, Jock Scott, Dunkeld, Connemara Black, Alexandra, Butcher, Pink Lady, Coachman, Wickham, Greenwell, M'Ginty, Hardy's Favourite, Prince Charming, Green Highlander, Lemon Grey, Teal and Red, Silver Grey, Black Gnat and some hackle patterns. Flies with jungle cock sides, tippet tails and real jay hackles are attractive, and there are many variations of the standard patterns. Large sizes, Nos. 6, 7 and 8 old scale can be fished on 2½-yard taper casts, down to 1x or 2x gut or the nylon equivalents. When the water fines-off, smaller flies, sizes 10 or 12, can be used with advantage to 3x equivalent. Few anglers use more than a single fly. When the water is low and clear, dry-fly fishing yields good results.

Tackle dealers in the larger towns carry selections of trout tackle, including split-cane and glass-fibre rods, reels, lines, casts, flies and all other requirements. Wading should be expected and rubber thigh-waders with non-slip soles give protection against the vegetation on the banks, but in summer many anglers discard them and fish in shorts and rope-sole shoes. Some, however, prefer drill slacks.

*Castig Rod Lures.*—Where spinning is allowed, as in bass waters and some reservoirs, fly-rod lures sometimes give good results, but most anglers use either the short rod and multiplier reel, or the fixed-spool, thread-line outfit with monofil nylon. All kinds of underwater spinners, devons and spoons are used, as well as floating plugs.

## SUMMARY OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

### CAPE PROVINCIAL ANGLING LICENCES:

"A" TROUT etc. (also covers holder for Bass and all other fish): Male Persons of 16 years and over: annual £1, monthly 10/-, weekly 3/6d. Male Persons under 16 years and Female Persons: annual 5/-.

The "A" Licence is necessary for all fishing in Trout Areas and is also valid in General Fish Areas.

"B" BASS etc. (not including Trout): Male Persons of 16 years and over: annual 5/-. Male Persons under 16 years and Female Persons: annual 2/6d.

The "B" Licence is necessary for Bass and for all fishing in General Fish Areas (not needed by holders of the "A" Licence).

FOREST DEPARTMENT FISHING PERMITS (additional to above) for fishing on any Forest Reserve: Season permit 10/-, daily 1/-, three consecutive days 2/6d. (Members of recognised angling associations, 5/- per season.)

From District Forest Officers.

NATIVE RESERVE PERMITS (from Native Commissioners): Per day 1/-, per week 3/6, per month 10/-, per year £1. (Members of *bona fide* angling societies, 15/- per annum.) No charge for juveniles under 16 years. Needed for some Eastern Province trout fisheries.

PERMISSION TO FISH: The Provincial Angling Licences do not give this, and the consent of the owner is required.

OPEN SEASONS: Trout, September 1 to May 15 (June 1 in some Eastern Province rivers); Bass, December 15 to August 31. (Except where varied by proclamation.)

SIZE LIMITS: Trout and Bass, 10 inches—but Trout 9 inches on Eeerste, Lourens, Dwars (Groot Drakenstein), Little Berg, Elands (Villiersdorp) and Smalblaar rivers. Yellowfish, 12 inches.

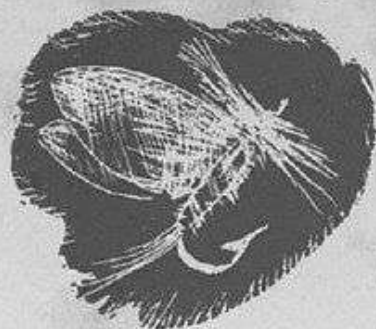
BAG LIMITS: Trout, Bass and Yellowfish, 12 per day each. (Except where varied by proclamation.)

LEGAL METHODS OF CAPTURE: Trout (and all fish in Trout Areas)—only by angling with non-spinning artificial flies. Bass (and all fish in General Fish Areas)—only by angling.


(See text for further details, or apply for complete schedules of Areas.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION consult Cape Piscatorial Society, 73 St. George's Street, Cape Town. Telephone 2-9549.

"PISCATOR", the Journal of the Cape Piscatorial Society, gives current reports and articles on Cape inland fishing.



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THIRD EDITION  
FEBRUARY, 1957