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THE FLYFISHING WATERS OF CAPENATURE'S JONKERSHOEK RESERVE

Can there be a more relaxing and contemplative pastime than fishing? Nestled in the picturesque Jonkershoek Nature reserve, just outside Stellenbosch, the flyfishery dams offer superb flyfishing for both the experienced and the novice flyfisher.

Eight trout dams with six on the main site and two wild dams on the border of the reserve are available for the more experienced flyfisher. The dams are well stocked with rainbow trout as well as the elusive and sought after White Fish (*Barbus andrewi*) one of South Africa's famous yellowfish species renowned for their fighting abilities.

CapeNature's Pierre de Villiers coordinator of the C.A.P.E. Estuaries Programme says: "Yellowfish are great angling species that can be targeted by bait, art-lure and fly." They are really beautiful fish and put up a spectacular fight. However the principle of catch-and-release should always be applied as most yellow-fish species are under some form of threat.

Yellowfish are basically indigenous fish species that inhabit many of the rivers in South Africa. Each species has a specific distribution range which means you only find them in very specific rivers. In the Field Guide – Fishes of Southern Africa, Skelton has named each of these species using a term that refers to its natural distribution range in some way, e.g. Clanwilliam Yellowfish

If these fish are transferred between catchments they can hybridize with other similar species. Included in the broad term Yellowfish are two threatened species in the Western Cape Rivers, namely the Whitefish and Sawfin.

Yellowfish in general prefer flowing rivers and are sensitive to habitat disturbance and over fishing. They are slow growers and are therefore often out competed and preyed upon by invasive alien species like Bass and Trout.

Pierre explained that by developing conservation plans for Yellowfish that aim at conserving the habitat as well as the species (flagship species principle) CapeNature will be able to conserve many of the smaller threatened species as well the manage the illegal stocking of fish.

Jonkershoek flywaters site manager Ryan Weaver says: "The dams will be open from 15 March after being closed since December in order to prevent undue stress to the fish during the high temperatures of summer."

The best fishing time is over winter when the trout are performing at their peak. Equipment can be hired from reception and advice and tuition are freely available. Fly casting and fishing clinics are run on a regular basis and private tuition can also be arranged. Flyfishing is also an excellent team building activity and we do run flyfishing clinics for corporate groups. For the non-flyfisher Jonkershoek Nature reserve offers a freshwater aquarium, restaurant, picnicking, bird watching, mountain biking and the tranquil beauty of nature at its best.

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