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21 November 2018

NBAA CONSERVATION REPORT 2018:

1. 2018 in Hindsight

After the drought stricken seasons we have experienced up to 2017, the 2018 season was one of visible recovery of our fisheries. We have seen the return of numbers of smaller fish and baitfish which is testament to a recovering ecosystem after the much needed rains received, as well as what can be seen and assumed to have been a more successful spawn during 2017.

After what was one of the lowest catch rates in the history of the NBAA during 2017, the 2018 season most certainly was a huge relieve for all NBAA members to not only to catch a bass, but numbers of them in most cases.

What we believe to have also played its part in the recovery, is the fisheries management initiatives started towards the end of the 2017 season, and the fisheries management initiatives voted in as part of the 2017 AGM for the 2018 season. These initiatives has undeniably contributed to the recovery of our fisheries' ecosystems. The Conservation Committee is and will be forever grateful for each and every NBAA member's contribution towards these initiatives, whether by attendance or financial contribution option as voted in with the 2017 AGM.

We trust the last event for the 2018 season scheduled for 30 November 2018 to 2 December 2018 will be well attended and a success with the support of all NBAA members.

2. 2018 Conservation Events:

The broader Conservation events we have undertaken during the 2018 season we have grouped and summarized in no particular order as follows:

2.1 Fisheries management events

Our focus was to actively arrange, manage, partake and recruit members to do the same in the fisheries management events to be held at our major dams to restore our fisheries to their former glory as far as humanly possible.

At the 2017 AGM, a points system was voted in where to qualify for Namibian Team or NBAA Representation, a NBAA member had to attend and earn points at the scheduled fisheries

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management events, or alternatively choose the financial contribution option contributing N\$ 30,000 towards the NBAA Conservation Fund to aid in the conservation events.

We had 3 (three) NBAA members who chose the financial contribution option, and the funds were well applied as reported in further detail below and reconciled in the treasurer's report.

The following main goals and objectives for fisheries management events were set out for the 2018 season, and is reported on as follows:

- **Clarius gariepinus (sharp-tooth catfish or barbel) sampling at S. von Bach**

We managed to get the Ministry of Fisheries involved in barbel sampling events at S. Von Bach Dam, from which we obtained approval to do further sampling as part of a study on the species as well as other species in our fisheries. This was a giant step in the right direction as having the Ministry on board will assist greatly in fisheries management events in the future.

As per the 2017 AGM, the Report by Dr. Neil Deacon, the estimated bio-mass of barbell in S. von Bach specifically to be in excess of 40tons. This estimate is expected to be even more given the results of the 2 (two) official sampling events undertaken to date.

In total, the 2 (two) official events that has been held, yielded **1.8 tons** of barbel contributing to the study's statistics. Even though this is only scratching the surface of the total bio-mass, this has proved invaluable to fisheries management through the study. All samples are generously donated to the less privileged communities in Namibia as a valuable protein source.

It should however be noted, that total number of NBAA Members who attended at least one sampling event, amounts to **17 NBAA Members** in total. Although this gives a staggering average of 105kg's per person attending, this is less than **34%** of total NBAA members, and exactly **56%** of all NBAA members who have fished a tournament during the 2018 season.

These attendance statistics are quite disappointing, as these sampling events, through the study mentioned, are paramount to restoring S. von Bach to its former glory, not only for current NBAA members, but also their children and evidently the future of our beloved sport, keeping sustainability for all freshwater angling facets in mind.

With the last barbel sampling event still to come on 30th November 2018 – 2 December 2018, we look forward to see all available NBAA members attending and doing their part for the future of the fishery.

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- **Fodder and habitat augmentation at our major fisheries**

We also undertook further initiatives of fodder and habitat augmentation at our major fisheries. Securing well established fodder species is key for a sustainable fishery. Habitat augmentation initiatives not only focussed on habitat for fodder species, but also for bass fry and fingerlings, as well as adult bass.

In comparison, 3 (three) more members to the barbel sampling events attended these events.

In total, 20 NBAA members attended fisheries management events, which is about 40% of all registered NBAA members, and 66% of members who fished at least 1 (one) tournament during the 2018 season.

Along with the 3 (three) members who chose the financial contribution, this leaves 46% of all registered NBAA Members, and 77% of members who fished at least 1 (one) tournament during the 2018 season.

2.2 Bass stocking

The NBAA received approval and license from the Ministry of Fisheries to import bass into Namibia and stock S. von Bach and Oanob dams respectively during the latter part of 2017.

During the start of 2018, we managed to get a supplier in Ceres in the Western Cape to supply us with 732 bass fingerlings, ranging between 10-20cm, predominantly northern strain, to be imported into Namibia.

This import of bass had a significant cost to it, and the Conservation Funds raised through members choosing the financial contribution option towards fisheries management, as well as other fund raising exercises, ring fenced specifically for Conservation efforts, were used to finance the initiative, putting the funds to good use.

The fish were imported and released into S. von Bach and Oanob on a 50/50 basis respectively. We are happy to report there were zero bass lost during the long trip from Ceres to the respective venues, and the release into the venues.

We should see this initiative kick start our bass populations within the coming season.

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3. Conservation initiatives for 2019

Even though conditions during years prior to 2018 forced a tough call to focus all efforts at recovery of our fisheries, and with definite noticeable difference in our fisheries with the 2018 events, some excellent ground work has been done throughout the events of 2018 for 2019 season and beyond for conservation events. We have identified and will be focussing all efforts at the following initiatives:

- a) Barbel sampling at S. von Bach in collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries
- b) Fodder and habitat augmentation at our major fisheries
- c) Stocking of S. von Bach and Oanob (need to obtain finances)
- d) Establish a third major fishery through restocking after obtaining necessary approval and licenses. Considerations are:
 - i. Hardap – Mariental Region (need to obtain finances, approval and licensing)
 - ii. Swakoppoort – Okavango Region (need to cull barbel, need to obtain finances, approval and licensing)
 - iii. Neckartal – Keetmans Region (need to obtain financing, approval and licensing)

4. Conclusion:

We are adamant on the conservation efforts and initiatives not only to sustain our current two major fisheries, but also to create at least one more major fishery to secure the sport of bass fishing in Namibia for futures to come. The action items and goals set for 2019 and the events mentioned above should see us achieve this ultimate goal, all the while keeping conservation and sustainability in mind.

We also would like to ask the NBAA members to make the effort to support these initiatives during 2019. We know that all members joined the NBAA to fish competitively for bass, however without these initiatives, there will be no bass to pursue and competitive bass angling in Namibia will surely not survive.

Sincerely yours

Johan Coetzee
Conservation Committee Official
NBAA

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