



Small Mouth Yellow Fish Reintroduced to 2 properties on Upper Seacow River,  
Northern Cape's Bo Karoo, October 22, 2010

Thanks to Pam Golding Karoo, Schanskraal Guest Farm & NKF, the Vanderkloof Fishing Competition was set to take place by October 16th. The previous municipal sponsorship had dried up so the *vissie kompetisie* had not taken place in 2009. This picture shows the beauty of arriving from the south towards Vanderkloof.



Early the next morning, the capture and translocation team arrived to pump the tank full.



Oh #\$\$%\*, the tank had been stored under the African sun for too long! A leak quickly sprung. Mark Senekal & Wayne Rubidge did marvels with duct tape and superglue inside & out.



About 100 people participated in the competition, which took place on the eve of Vanderkloof's 1<sup>st</sup> (and hugely successful) Water Festival. No small mouth yellow fish were caught during the night...but at 5 am they started taking the bait! This was fantastic news as it meant the endangered fish had less time in the keep nets.



After being measured & weighed by the VDK Fishing Club Representatives, 40 SMYF were placed in the tank. We hit the road but suddenly had to go back to town to fix a trailer tire.



Travelling south to Hanover we passed the usual Bo Karoo Traffic.



The fish were checked in every town. In Philipstown, it was decided that shade netting would be a good idea. We had the usual Saturday morning N1 traffic en route to Richmond.



Richmond was full of Book Fair enthusiasts.



30 km of dirt road and the first release site, “Blue Pools” was reached where 15 fish were released. Unfortunately, no tagging or marking expert was present. By this stage we were just focussed on getting them safely delivered ASAP...the oxygen tank had run out in Richmond but we were hopeful that the agitation of dirt road travel would help keep the beautiful fish oxygenated. The first site was chosen because it is rich in the lightweight, long, thin and non-choking water grass that provides extra food and oxygen – as well as protective cover from fish eagles and otters. This is the same grass that cattle, hippos and Cape buffalos love to eat.



Unbelievably, ANOTHER bottom fish tank puncture took place en route to the final release site (this on top of the horizontal crack that formed in the upper 20% of the tank between Petrusville and Philipstown). It was plugged by hand from the back of the moving trailer until we could get to the nearest emergency containers and repair site. For 2 hours, the entire focus was keeping temperatures steady (no more than 2° variance) and the fish hand-oxygenated (included was a bicycle pump). During this time, we learned we had 46, not 40, fish so 5 SMYF were released into the large Zoetvlei dam (below).



It was now 17h00. The remaining 26 fish were all alive and successfully released at 18h30 into the final release site. The next day, the Blue Pools site was checked. There were 5 fish that had not taken the plunge into their new habitat and were still swimming along the shoreline. They were helped in and swam away. 2 days later...there were no floaters and we think all the fish have survived! A malachite kingfisher was seen near one of the little tributaries near the release site. Let's hope mudfish reintroduction is going to be a lot easier!



The following need to be thanked profusely for enabling the SMYF reintroduction:

Northern Cape Dept of Tourism, Environment & Conservation

Pam Golding Karoo

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Mark Senekal – the greatest volunteer!

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