



NEWSLETTER

No 3: August 2018

FISHTORY

Share your 'fishtory' with us and leave your legacy...

Reeling in some preliminary results

We'd like to thank everyone who took the time to submit their 'fishtories' to us over the course of this project. We have been busy collating all the information that we've collected and sorting it into our database to be analysed by our clever stats gurus. The complete data analysis is now underway, and we hope to be able to share this information soon. As this has been the 'pilot phase' of this project, we hope that once all the FISHTORY data has been analysed, and we share this with the public, that everyone will see the value in preserving these valuable data and will continue to submit their data on the FISHTORY [website](#) or [Facebook page](#).

What we've landed

We have managed to collect over **3000 data entries** to be analysed. This includes historical data that we sourced from print media such as Tight Lines angling magazine, SA Angler Annuals, The Knysna & George Herald newspaper and images submitted directly to the FISHTORY database by the public. **We managed to collect images ranging all the way back from in 1890 up to 2015.**

What will this tell us?

A preliminary analysis of the data collected from **Tight Lines (Stywe Lyne) from the years 1960 to 2009** has been completed and we'd like to share a summary of some of these results with you. **Please note, all data presented in this Newsletter are the preliminary findings from ONLY the Tight Lines data. We will present all the FISHTORY data, once analysed, in a later Newsletter.*

Eight shore-based recreational fishery species were selected for this preliminary study and a total of 1689 shore-based catch records were analysed. These were dominated by **Dusky kob** *Argyrosomus japonicas* (37.8%), **Black mussel-cracker/Poenskop** *Crymatoceps nasutus* (18.9%), **Leervis** *Lichia amia* (16.9%), **White steenbras** *Lithognathus lithognathus* (6.6%), **Galjoen** *Dichistius capensis* (6.5%), **White mussel-cracker** *Sparadon durbanensis* (5.4%), **Shad/Elf** *Pomatomus saltatrix* (4.1%) and **Red/Copper steenbras** *Petrus rupestris* (2.1%).

Figure 1: Changes in composition (in numbers) of the catches of marine shore-based recreational angling fishery in South Africa based on a content analysis of "Tight Lines" magazine between 1960 and 2010.

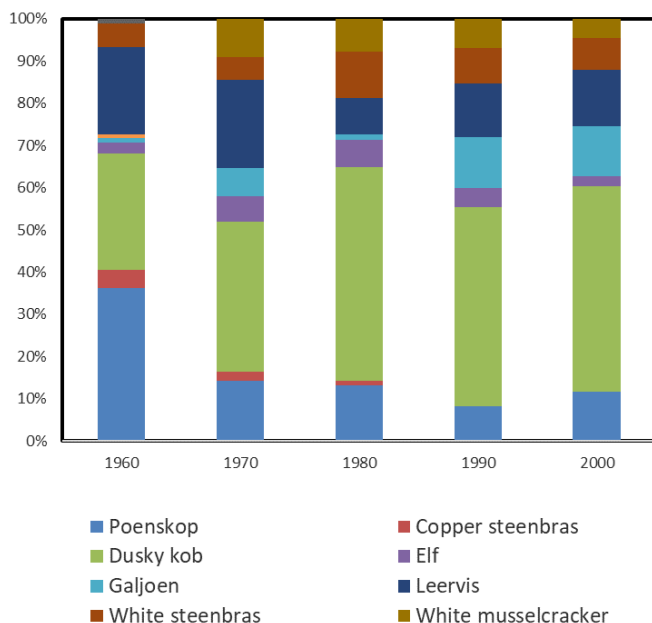


Figure 1 summarises the species composition by grouping the number of reported records for each of the eight species by decade. This was investigated further by analysing the trends in these reports

What could these trends mean?

Generally the number of fish reports declines rapidly after 1970. After 1982, there was **not a single report of a shore captured Copper steenbras**. There was a downward trend for 6 out of 8 of the species, with the large predatory, resident reef species (Poenskop and Copper steenbras) showing the steepest downward trend. This suggests that they were quickly depleted in the near-shore zone, more easily accessed by fisherman.

There was a slight increase in reports of Dusky kob which suggests a possible shift in targeting of trophy fish from large predatory fishes, such as the resident reef species, to the sand and estuary associated Dusky kob. Galjoen reports also increased over time, also likely due to a shift in targeting of larger to smaller species.

What else can the data tell us?

Size matters. The mean and maximum weight of trophy fish were investigated. The size of most species remained relatively stable, with the exception of Copper steenbras which showed rapid declines in mean size. Mean and maximum size of Dusky Kob increased, possibly due to increased focus on this as a target species, improved technology and angler learning.

Location. Location. Location. Geographic locations over time were analysed by plotting the maximum and minimum distances of catches from the Mozambique border, in order to give us an idea of each species’ distributional extent. Distributional extent remained similar for White steenbras and Shad, although the location of White Steenbras’ core distribution appears to have shifted approximately 200 km eastward. Distribution shrunk for Copper steenbras and White musselcracker towards their core areas in the Transkei and Port Elizabeth, respectively. Distribution expanded for Dusky kob and Galjoen, most likely because of an increase in effort for those species. Distributional shifts such as this could be attributed to many variables such as climate variability, climate change or the effects of exploitation which we will be exploring further.

Where to from here? This type of content analysis can an effective method of assessing some long –term trends in the stock status of South African linefish. Historical recreational fishing data is difficult to obtain, as official catch reports are sparse and inconsistent. By continuing to engage with anglers as citizen scientists, collecting these important historical data sources allows us to glimpse into South Africa’s recreational fishing history and to reconstruct a baseline from which current stocks can ne assessed and managed.

An example of the types of data extracted from Stywe Lyne/Tight Lines Magazine

ON LIGHT TACKLE

I am enclosing a photograph which could be of some interest to readers of “our” magazine. This salmon which weighed 51 lbs. was caught by Ronnie Wood down at the Umgazana River, on the Wild Coast. The fish was caught up stream about two miles from the river mouth, on a No. 1 hook, 8 lb. nylon and a Mitchell 301 reel.

The fish was hooked at four o’clock one afternoon and landed at 8 p.m. During that time the boat was dragged a full mile up river and finally beached some hundred yards from the mouth. This was an exciting duel and it was only angling of the highest order that ensured the successful outcome.

With all good wishes,
Roger Lamb, Durban.



The 51 lbs. salmon from the Umgazana River.

Stywe Lyne/Tight Lines
January 1968 Issue 96

Look out for more

We hope that you have enjoyed the brief summary of results from the preliminary data. Our results will only be as good as the data that we put in, so please send us your old photos and fishstories! We really appreciate the effort of those who have taken the time to share your FISHTORY with us! We look forward to sharing the full FISHTORY data set with YOUR contributed data soon.

Best fishes, The FISHTORYTeam



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