

Mapping fly-Fishing Tourism in Southern Africa

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Abstract

Research on fly-fishing tourism within the Southern African context is under-explored. This paper will seek to investigate fly-fishing destinations sourced from the *Federation of South African Fly Fishers guide to fly-fishing destinations in Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean* (2010). In addition, this paper will map out the different fly-fishing destinations over Southern Africa for different fish species as well as infrastructural initiatives put in place to support this kind of tourism. This information is augmented by a number of personal in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in the Southern African fly-fishing industry. In closing, this paper will pose suggestions in terms of how fly-fishing tourism can be developed as a form of niche market tourism in the Southern African context and highlighting the challenges faced.

Keywords: Fly-Fishing, Southern Africa, development, potential, tourism

Introduction

Angling¹ is a popular recreational activity for individuals participating therein (Hjalager, 2010). Bauer and Herr (2004, p. 74) note that a vast tourism market has emerged around angling globally. Visser and Hoogendoorn (2011) note that angling tourism and specifically fly-fishing tourism as an avenue of investigation requires attention, especially to shed some light on the potential economic benefits for Southern Africa. The region hosts 71 fish species that can be targeted with a fly rod, such as the alien species rainbow trout and brown trout as well as indigenous species such as yellowfish, tigerfish and sea fish (Wolhuter, 2010). Southern Africa in particular has a well established fly-

fishing tourism industry that is run by the private sector and occasionally supported by government poverty alleviation strategies (Du Preez & Lee, 2010). In terms of policy implications, Shrestha, Seidl and Moraes (2002, p. 298) argue that governments and local communities globally need to be made aware of tourism expenditure possibilities of recreational angling, rather than viewing fisheries as a 'harvestable renewable resource'. If angling tourism initiatives are implemented, it could be a viable means for developing anglers and local communities as custodians of their resources² (Zwirn et al., 2005).

¹ For the purposes of this paper, two terms will be used to describe the activity of fishing. Firstly, 'angling' will be used as an umbrella term to describe all kinds of fishing such as gear fishing, coarse fishing and spear fishing. Then 'fly-fishing' will be used to specifically describe a niche type of fishing tourism.

² All the venues discussed in this paper charge rod fees to their clients that may range between R50 and R350 per day, while some venues will include rod fees into the accommodation prices.

Methodologically, this paper uses of *The FOSAF³ guide to Fly-fishing destinations in Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean* (2010), to map out the fly-fishing industry in Southern Africa. This edited collection lists Southern African fly-fishing destinations, whereby different operators can choose to be listed. It is not an exhaustive list, but it gives a good indication of the size and distribution of the fly-fishing industry. To determine the size of the industry, bed-nights⁴ were used as an indicator. To augment the mapping of the fly-fishing industry, seven personal in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the Southern African fly-fishing tourism industry. These individuals included fly-fishing tour operators, guides, outfitters, magazine editors and committee members of organisations across South Africa.⁵ This paper is an exploratory review of issues that require investigation.

Angling tourism a review

Bauer and Herr (2004, p. 57) argues that angling tourism incorporates much of the defining elements of tourism, for example 'travel to and from a particular destination; the presence of a tourism service industry (outfitters, tour guides); the exchange of money for services; overnight, to several months, stay at destinations; a service industry; aspects of leisure and recreation.' Ditton et al. (2002) suggests that angling is a form of tourism in the United States when anglers choose to cross state lines to pursue this activity. Angling tourism offers a blend between tourism amenities and leisure-based activities. This experience offers the angler experiences connected to adventure tourism and encourages visiting friends and relatives (VFR) travel (Salmi &

Salmi, 2010; Buckley, 2009). However, according to Bauer and Herr (2004) fishing represents important land uses and can be considered as cultural heritage for many communities.

Angling tourism is considered to be a valuable part of the economy in the developed world (Bauer & Herr, 2004). The angling industry and its dedicated services are marketed globally (Ditton et al., 2002; Hjalager, 2010). In Australia, one in three people go fishing every year (Bauer & Herr, 2004). Moreover, recreational angling is the most popular outdoor activity in the United States of America (USA) and is a One Billion Dollar industry in the state of Alaska where it substantially supports local and regional economic activities. Of the one billion dollars, \$500 million come from direct, in-state expenditures, but also from standard tourism initiatives like guiding companies, supplies, gear and accommodation (Zwirn et al., 2005). Angling tourism has a greater economic impact than commercial fishing in certain areas (Hjalager, 2010, p. 198). Zwirn et al. (2005) argues that one fish caught by a recreational angler can be worth 40 times more to a regional economy than a fish caught as part of the commercial industry.

In Scandinavia, anglers pay licencing fees that are much higher than the value of the catch (Hjalager, 2010). Although angling tourism is considered to be relatively friendly to the environment, Hjalager (2010) argues that often the aims of economic development often overrides environmental impacts if not approached sustainably. A valuable point that Zwirn et al. (2005) makes is that since the establishment and common practice of catch-and-release⁶ fishing within the majority of angling activities, angling tourism can be considered as a type of ecotourism, because it is seen as a

³ FOSAF is the Federation of South African Flyfishers.

⁴ To determine the number of bed-nights either a web search was done or a phone call was made to venues. In some cases, the number of beds were noted in the FOSAF guide.

⁵ Please see the end of the paper for the list of interviewees.

⁶ In catch-and-release fishing, the angler catches a fish and – with limited physical damage – releases it back into the water for other anglers to also have the opportunity to catch.

means to advance conservation and economies. To organise a quality angling experience, the tourism industry needs to communities for access to fisheries. Advertising needs to be done in local and international magazines, and tourism agencies need to be involved. However, for their own sustainability, everyone engaged in the angling tourism industry is inevitably involved in the management of target species and their conservation (Bauer & Herr, 2004, p. 66).

Zwirn et al. (2005) notes that if unsustainable initiatives are implemented overfishing and pollution occur as is the case with commercial fishing. For example, recreational angling is responsible for 23% of endangered species caught, however, in the majority of cases these species are released Zwirn et al. (2005). Nevertheless, angling tourism is seen as a positive economic development initiative in the case of northern Finland where unemployment, diminishing incomes, out-migration and budget cutbacks for economic development has become commonplace (Salmi & Salmi, 2010, p. 194). Biologists and nature conservancy groups in Finland have made suggestions that all commercial salmon fishery ventures should be bought out by tourism business to develop recreational fishing (Salmi & Salmi, 2010, p. 196). This would not be a viable suggestion in the developing world contexts where food security is a problem and local communities often rely on subsistence fishing, it does nevertheless, pose the important question, that if commercial fisheries are stopped, will this allow for tourism development and long term economic benefits? The answer to this question is however unsure; there are examples in the United States, more specifically in Key West and the Stock Islands of Florida where all commercial fishery initiatives have been eliminated, and, for the most part, recreational fishing as part of the larger tourism industry has emerged as the dominant force (Schittone, 2001). In fact, over 60% of all economic activities in Key West had been connected to tourism activities and fear of

sustainably develop local and regional comply with the demands of governments by attaining good relationships with host dependency on one type of economy has been expressed (Schittone, 2001).

In South Africa, few studies have specifically been done on fly-fishing tourism, although two examples exist (see Du Preez & Lee, 2010a; 2010b). However, these studies are limited to only one geographical location and focuses only on the economic impacts of fly-fishing tourism. Nevertheless, they note that fly-fishing can contribute significantly to the economic development of remote and economically marginalised areas of South Africa and that it could be a viable means to establish a variety of micro-enterprises that could form part of local economic development initiatives. However, the main purpose of the studies by Du Preez and Lee is that the eradication of invasive trout species could have potentially negative economic impacts, and thus instead of eradicating trout it should be rather used to develop touristic opportunities to gain much needed income for previously disadvantaged communities. They argue that this issue should be considered, as there is often a disparity in communication between nature conservation initiatives and local economic development.

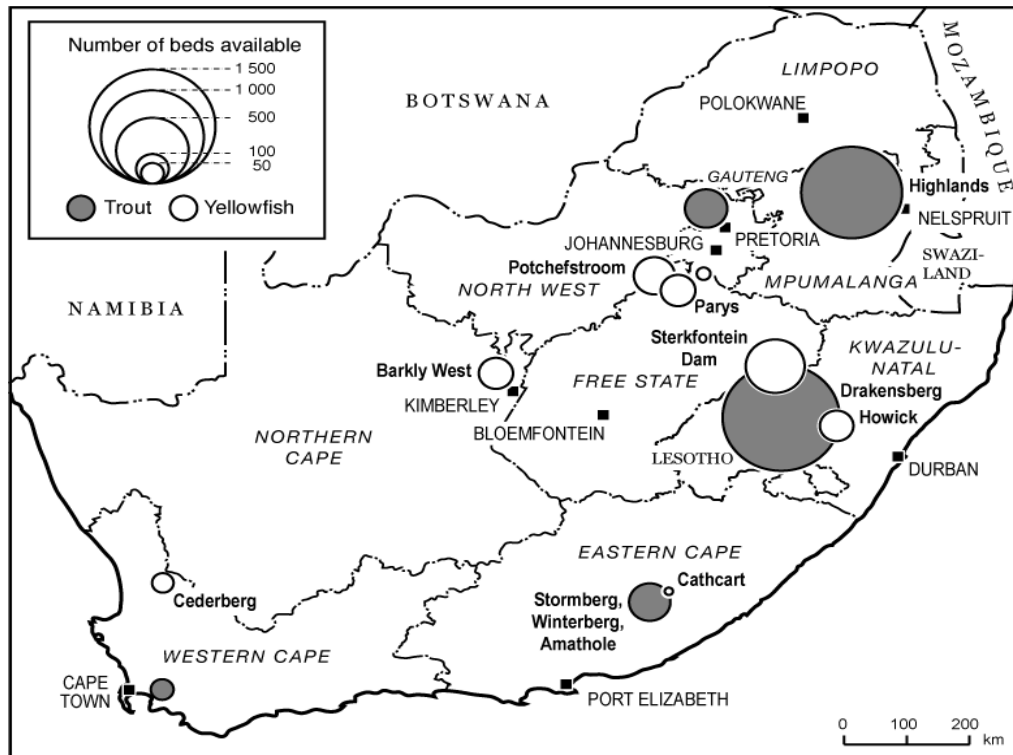
Trout fly-fishing in South Africa: historical dominance

In 1890 and 1897, brown and rainbow trout were introduced to South Africa from mainland Europe and Britain respectively, specifically for angling purposes (Cambray, 2003). Because of this original introduction, the trout fly-fishing industry in Southern Africa is dominated by five regions in South Africa:⁷ the Mpumalanga Highlands, the Drakensberg and Stormberg, Winterberg and Amatole mountains range, the North-Rand region and the Western Cape province (see figure 1). However, for the purposes of

this paper, only the Mpumalanga, Drakensberg and Western Cape areas will be discussed because of their already established infrastructure and also because it may be argued that they have the most development potential because of their proximity to the main metropolitan

areas of South Africa. Nevertheless, see figure one for the number of bed nights in the North-Rand and Stormberg, Winterberg and Amatole regions. This section of the paper will discuss the issues surrounding fly-fishing tourism in these areas accordingly

Figure 1: Bed nights available for trout and yellowfish fly-fishing in South Africa



The Mpumalanga Highlands

The Mpumalanga Highlands host a number of destinations mostly clustered around the Dullstroom with venues around Lydenburg, Waterval Boven, Machadodorp and Belfast too. This area has twenty-six fly-fishing venues with a total of 982 bed nights ranging from basic self-catering accommodation to five-star estate developments. This area also has five fly-fishing clubs that have rights to a variety of venues that offer fishing opportunities to its members and day ticket fishing. The Mpumalanga Highlands is also well known for its Trout Syndication efforts where timeshare, fractional titling and second home ownership are established for fly-fishermen

(Hoogendoorn, 2010). In a personal in-depth interview with Jonathan Boulton the owner of Mavungana Fly Fishing Centre, the largest fly-fishing shop and guiding venture in the Mpumalanga Highlands, one of the great benefits of fly-fishing in this area is that it is not seasonally bound as there is access to more than 1200 dams in the area (Rogerson, 2002). Moreover, the tourist destination image of the town is connected to the fly-fishing industry, restaurants, coffee shops and hotels have names connected to fly-fishing like the Anglers Court or Rivermans Cabin (De Jager, 2010). Economically Boulton is of the view that because of the global economic slowdown many anglers from Gauteng have been doing more angling nationally rather than

internationally, therefore he is of the view that more tourist traffic has been experienced than in the past.

The Drakensberg

The Drakensberg area presents a large area, which is under-utilised in terms of its fly-fishing potential and can offer a variety of developmental opportunities. This area offers 39 destinations and 1313 beds. In an interview with Andre Burger, the owner and guide at Present a Fly fly-fishing outfitters in Bethlehem (one of the oldest fly-fishing shops in the country), it came to the fore that fly-fishing opportunities in and around the scenic town of Clarens have systematically declined over the past decade despite the viewpoint by many that Clarens would become the 'new' Dullstroom. However, Andre Burger is of the view that the Eastern Free State area can offer a vast number of opportunities if it adopts a central booking system present elsewhere in the country. Nonetheless, he feels that there is a sceptical attitude amongst farmers in the area to allow anglers on their farms – purely from a safety perspective, especially given that these farmers are in constant battle with cattle thieves operating from Lesotho. Andre Burger noted the very well known Metsi-Matso dam that was considered to be a world-class trophy-fishing dam in Africa, which also hosted the largest trout caught in Africa up until the mid-2000s, but has gone into complete decay. This, he argues, is largely because the dam is in the former homeland area of QwaQwa where no private ownership rights are available. Moreover, trout need to be seasonally stocked in this dam, which requires substantial financial investment. In addition, the safety of anglers has become a grave concern. However, he is of the view that if this area could be policed properly, it could offer significant opportunities as a tourism market in the Eastern Free State in and around the Clarens area which has already a well established tourism infrastructure (Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2011). Mr Burger also noted that Lesotho has potential for fly-fishing tourism, however access without a 4x4 vehicle, in addition to

adverse weather conditions, often hampers the development of opportunities that are safe. Although he feels that greater development of the fly-fishing tourism industry needs to be established in Lesotho, the education levels of local operators are limited and licencing systems are all but non-existent. Lesotho is host to a large variety of fly-fishing opportunities but only one venue is listed in the FOSAF guide.

In an interview with Jan Korrubel the Wildfly general/retail manager and guide situated in Nottingham Road, he argued that stillwater fishing is popular in the Midlands area – more so than river fishing.⁸ According to Jan Korrubel, many attempts have been made to engage local communities in fly-fishing tourism but few have succeeded. He suspects that it is due to lack of interest by local community members who would rather harvest fish as a food source than develop tourism in the area. However, it seems that a renewed effort has been launched by the KZN Fly-fishing association to develop a fly-fishing and fly-tying initiative with the Tendele Community just outside the Kamberg Nature Reserve. Therefore, the challenge lies in engaging communities to see the potential of fly-fishing tourism as a potential job creator.

In the northern Eastern Cape close to the towns of Rhodes, Lady Grey and Maclear, the Wild Trout Association (WTA) offers 200km of running water to its customers, who can book a fishing 'beat'⁹ for R150 a day and the Maclear Fly Fishing club hosts a number of venues operating on a similar system. Two personal in-depth interviews were conducted with Tony Kietzman, a professional guide, and Mario Geldenhuys, a well known rod builder and

⁸ A large part of the Kwazulu-Natal Drakensberg fly-fishing opportunities are locked up in the Ezemvelo Nature Conservation parks which offer a wide variety of opportunities, although they do not specifically cater for the fly-fishing market 'per se'.

⁹ 'Beat' is fly-fishing parlance for the section of river fished.

former guide, to discuss the developmental challenges faced by the northern Eastern Cape. Tony Kietzman argues that trout fishing in the area has grown: there is a core of regular visitors annually. A few international anglers are starting to visit because of popular fly-fishing websites focusing on the area. According to Tony Kietzman, tackle retailers and media have done much to market the area. A positive development has been that PG Bison, a forestry company, has opened its waters in the Maclear/Ugie area, which could substantially increase angling opportunities. However, according to Mario Geldenhuys the mismanagement (or non-management) of the trout fisheries in certain areas has created problems. For example, trout have a very high reproduction rate – in some cases over-populating systems. This means more fish of smaller size, which is detrimental to offering "quality" trout fishing experience to the customer.

According to Mario Geldenhuys, simple management policies could be put in place, where catches are monitored and managed. According to Tony Kietzman, the vision of the landowners is limited when it comes to utilizing financial benefits of the area, while there is a general lack of state support to develop this infrastructure, especially in former homeland areas where fishing resources are over-utilised. In addition, Tony Kietzman argues that the unfortunate offshoot of this situation is that the benefits of this enterprise do not spread to historically disadvantaged communities.

The Western Cape

Trout fishing opportunities in the Western Cape seems to be limited to only three destinations, providing 50 beds in total. However, the majority of the rivers are managed and controlled by the Cape Piscatorial Society (CPS) on different rivers in the Wellington, Paarl and Worcester areas. Central issues pertaining to fly-fishing in the Western Cape were scrutinised in an interview with Liam Surrige, a committee member of

the CPS and a co-founder of Wade Magazine (an online fly-fishing magazine). According to Liam Surrige, the CPS has been in existence since the 1930s and has 640 members of which 150–200 are active members. The CPS controls five rivers in a 'memorandum of understanding' with Cape Nature Conservation and works on a 'beat' system from September to May. The possibilities for stillwater fishing it seems are relatively limited because of issues surrounding access and distance from Cape Town. However, Liam Surrige noted that the limited number of tourism accommodation opportunities is in part due to the CPS. He is of the view that if a fly-fisherman wants access to a river, it is much easier and cheaper to go through the CPS than booking a guesthouse and paying additional rod fees. This is an additional reason for the underdeveloped nature of these areas, despite their close proximity to Cape Town, South Africa's most influential and largest tourist destination.

The dominance of wine farms as a form of rural tourism is of great importance to its tourism economy. Wine farmers might rather attempt to develop wine tours and wine tastings with regard to their entrepreneurial ventures.

Fly-fishing could be considered a side venture associated with their main income streams. Especially as the majority of the 'beats' of the CPS is within day driving distance of Cape Town, thus eliminating the need for staying over. Liam Surrige also noted that there are some potentially conflicting issues that are arising in the Western Cape especially relating to the use of Rotenone, which is a poison that can eliminate the invasive trout.

It does however seem that trout fishing in the Western Cape is quite contested: fly-fishers, landowners and Cape Nature Conservation are betwixt and between the development of fly-fishing as niche market tourism and the eradication of trout to allow indigenous species to develop.

Yellowfish fly-fishing: indigenous potential

Yellowfish and its nine different species is the most widely distributed fish species in Southern Africa and can be caught in the majority of South Africa's rivers. Yellowfish is a relatively new target species for fly-fishermen in Southern Africa, only emerging as such during the 1980s. Since the 1980s, fly-fishing for yellowfish has become popular, especially on the Vaal River (within close proximity of Johannesburg). However, since the Vaal River emerged as a fly-fishing destination, this river has been faced with serious ecological challenges with pollution (especially from industries in the Van Der Bijl, Vereeniging and Sasolburg area that often dump raw sewerage and untreated industrial waste into the river; see McCarthy & Venter, 2006). This has resulted in massive fish kills as well as negatively affecting the health of fly-fishermen and other individuals accessing the river. Although fly-fishing for yellowfish potentially presents a variety of economic opportunities, it is relatively under-developed in comparison to fly-fishing for trout (see figure 1). The greatest fly-fishing opportunities for yellowfish are in venues on the Vaal River, where there are nine venues open to the public from Vereeniging to Klerksdorp.

The Northwest province offers three venues with 93 bed nights. Gauteng has one venue with 18 accommodation units. The Free State province offers a large number of beds on the Vaal River around Parys with 182 beds in two venues. In an interview with Mike McKeown, a shop manager for Frontier Fly Fishing in Johannesburg, it came to the fore that there is immense rod pressure on the Vaal River. Brand, Maina, Mander & O'Brien (2009) found in their research that about 5000 fly-fishermen access the Vaal River between 2 and 32 times each year on trips lasting 1 to 3.5 days per trip. However, Mike McKeown argues that although this is good for the tourism industry, it is not necessarily good for the environment. For example, greater care should be taken to train river rangers from local communities

which could potentially help solve issues at hand such as trespassing. Moreover, he believes that three issues need to be looked at when it comes to fly-fishing on the Vaal River. Firstly, pollution needs to be reduced from its sources, and secondly, angling pressure needs to be dropped and the quality of the accommodation needs to be rethought. For example, he argues that the majority of the anglers that access the Vaal are budget oriented anglers and often venues are too expensive for the average angler or the accommodation is of low quality that it is not comfortable.

Also within the Free State province is the Sterkfontein Dam, which is an impoundment of over 7000 hectares that offers world class fly-fishing for yellowfish. This dam is largely undeveloped, except for a municipally run resort and two other resorts, these have 328 bed nights in total and licences to fish this impoundment are attained from the municipal offices on the dam. According to Andre Burger, the Sterkfontein dam has emerged as a very popular fly-fishing destination in the Free State roughly running parallel with the deterioration and pollution of the Vaal River system. However, he is fearful for future developments of yellowfish species as he is of the view that the yellowfish is taking maximum pressure and continued pressure will decrease the quality of fishing. He argues that tourism might be easy to develop in the area given the 92km shoreline available, however he supposes hotels, golf estates and restaurants could negatively affect this impoundment. Therefore, for yellowfish fly-fishing, Andre Burger argues that this area has reached its peak especially given that The Complete Fly Fisherman magazine, the Wildfly television programme, and the Flycastaway guiding company, in total take up five weekends of fishing in an already relatively short season for yellowfish from November to early March at this venue. Andre Burger is also of the view that the policing and licensing systems on Sterkfontein dam are substandard as very few people actually buy licences to fish the dam and poaching is rife – up until recently, only two rangers

patrolled a 92km shoreline (an inadequate attempt to exercise the necessary control on this resource).

In terms of developing other venues in the country the Orange River, South Africa's largest and longest river can offer world-class fly-fishing opportunities in the Richtersveld which under normal circumstances would not offer many economic opportunities other than irrigation because of its arid nature.

The Northern Cape Province has three venues totalling 110 bed nights for fly-fishing, especially close to Kimberley, the capital of the Northern Cape Province. In the Western Cape there is only one advertised venue (for the sought-after Clanwilliam yellowfish species in the Cederberg) which offers 44 beds. However, it is clear that there are many more venues that could be developed in the area, as it is roughly 270 kilometres from Cape Town.

In an interview with Liam Surridge, it came to the fore that there is only limited potential for Clanwilliam yellowfish, as they only exist in one river system, the Olifants, that is also in a fairly inhospitable landscape and desert climate. In Kwazulu-Natal there are two venues: one on the banks of the Nkomazi that offers fishing for Natal yellowfish, the second in the Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve which offers a total of 108 bed nights.

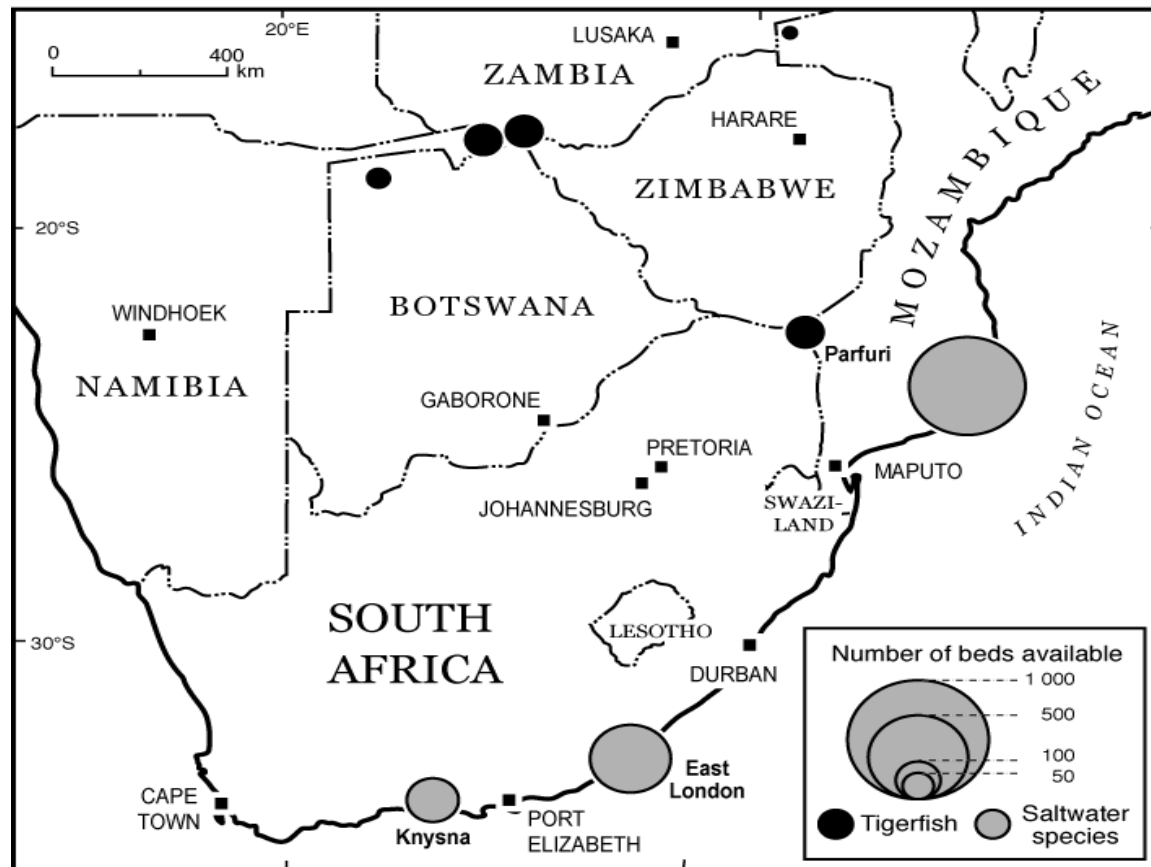
Jan Korrubel is of the view that there is an abundance of yellowfish fly-fishing opportunities in Kwazulu-Natal, however, there is a perception that fly-fishing is for trout and not yellowfish and thus there is a misconception amongst landowners about the marketability of their river frontage.

Tigerfish fly-fishing: exotic appeal

Tigerfish can be found in the northern parts of South Africa, the Okavango River and Delta, Chobe River and the Zambezi River (see figure 2). These systems offer fly-fishing for world-renowned species in selected parts of Namibia with 61 beds in three venues. Botswana has two venues with 26 beds. Zambia has three venues with 66 beds. Mozambique has one venue with eight beds. South Africa has one venue with 66 beds. It is apparent from interviews that the venues that offer accommodation for this kind of fly-fishing are more focused on higher-income clients. It appears that Zimbabwe has no lodges that specifically advertise themselves for this kind of market. South Africa does not offer many fly-fishing opportunities as the majority of South Africa's rivers that hold Tigerfish are within the Kruger National Park.

Opportunities are few and far between and largely undeveloped. In communication with Jonathan Boulton about Tigerfishing in South Africa, it came to light that the Tigerfishing industry in South Africa is relatively small although there are opportunities in the Pongola and Komatipoort systems. However, he is concerned about the impacts on the rivers where these river systems are in sugarcane farming areas where the rivers suffer heavily under water abstraction and pollution which limits the development of good populations of Tigerfish. This is over and above the fact that the majority of the riverbanks are private with owners who are not necessarily interested in developing the potential as tourism ventures. Although in his view the Pongola Dam offers the most consistent opportunities to target these species, however the majority of the dam's banks are privately owned which limits fishing opportunities for day fishermen.

Figure 2: Bed nights for Tigerfish and saltwater fly-fishing species in Southern Africa



It does seem that South African guiding companies run the majority of operations for Tigerfish in Zambia and Namibia which pleads questions as to which benefits trickle down to local residents. In personal communication with Jonathan Boulton, he noted that there are many lodges on the Zambezi river system that don't necessarily advertise themselves as dedicated fly-fishing venues, half of the lodges are South African-owned and the rest are owned predominantly by Batswana and Namibians. However, he is of the view that despite the fact that the Zambezi offers world-class angling for Tigerfish, he is of the view that it will not be sustainable in the long run from a tourism point of view. This is due to Chinese investment into the Copperbelt district of Zambia which has created issues in terms of food security because

of in-migration to this area. However, he feels that lodge operators and general tour operators need to come together to control netting in the areas within which they operate to create a sustainable Tigerfish population that will keep the tourism industry going but also provide food security for Zambia.

Saltwater fly-fishing in Southern Africa

Coastlines are popular venues for nature-based recreation (Borch, 2009). Saltwater fly-fishing has fairly recently become a popular form of fly-fishing in Southern Africa. Unfortunately, conditions on the South African coastline are often too unpredictable and fly-fishermen are often forced to rather focus on estuaries which are often over-fished and polluted. Mike

McKeown argues that it is not really worth marketing the saltwater fly-fishing tourism industry in South Africa.¹⁰ However, for the purposes of this paper, some destinations in South Africa will be discussed but more so venues in Mozambique which have become popular. Mozambique offers eight venues with 667 beds. The lodges are scattered along the Mozambican coast from the Bazaruto Archipelago to towns in the south like Xai-Xai. However, given the length of the Mozambican coastline, there are likely to be more opportunities that could be developed. However, it seems that there is massive competition between angling and subsistence fishing, where subsistence fishing depletes fish stocks, lowering the quality of the experience for the fly-fishing tourist. McKeown posits that there are three issues that need to be looked at in the case of Mozambique and its tourism accommodation.

Firstly, the camping sites available for fishing purposes are often very cheap and accessible but not safe, thus anglers risk the possibility of having their tackle and vehicles stolen. Secondly, actual low budget accommodation is again of a low quality that does not allow for comfortable access. Lastly, quality accommodation is often too expensive for anglers from South Africa to access. Therefore, there is no mid-level pricing accommodation that might encourage more anglers to go to Mozambique. As a result, given Mozambique's problematic past and the current state of its economy, it would be a good option to develop this side of their tourism economy.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to give a broad overview of the fly-fishing tourism industry and development potential of Southern Africa, with the main intention to stimulate further research in this under-researched tourism industry. This paper has two main concluding thoughts. Firstly, it seems that there is competition between recreational potential and subsistence

fishing. Secondly, there are environmental concerns about pollution. However, firstly it seems that South African fly-fishing is faced by a number of challenges – one being the potential extermination of alien trout species. This would have a significant economic impact on a variety of locations, especially in the poorest of rural areas of South Africa. The current procrastination by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism on the National Environment Management Biodiversity Act and the ecological status of trout is a severe limiting factor in future development.

Bauer and Herr (2004) make an important assertion that fishing can form an important part of sustainable conservation if it is approached in a humane and professional manner. Moreover, the sustainable development of fly-fishing destinations also needs to be considered. Overdevelopment will inevitably lead to over-fishing and, as a consequence, degraded fishing opportunities and economic decline. In essence, fly-fishing tourism should be developed with the intention of maximising the number of anglers on the water without negatively affecting the often vulnerable ecosystems in which they are situated. It does seem that there is an uneasy marriage between environmental protection and tourism development.

An important issue noted by most interviewees is that governmental nature conservation organisations are not in dialogue with government tourism departments. A problematic issue for fly-fishing tourism in Southern Africa is licencing. Very few if any anglers who access fresh waters purchase licences and little to no control is exercised by the government. Therefore it is often in the hands of the private landowners to exercise control over their waters in terms of numbers of anglers and fish stocks. However, fly-fishing is beneficial because it can be considered as a kind of ecologically friendly angling method as it is for the majority of the time based on the catch-and-release ethos. In terms of saltwater fly-fishing, purchasing of

¹⁰ See figure 2 for bed nights along the South African coast.

licences from local post-offices is commonplace, however, it seems that actual monitoring of this on the beaches and estuaries of the different coastlines is minimal. Bass and Carp are not traditionally associated with fly-fishing in South Africa, but are increasingly becoming popular target species in the United States. Therefore, it could be argued that South Africa should follow suit.

The Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted Bass along with Carp, especially in the Western Cape, are widespread and have played a major role in wiping out many indigenous species (Impson, 2010). Nevertheless, if these species are marketed properly, some financial benefits could be gained. An important point to be mentioned is that the Eastern Cape especially hosts great potential for fly-fishing to be developed as a means of economic development over a very large geographical area. Fly-fishing opportunities in both the former Transkei and Ciskei homelands are largely underdeveloped and if managed correctly could present employment opportunities.

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Jan Korrubel: General/Retail manager and guide of Wildfly fly-fishing shop in Nottingham Road in Kwazulu-Natal. 19 May 2012.

Mike McKeown: Shop manager of Frontier Fly Fishing in Bryanston, Gauteng. 14 May 2012.

Mario Geldenhuys: Former guide and Rod builder from Aliwal North. 21 May 2012.

Andre Burger: Owner and guide of Present a Fly, fly-fishing outfitters in Bethlehem. 8 May 2012.

Tony Kietzman: Professional guide in Rhodes, Eastern Cape. 14 May 2012.

Jonathan Boulton. Guide and owner of Mavungana Fly Fishing in Dullstroom. 10 May 2012.

