

*South African Deep Sea
Angling Association*

GOVERNING BODY OF SPORT FISH
ANGLING FROM CRAFT AT SEA IN SOUTH AFRICA



*Suid Afrikaanse Diep-
seehengelassosiasie*

BEHEER LIGAAM VAN SPORTVIS HENGEL
VAN VAARTUIE TER SEE IN SUID

7 April 2021

The SADSAA SECRETARY
PER E-MAIL

**IN RE: ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICERS REPORT TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
MEETING, AND AGM ON 23 APRIL 2021**

DEAR PRESIDENT, COUNCILLORS & OFFICE BEARERS

COVID 19 PANDEMIC

1. The continued effects of the Covid 19 pandemic keeps on hampering our fishing, but also has changed some of the workings of the environmental portfolio, in my view for the better.

2. You will recall that I reported at our previous meeting in October 2020, that SADSAA had its first meeting with the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Forestry and Fishing, Ms Barbara Creecy and her delegates, albeit virtually. Our main aims for that meeting were:
 - 2.1 To seek the Minister's intervention on establishing an open communication where SADSAA can regularly communicate with the regulatory authorities about the protection of our offshore marine life, by either reviving the

Recreational Fishing Forum meetings or establish a new consultative forum, where we can air our views and discuss matters of common interest;

2.2 To be allowed access to certain of the scientific working group meetings to provide an input, specifically when it comes to, the determination of bag limits, MPA'S and the fish stocks in a particular area;

2.3 Establishing a quick and effective reporting system not only for our members, to report illegal fishing practices whether it is local transgressors or foreign, in real time.

3. As reported in earlier reports, SADSAA's requests were well received, and the Minister instructed her departmental heads to set up a follow up meeting, which meeting duly took place on 9 February 2021.

4. The follow up meeting was attended by:

4.1 the SADSAA Vice President and the SADSAA EO (Mr N Nel tendered his apology for not being able to join, as he was working in an area without electronic media coverage); and

4.2 Mr. Dennis Fredericks, the Acting Chief Director, Resources Management, Mr Mandasile Makotwe, Acting Director Offshore Fisheries, as well as other persons from DEFF.

5. Before dealing with a brief overview to our members of the topics discussed and agreed, the meeting was again dealt with in a positive manner, and the delegates were actually prepared to consider SADSAA's proposals, and as will be demonstrated below, the meeting was constructive and resulted in a positive outcome.

REGULAR MEETINGS

6. Firstly, DEFF was pleasantly surprised by SADSAA's organizational provincial and club structures, and even more so, when our Vice President informed them that we have our own members database. SADSAA was requested to provide a list of our members, and our constitution, and which our Vice President agreed to attend to.
7. Probably the most important achievement of the meeting was, that SADSAA convinced DEFF to have regular meetings to provide an open channel of communication.
8. For the time being, and in the absence of the Recreational Fishing Forum Meetings, we have agreed to meet during the first week of every third month. The next meeting should take place in the first week of May 2021.
9. In these meetings, only matters of national importance, and general application will be discussed, and not individual complaints. Individual complaints will be dealt with through existing means.
10. Depending on the agenda, which will be decided by Mr Fredericks and the SADSAA EO, only affected persons from DEFF and SADSAA will attend such meetings. These meetings for the next foreseeable future will be mostly done virtually via MS Teams, unless otherwise agreed, which is probably one of the few good things about Covid.

REPORTING OF ILLEGAL FISHING

11. SADSAA's suggestion of our members being intelligence gatherers, was well received, specifically the proposal that a smartphone application be developed where our members person can report an illegal fishing activity, in real time.

12. The information can be used by the enforcement authorities, such as DEFF, Navy, SAPS, and other law enforcement officials, to act upon. This topic will be addressed in future meetings.

LINE FISH SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

13. It is extremely important to provide SADSAA's input specifically when it comes to considering bag limits, closed seasons, for a particular geographical area.
14. This aspect was surprisingly well received at the meeting, which resulted in an agreement that SADSAA may send a delegate to attend the line fish scientific working group meetings. There is however a process to be followed, and SADSAA was advised on how and to whom such a request is to be made.
15. Following on from the above, it was extremely important to identify a reputable scientist, who can advise us, on specific aspects, as well as to attend the meetings with the EO if necessary. This will have a cost implication, but it is believed to be well worth it.
16. I have taken the liberty of contacting Dr Bruce Mann, as reputable scientist, and he indicated to act on our behalf, and join me at such meetings. Since he is already attending such meetings on behalf of ORI, there will be little or no cost implication to SADSAA.
17. Consequently, I have contacted Dr Denham Parker, the chairman of the line fish scientific working group meetings, and he has undertaken to inform us of the next date.
18. Lastly on this aspect, SADSAA was requested to provide catch data in respect of Tuna catches, and I intend holding a meeting be held with the relevant Provinces

and Clubs where Tuna is regularly caught. This has to be arranged before our next meeting in early May, to ascertain if SADSAA can provide catch data on Tuna fishing.

19. Also, myself and our Tournaments Officer, Mr Nick Nel had discussions with Drs Mann and Parker, with a view to use our National and Interprovincial tournaments, as an opportunity to obtain scientific data. For example, with the help of Dr Parker and Dr Mann, we hope to receive permission to catch Seventy Fours (a fish species that is currently totally banned), remove part of a fin, and release them, for an upcoming interprovincial tournament in the Eastern Cape.

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION IN FUTURE

20. We also had a brief discussion on a topic, that has aggravated many of our members, namely to re-think how to deal with fishing licenses in future, and whether the current system via the Post Office, should not be supplemented by SADSAA, like we do with the safety with SAMSA. We agreed that this aspect will be discussed in future meetings.

21. In conclusion then, SADSAA has for the first time in its history, has established an open communication channel with the authorities directly, and which we must be guard jealously. Whilst SADSAA and the authorities approach the aspect of our marine resources from opposing sides, we can now provide meaningful input to the authorities, and where possible with them in advance our constitutional prerogatives in the protection of fish resources.

22. Lastly, yet another year in my portfolio has gone by, and I take this opportunity to thank my fellow office bearers and provincial chairmen for the manner they have assisted me. It has been a pleasure serving you.

**Yours in Angling,
Mark Beyl**

