

## **Water conditions history from Truttablog.**

**Appearing below (with most recent reports first, ageing as you scroll down) are the archives of all water conditions reports periodically removed from Truttablog. These are removed from the website due to space storage limitations on sub pages of the blog, which the current software and service provider do not cater to. So older reports are removed, but saved here for posterity.**

### **Check in: 31 December 2024**

The day before yesterday I stopped to see if I could help a couple whose Landrover was giving them some mechanical trouble. It turns out they carried some wire and pliers with them (standard Landrover rescue kit) and didn't need my help. But since we were stopped beside the Amanzinyama and the view was fine, I lingered a while and chewed the fat while said wire solution was contemplated. Turns out they had been camping at Lotheni since about mid month, and although neither fished, they had kept an eye on the river. They reckon that to start with (mid December) it was a lot lower than they normally experience on this annual pilgrimage of theirs. Then there was some rain, and the level rose, but it puzzled them that the river was way more coloured than the flow suggested it should have been. Funny thing is that a mate who fished it a week earlier told me the same thing.

Either way we exchanged weather commentary there at the roadside and agreed that it had been particularly hot. The following day was a bruiser too. And my still water foray saw surface water temps at 24 degrees C. And a lone Trout which I feel guilty even fishing for.

I heard elsewhere that a bloke with big fishing plans, cancelled and stayed home by the pool.

But today is cooler (albeit humid as hell), and the Inzinga and Amanzinyama and Rooidraai were all coloured from a storm flush, and might have been cooler. And as I type this there is a roll of thunder.

### **Check in: 23 December 2024**

The Hlambamasoka received a storm dump over the weekend, which turned even the main Lotheni a chocolatey colour, but only below that confluence. From Folly bridge up it was as clear as a bell, but it has to be said that the whole river, even down where it was dirty, was surprisingly low. We have just had a rainstorm here in Hilton, and the prediction was for these to be widespread, so as is usual with these summer reports, my info is probably outdated already.

What I will say is that [the river was unbelievably hot](#). It was also quite busy. But here's the thing: we saw two father and son duos fishing, and we bumped into my friend Robyn and her lady friend on the river. Pukka fly fishers, throwing light lines, respecting the environment and enjoying a berg river in a way that doesn't demand a winner. I'm good with that.

We had a few fish rise to our dries, but it was very slow, as you can expect in such warm low water.

The uMngeni was no doubt just as warm, dare I say worse, but it was flowing stronger where we crossed it at the Chestnuts bridge.

The uMkhomazi was dirty down at the Stoffelton bridge, but I would imagine it too would have been clean (and probably low) up in the berg.

The Mooi, Bushmans, Injasuthi? Hell...I don't know. But if I did, and if I knew yesterday, it will likely be different today.

And different again tomorrow.

### **Check in: 19 December 2024**

I crossed the Inzinga this week, and was surprised to see how low and clear it was. Mind you, my mate Ray said the Bushmans was like that on Monday too. I think he got caught in the same storm which I heard rumbling and hissing off to the north of where I was. The one that chased us home too.

The stillwater I visited was a tiny bit off colour, probably from the wind action of last Thursday's rather extreme gale. (and heat!) A tributary of the Bushmans was also that colour, but I think that was from a storm which hit there, and nowhere else.

The uMngeni and the Poort have been crystal clear and getting lower, and there is no knowing if the current soft rain will lift the levels of those and other berg streams without dirtying them.

All I know is that the coming week we are expecting widespread (note...I didn't say *evenly* spread) rainfall. That will bring some welcome cool, but could also bring some unwelcome dirty water. We will just have to venture forth and see what we can get.

If a friend's report back is anything to go by, they will be the usual 9 to 15 inch river Browns, and we could get half of them on the nymph and the other half on a dry. And the pattern won't matter much.

### **Check in: 11 December 2024**

Let's just say that my butter is VERY soft.

I peeked in at the upper uMngeni yesterday on my way to a (very early to beat the heat) site inspection, and it was running very clear, but still with good flow.

Two mates fished a high altitude lake off towards Lotheni a few days back, and really struggled in strong wind. Despite very good returns on that water a few days prior, they struggled.

But they did get a fish each, and one of them was a Brown which looked more like 6 pounds than 5.

## **Check in: 2 December 2024**

We seem to be having a mix of blistering hot weather and high rainfall. Last Monday (and Tuesday) were unbearably hot, even up in the hills. Interestingly, (I must share this with you!) On Tuesday I was about 500m away from a large indigenous forest up near Fort Nottingham, and out in the open sun. It felt hot, by my bakkie thermometer read 24 degrees C. I then drove about 2 kms away from the forest, same altitude, and the temp was 30 degrees C. So there's some evidence of the cooling effect of intact, indigenous forests. As if to prove that, a pal and I fished the very upper reaches of the uMngeni on Saturday, and the water temp stayed fixed on 18,5 degrees C all day. We were fishing a stretch that comes out of the forest.

That water was clear, which was pleasing, since last Wednesday I measured 50mm (2 inches) in 4 hours of rain, and it seems to have been widespread across the midlands and the berg.

If this is anything to go by, all the KZN rivers will have been full over the week-end, but the higher stretches will have been clean (and cool). The relatively cool weather has persisted, and I see no long hot spells, or heavy rain, forecast for the coming week.

My recent fishing suggests that, unless you hit it lucky, the Browns want a deep sunk nymph, rather than a dry. I am doing my usual thing with a small, compact ("fluffless") nymph like a pheasant tail, with a flashback thorax cover, on a #18 hook. That is to say, a Grip Egg hook, which has a wonderfully wide gape and sharp point.

## **Check in: 18 November 2024**

We are suddenly thrust into the mid-summer mayhem when it comes to weather predictability. The uMngeni was looking superb, then there was 100mm of rain in its catchment in a week. But that dirtied up the Furth stream, and not the main stem, which just got a dose of summer tannin stain. The combination looked brown in the photos from Chestnuts on Saturday, but apparently it was not as bad as the photos suggested and you could still see a fly in it.

Then the Mooi was a bit coloured up on Sat morning, but the Reekie Lynn stream was crystal clear, and that combo was good enough: I saw 3 anglers out on the river that day. By evening the main Mooi was looking marginally cleaner, and the Reekie Lynn was blown out, with another storm in its catchment as I drove through there.

The Hlatikulu remained blown out all week-end.

My pal on the Bushmans said the river was the colour of "Sprite" when I called him on Friday. A word of advice: If your Sprite is grey, don't drink it! Anyway, it seemed to be

clearing during Saturday, but then after swirling storms all day one of them stuck...stuck lots of hail to the face of the Giant that is, and then the river was rising and still not "Sprite". But the Bushmans clears quickly and I reckon you could head out there as long as you are prepared to lower your standards and swing a Woolly Bugger.

I can confirm that it still works.

Highmoor was slow, and hot on Sunday, and hot is what to expect now if the sun is up in the morning. Hot, with the prospect of rumbling storms as early as 10:00 am.

But if you take a hard hat for the hail, sunscreen for the roasting, and a Woolly Bugger for the Trout, you should be fine. All you will have to worry about is the lightning.

Oh and the snakes maybe....

But damn, when you hit it right, with all that fresh water pumping through the system, and a good Trout in strong flow...It is very worthwhile!

So don't stay home.

## **Check in: 7 November 2024**

My friends at the Bushmans tell me that the colour of the river is that of "Stoney Ginger Beer" after recent rains.

Yesterday, the uMngeni at Chestnuts was more like "milo", except that it was more orange/yellow than that. Unfortunately that is the result of a big dam spillway upstream on the Furth stream that is eroding badly. What that does mean, is that the river above the Furth's confluence with the uMngeni is actually rather clean and fishable.

The surprising one is the Mooi. All the rain seems to have by-passed this one, and my assessment yesterday is that while it is not horrifically low, it definitely is in need of a damn good flush. The Reekie Lynn stream was also low.

The water was a little brown and lacked a freshness to it, notwithstanding that it was quite clear enough to fish.



Clear enough perhaps, but the Trout were positively un-cooperative at Riverside yesterday. That is three slow days on the Mooi in the last month.

I am starting to develop a complex.

### **Check in: 27 October 2024**

The Mooi was clean yesterday below the falls at Reekie Lynn. And flowing well. You couldn't have asked for more. (except perhaps for more evidence that there are Trout there).

The water was 18 degrees C at mid afternoon. Very pleasant.



Stillwaters: I heard news of some good Rainbows caught on a local syndicate up near Impendle: some stockies, and some fish of 20 inches....so not all fish were affected by lockjaw it seems.

### **Check in: 24 October 2024**

Rainfall figures everywhere vary from 60 to 75mm. Fantastic!

The uMngeni at Chestnuts is coloured, but it seems mainly so from the Furth stream, which was pumping yesterday. The Poort stream is quite a bit stronger than the main stem of the uMngeni at the moment, was a bit coppery yesterday, but much better today, and the main stem is crystal clear but flowing rather well.

The Mooi at The Bend looks like this today:



### **Check in: 21 October 2024**

The week-end was soggy and cool. Perfect Brown Trout weather you may think. I thought that too. But if there's one thing about Browns, they are unpredictable. The river was low, but not in a sad way, and it was wonderfully clean. I had some knicks, bumps and scratches, and my mate Noel landed just one 12 incher on the mid uMngeni..



then we went in search of a brass rail to put our feet on while drying out.

A mate fished one of the high altitude lakes. He didn't really cream it either.

Today has been cold. Too cold for rain of any consequence, I thought. The Norwegians (YR) were right. I was wrong. It is bucketing down as I write this, with thunder and lightning to boot.

Wonderful, I'd say!

## **Check in: 11 October 2024**

Yesterday, I had occasion to chat to a farmer who looks after a lovely piece of water on the Nsonga. We chatted about its resident Loch Leven browns: a topic that gets me going. He said that the fish have bred well this winter, which is pleasing and somewhat of a relief.

I say a relief, because both he and another farmer from Fort Nottingham confirmed that they are experiencing weather as dry as the inside of a Simba chips packet. Here in Hilton we have had 75mm since opening day, but everywhere in the hills seems to have had 30 in total, and a lot of warm dry weather since.

Add to that the REALLY hot weather over the last two days, and things don't look so good for the Trout. The Poort and the uMngeni right up at the top were as clean as it gets this week, and more than a bit low. Chestnuts had plenty of water to cover a Loch Leven leviathan, but the water temp was up as high as 22 degrees in the heat of the day on Wednesday.

Another friend described the Lotheni as "just a trickle".

So the rain that my weather app is predicting next week will be very welcome indeed. It is hard to believe that they are predicting air temps of just 7 degrees, and today was 30!

On the stillwaters: Sorry: I really have no news at all!

Tight lines! (for when it cools down I mean. You wouldn't fish in this would you?)

## **Check in: 27 September 2024**

While it looks to me that the uMngeni has fared best in terms of water level after the snow and rain of last weekend, the Mooi and Little Mooi don't look quite so good. Yet.

Reekie Lynn stream:



Mooi at Riverside



Little Mooi:



I reckon the Bushmans is better:



This despite so many snow-broken trees from Balgowan to Mooi River. Either way, all of them are fishable, and I reckon the Lotheni will be similar, as will the uMkhomazi after the collective 40 to 60mm of rain and snow in the last 2 weeks. Certainly the water table will be up, and much of that first flush of opaque dusty stuff will be largely gone. So with more rain and snow predicted from tomorrow through Monday, things are looking promising.

What was surprising to me yesterday was the almost completely melted snow on the berg, and water temps which peaked at 19 degrees at 3 pm!

There were some trout about. Not a lot, and they didn't seem to want to come to a dry, but they were there:



(Thandabantu beat: Bushmans)

## **Check in: 24 September 2024**

My weekends have involved a wedding, and then some snow, and I cant remember what else, so my fishing news is scant.

I can tell you that we had 24 mm of rain last Tuesday, and that it was widespread across the midlands of KZN. The uMngeni was up, but also opaque from the first dust washing, as it were. Then on the weekend we had that snows and rain. I measured another 38mm . I don't know what others got, but either way, It was widespread as you well know.

And today we have sun and warmth.

So if you stand still for long enough, something will grow right through you. It would be better to move. Go fishing perhaps.

The water will be cold, if my swimming pool is anything to go by, but I reckon that by Friday it will have warmed enough to get us back to where the fish are likely to be on the prod. That is my theory anyway.

A mate tells me that there aren't as many fish in the Bushmans this year as there were last, but that he is averaging fish around 12 to 13 inches, and got a 16 inch fish two week-ends back.

That'll do.

## **Check in: 2 September 2024**

Interestingly, there seems to have been a higher than usual attention on opening day. Maybe it is just that I was somehow more aware of it this year.

Either way, the Bushmans seems to have been occupied by anglers top to bottom. The few pictures I saw showed the river dry as a bone, but more so up at Giants Castle than down on the community waters. Up in the park, my friend Jan tells me they had a big fire and while the veld is greening up, the pretty little hiking bridge below the parking spot went up in flames.

Some fish were caught all along the Bushmans, but not in great numbers. I heard that some guys had a blank on the Mooi. Some mates and I had plenty of action on the uMngeni.

Water temps seemed to be universally 11 degrees in the morning going up to 16 according to my friend Ray.

The fish seemed to be on the prod, doing crazy brown Trout stuff....chasing stripped flies, ambushing woolly buggers right under your feet, rising when absolutely no hatch was visible, that sort of thing.

Flow is low everywhere, but those deep green pools with cover, and a sunk fly (as opposed to a dry) seemed to be the recipe.

## **Check in: 26 August 2024**

A friend of mine went on a recce this last weekend and sent me some pictures.

Bliksem. It's dry!

The rivers are really showing their bones, and the water clarity is something else.

I could tell you which 2 rivers I crossed today, which ones my friend photographed. It wouldn't add anything to this message. No one river is in a better state than the other as far as I can tell.

1 September may be more of a "look and see" than anything else.

## **Check in: 04 August 2024**

A friend and I were out on the water this week-end. I struggled, latching onto just two fish, and only landing one. What was notable though, was that:

- a) I was on the tube and not doing as well as my buddy who was wading, and
- b) I did better when I moved away from a stark, rocky shoreline to a weedy and reed-lined spot.

Anyway...the set-up that got me my two was a small brown dragon (unweighted) chasing a #12 GRHE with a brass bead. My colleague got most of his five fish on a black DDD which I had lent him. We may just have a convert!

I had been hearing that the fishing has been slow, but apparently results lifted for the final leg of the corporate competition at Kamberg this last week-end, and most success was during some pretty hectic wind. That just goes to show that sticking out bad conditions can pay dividends!

Some other fishermen on the next door dam didnt manage much more than a fish a piece, and a mate fishing elsewhere last weekend reported similarly lean pickings...I think he said 3 fish between 2 anglers. On that week-end a mate and I put in about 7 hrs, and he got a single fish. So yes...it has been slow. And cold!

I measured water of 11 degrees at the surface on Saturday afternoon, and last wee4k-end 8 degrees earlier in the day. And apart from yesterday's crazy berg wind day, we have had some cold weather. Looking back at my last report, the other thing that has changed since June is that we have had plenty of wind.

It is hard to believe that we are just a few weeks away from river season! I fear the streams are going to be properly bony because this winter stands out as dry to the point of cruelty! We really haven't had a drop in 4 months straight. In fact we haven't even had so much as a whiff of mist!

## **Check in: 29 June 2024**

Okay. Winter.

You will see fewer water conditions updates during winter: not because I am not fishing...I have thankfully done plenty of that, but because conditions are ultra stable.

Ice cold mornings, thick with frost. Water cleaner than you can image, and lovely mild, warm sunshine.

I haven't kept up with how the various competitions have gone...how many fish, how big etc, but I guess you can find all that on social media. I have heard comments that the fishing has been pretty slow, and catches down on other years.

From my side: Mates and I have done well with black flies. I have also had a some good action on a Booby Bugger tied about 12 inches behind a cactus chenille bugger, and chucking that lot into the shallows, really tight up against the reeds.

Water temps I have encountered range from about 8 degrees to 11.5 degrees C (in the shallows and late in the day). What has been quite unusual is the lack of wind: dead calm conditions or close thereto, have made for some challenging fishing often for hours at a time. At times like this I generally try to keep off the canoe or tube and fish from the edge where the ripples of the craft are not going to disturb the calm.

## **Check in: 4 June 2024**

So we had warm weather right up to the end of the river season. Cold nights sure, but surprisingly warm days. I fished the upper Mooi as did a few friends, and while we got a few, we agreed it was all over for the season: fish schooling and acting grumpy.

It was like that on the upper uMngeni too. The Boardermaster and I got one or tow little ones, but for the most part we just spooked them in shallow water. BUT....I did get a 17 inch stonker. What a great way to end the season.

Then I went off on a work trip and as I arrived back so did winter. BAM...just like that. I have a fire going and the dog has put in a request for one of those ridiculous suits that people dress them up in.

Stillwaters coming up....

## **Check in: 11 May 2024**

The weather has been warm, but night time temps have meant that river water starts off around 12 to 15 degrees, and warms up during the day to 17 to 19 degrees. The browns are loving it!

The uMngeni and Ncibidwana were both ever so slightly milky this week past, but really, we are splitting hairs, because they are both clean, and you can see the riverbed wherever you go. The Ncibidwana fish were more willing to take a dry than the ones on the uMngeni, which, as usual, were just downright picky!

My friend Wayne tells me that the stillwaters have been disappointingly slow. I recommended he try the Bushmans today, because honestly, the rivers have been on fire!

With the warmer weather, we have been handed May on a plate....often by now we have had a frost or two and it is all over, but this year.....

Don't waste it!

### **Check in: 3 May 2024**

All the Trout rivers are looking magnificent....from the Injasuthi in the north, to the umKhomazana in the south, and everything in between. That includes the Lotheni, uMkhomazi, uMngeni, Mpofana, uMtshezi....all of them.

If you get with the isiZulu, you will know where those all are!

The Bushman's level dropped in the last week to the point where a dry fly is now working a higher percentage of the time than it did a week earlier. The Browns seem to be hanging in the mid to tail end of the pools and runs, with the odd good one in a pocket in the riffle water, or an eddy up near the whitewater inflow at the top.

They were eating my hopper with gusto on the last two trips to the Bushmans, and the #18 troglodyte a few feet behind it almost as often.

On my last foray, the angler on the beat above us got 15 fish, 4 of which were "better". Our party o landed twenty something fish, and literally one or two were under 12 inches. The best were 18".

Water temps....I was getting 13 degrees in the mornings, but with a few hot days that was 15 degrees on Wednesday, going up to 18 degrees by mid afternoon. So the temp is drifting past the magic 16 degree mark twice a day.

It just doesn't get better!

### **Check in: 26 April 2024**

The roadworks in the vicinity of the Reekie Lynn stream are dirtying the Mooi, in repeated slugs of mud that join the main flow. It is a real bugger, because aside from that, the Mooi is beautifully clean, despite being quite full.

So up at the bridge at Riverside, you will see that it is as near perfect as it gets.

Notwithstanding the water colour the fish were snapping at passing flies when I was there 3 days back, and the angler I met at the stile yesterday said he also got some fish, but we shared a moan about water colour.

The Bushmans at the Clinic is a tad milky, but I would say, still very fishable, albeit with a wading staff at hand. The colour comes from the Emahlutshini stream, which joins on the Bhungane beat above. If you go in above that confluence you will get your nice clean water.

The cockfish have started to develop their kypes. The leading edges of the anal fin are a dashing white, and the Trout are smacking a dry fly.

Go get em...autumn is receding by the day.

### **Check in: 20 April 2024**

The Mooi at The Bend and at Trout Bungalow was still milky, very full and was 18 degrees C on Friday 19th April.

Apparently the Bushmans at the upper tribal water is crystal clear as at Saturday, but the report is from a non-fisherman.

On Friday the uMngeni was still very full, and even up above the Poort confluence it was off colour, albeit with tannin stain.

We just need flow to drop off, and things will be perfect.

### **Check in: 14 April 2024**

Last week-end saw a cut off low, and a deluge of rain. By Monday the Bushmans, the Little Mooi, Mooi, uMngeni and others were a bundle of mud. The roads were pretty damn slippery too. The tributary was over the Reekie Lynn bridge in the vicinity of the Mooi, and fishing was very much out of the question.

Interestingly, the rain fell over what I would describe as the Giant's Castle *massif*, meaning that anything that drains off there was blown out. I don't know what happened at Injashuthi, but I do know that all the rivers that we fish south of the Elandshoek, were actually in fine fettle.

Yesterday the uMngeni at Chestnuts was still full and blown out. We did however witness some Trout rising! The Bushmans was still very full and slately, following a top up of rain on Tuesday last week. I imagine the Mooi would be similar.

Water temps were 15 to 16 on the Bushmans, but as low as 13 degrees in the mornings on a number of the rivers, topping out at 18 degrees as the day moved on. Hoppers are everywhere. Fish are eating them.

Autumn is very much in the air. The day the river clears, you need to be out there.

## **Check in: 26 March 2024**

After the heat and dry, some scattered storms have been sweeping across the hills dropping rain in unpredictable patterns. Suffice it to say, dwindling river flows may be rescued yet, and autumn could just be all it is cracked up to be.....

### [VIDEO](#)

[embed]<https://youtu.be/6bes855qEAY>[/embed]

Certainly until this rain rivers were low and clear, but not drastically so. I have still been able to drift a hopper down a tumbling run, or flick a fly into multiple pockets to skittish Trout. No algae and no fish stranded in stagnant pools....nothing like that. Just very clean, beautiful, and challenging water, ranging from 17 degrees C in the mornings to as high as 23 degrees by mid to late afternoon. The weather is however cooling by the day, and I suspect we have seen the last of those high water temperatures.

And we have just had a rain shower here in Hilton. Things are looking up.

## **Check in: 18 March 2024**

Damn it has been hot!

A mate fished The Mooi on Saturday and tells me that flow has dropped significantly. I was on the phone to a friend on the upper uMngeni this morning, and although as a non-fisherman he wasn't able to describe it in terms I could picture, he also reported the river as very low.

Of course today is wonderfully cool, as was yesterday, and I am having trouble believing the weather forecast which says it will be above 30 degrees by tomorrow. I can more easily believe what I want to believe, and that is that autumn is now upon us, with this cool spell being the corner we needed to turn.

I will say that morning water temps have been reasonable (18 degrees or so) despite the hot days. That talks to day length and cool nights.

So if we could just get some flow! The drizzle we are having in Hilton now has translated into precisely ZERO rainfall up in the catchments....or certainly ZERO runoff.

So the weeks are flicking by, and I hope for some pre-autumn rain so that I can use all the hoppers I tied up over the week-end.

## **Check in: 11 March 2024**

managed to find another day when we had had drizzle the night before, and the morning started off cool. [In fact it was sublime](#): I could have sworn it was April!

Clean water (on a falling Bushmans River), sunny skies, as the mist burned off and the puffy white clouds drifted by. But after lunch the sweat was trickling down the back of my neck, and the water suddenly seemed so warm that it was no longer refreshing. We had had a good morning, so we called it off, just idly chucking a fly here and there on the way back to the car. We had caught a few fish as the water temp crept up from 19 degrees C, and we were happily done.

The nights are definitely starting to cool, but daylight hours are still long enough that it is not necessarily translating into cooler water. Over the last few weeks I have been trolling the valleys with a thermometer and sticking it into streams here and there. The mornings are generally good, but more so after a cooler spell. Not the dams.

Midmar has stopped overflowing. The uMngeni has good flow, but the Mooi is a lot drier, and the Bushmans was great, but I reckon it is dropping by the day as this dry spell starts to bite. We haven't had rain in about 3 weeks now.

Hopefully it will cool while there is still water in the river. If this is a drought inbound, that could be like, a week, tops. My bigger hope is that it will rain soon.

Autumn is short enough as it is.

## **Check in: 2 March 2024**

This week we had 3 wonderfully cool days at the beginning of the week. So on day 4, and before the heater turned back on (which it has done), a mate and I got onto a river.

We fished the very upper uMngeni. It was sublime! Water clean and 18.5 degrees mid morning, and the weather vaguely autumnal. The fish were reasonably willing, and we raised roughly half of them on dry flies (terrestrial patterns). Hooking them was another thing, but we [landed a few](#).



By 3 pm, it was rather warm however and water temps were up at 22 degrees. Amazing how quickly they can rise on a river with lots of sun-exposed black rock!

Another friend was on Brigadoon yesterday and he did similarly....nothing big, but very pleasant fishing.

I heard that a week back a fisherman did quite well on a tributary of the Bushmans, and I saw two superb fish from the Mooi online....2 different beats.

We have not had all that much rain...not widespread anyway, and the river levels have dropped, giving us very clean water.

Night time temps are just starting to drop, and suddenly altitude seems to be making more difference in moderating air temps.

I reckon we give it another week and then we declare our mid-summer mini "off season" over, and start calling in sick.

## **Check in: 19 February 2024**

Since Thursday's searing heat, and gum-tree-buckling wind, we have had grey skies, drizzle and cool weather. But as far as I can tell, so significant rainfall. That means clean streams, with some temperature relief.

That is about as good as it gets in February. The only thing we didn't get right is the alignment with the week-end. This means that your work will have to suffer for a day or two.

Oh well...at least you have your priorities right.

## **Check in: 16 February 2024**

Yesterday was fierce, meaning it was 30 degrees C in the Dargle, and no doubt hot everywhere across the KZN midlands and berg. The gum trees were buckling under a strong NE wind, and quite honestly, it was tough being out and about. My mate Rogan called to enquire about the prospects of fishing soon, and I said "Naa"...or something similar.

But a friend of mine fished the Bushmans last week-end and got some fish (before being chased off by yet another storm)...so its not impossible.

And speaking of storms, farming friends tell me that it is actually getting fairly dry. I can see that in the receding level of the Midmar Dam overflow. But the water table is up, and the uMngeni is only now starting to look fishable down at the Chestnuts bridge (in my book anyway).

If we could just get some relief from this heat...

Oh, but the plane trees above 1600m ASL are starting to get the slightest yellow tinge. And in March, we still have lots of hot (sometimes VERY hot days), but start watching the night time temps....there lies the cue to get fishing again. March is 13 days away. Yes...I am counting.

## **Check in: 5 February 2024**

storms hit the Bushmans and Ncibidwana yesterday afternoon, knocking them out in terms of throwing a fly, but I guess that only counts if you plan on fishing between Monday and say Thursday.



The uMngeni was clear\* Friday, and as far as I know yesterday's storms missed there.

\* I say clear, but the Furth stream continues to add some colour, so you would need to be upstream of that to get the cleanest water.

Water temps on the Bushmans: 19 degrees C at 11: 00 am.

## Check in: 28 January 2024

The Lotheni was completely blown out by a massive cloudburst on Friday evening. As significant is that the road into the park is partly washed away, as well as being blocked by flash flood debris!



The Mooi has been clean for a week now, and temps varied from 17 degrees last week-end to 18 degrees yesterday. There is a bit of colour at the bridge at Riverside,



but not much, and going by the small amount of colour in the Reekie Lynn tributary, I reckon the main river in the gorge below, and below that, is very fishable.

The uMngeni still had a little more clearing required when I saw it on Friday, and it is not helping that the Furth stream is very dirty...something upstream is causing the water to cloud quickly and clear slowly....some stream channel stuff that I am aware of.

## Check in: 19 January 2024

News in this morning is that the Bushmans is clean throughout the tribal water, with flows receding after the last heavy rain. So you could get lucky and get in a day there over the weekend.

The uMngeni is however still blown out.

## **Check in: 16 January 2024**

We seem to be having blisteringly hot days and rain every night.

The uMngeni is absolutely pumping and completely blown out. That stands for the very top beats too. There is water pouring out of everywhere, with at least 2 severe storms in the last 4 days (and much hail and wind and wash damage).

The Bushmans is apparently full but clearing. A friend of mine says its not as radically full as the uMngeni, and will be clear at the head of the tribal area if we can just get through the next 24 hours without another storm breaking. Isn't that kinda typical of all Trout rivers at this time of year....if the storms can just stay at bay....and then they don't...

Those guys in the Sates who have real-time flow and colour monitoring have it good! We just don't get enough of a break from theft to make that work here...theft of the device, the solar panel, or the batteries of the local cell tower required to send the data. Also, the sensors which I know were put out were washed away within 12 months due to the wildly unpredictable nature of our berg streams and rivers.

But what if we could get a photo, a clarity tube reading, and some sort of flow measurement every Thursday, just ahead of the week-end....? On several of our KZN Trout streams.

If that would SERIOUSLY interest you, I would really like to know. So if it would, please drop me a one liner on **andrew at truttablog dot com**.

**or**

Take one minute to answer this very simple [SURVEY](#) (click the word...it'll take you there)

*(yes...we timed it...it took only 1 minute)*

## **Check in: 9 January 2024**

Last night's storms were pretty remarkable! I am not aware of a river anywhere that is clean, and not dangerous to go near!

Here's the Dargle Falls on the uMngeni (lower limit of the Trout water) as at this morning:



### **Check in: 8 January 2024**

The rivers in pictures: the last 24 hrs (and before Monday evening rain deluge)

uMkhomazana



uMkhomazi



Lotheni



Inzinga



Bushmans (With thanks to Ray)



### **Check in: 14 December 2023**

There has been a mix of weather, and depending on which river valley you are in, you could encounter clean water, or it could be blown out.

I have been getting water temps around 19 degrees everywhere.

Yesterday the Hlatimbe and Hlambamasoka were filthy after big rains. The Lotheni (into which they drain) looked that way too:



but take a look here:

[Video of the upper Lotheni](#)

The uMngeni has been full, and while the Poort was adding a bit of colour, the main stem and the Furth were clean, such that yesterday Chestnuts was approaching a fishable state, and I reckon by today or tomorrow, it will be ready to fish.



The upper reaches are certainly very fishable at present:



The Mooi at Reekie Lynn was blown out yesterday, in part due to the Reekie Lyn stream which was dirty.



But up at Riverside it was just "slatey", and you could see the bottom of the river off the bridge:



So there's a wrap for the upcoming long weekend.

Enjoy!

### **Check in: 10 December 2023**

Wow...its actually cold (14 degrees C here). And wet (60 mm in the last 48 hrs). Thank goodness for the relief!

On Friday evening, as a prelude to two days of cold and wet, we had some hum-dinger storms, at various places across the midlands and the berg. It drizzled all day yesterday, rained last night, and is drizzling again.

I haven't heard from everywhere, but I can tell you the uMngeni is blown out. Before this it was as clean as a whistle, and getting a bit low.

Water temps reported as high as 24 degrees in the days preceding this cold front, are now coming in consistently at 19 degrees C, which is much better!

There's lots of rain forecast, so it will be a case of looking for gaps and news of clean water. I will try to help with that.

### **Check in: 4 December 2023**

Despite some rain and one or two cooler days, the heat of summer remains fierce. A friend measured a water temperature of 24.5 degrees C at Riverside on the Mooi over the week-end, and I measured similar temps while doing some water testing just below the Trout zone on the uMngeni.

The uMngeni, both at Chestnuts and right up at Umgeni Poort were looking thin when I crossed those bridges on Saturday. I was on a work trip, but given the blistering weather, I didn't even pack a rod.

There were wild (and non predicted) storms yesterday, and I am waiting for more news to trickle in as to who got how much rainfall. I know the lower end of Dargle got 45 mm, and here in Hilton we got 50mm.

But it is damned hot again.

There is some marginally cooler weather predicted in the next few days, and I for one am working furiously at my PC while its hot, so that I have a better chance of getting in a few hours on the rivers during that cooler patch.(water conditions permitting of course).

AND news just in....the uMngeni at Chestnuts is absolutely blown out. Mudpies.

### **Check in: 25 November 2023**

What a week! We had an awful heatwave. Last night and this morning it stormed several times, which has thankfully cooled things down a whole lot, but the sun came out for an hour earlier, and it was instantly hot again. The weather forecast for the coming week still shows some high temperatures.

You know how they have an "off season" in the northern hemisphere when it snows in winter.....same but different here.

### **Check in: 20 November 2023**

Saturday and Sunday were hot as hell. Saturday saw a particularly ferocious storm in the vicinity of the Furth stream catchment, and despite the source of the uMngeni not getting any significant rain, that tributary, and some road runoff turned the uMngeni filthy at Chestnuts. Who knows what happened in the Kamberg, at Lotheni and over the Bushmans. We are in full 'summer unpredictable' mode.

Case in point: Today I heard that a heatwave is forecast for the whole of this week, but today isn't nearly as hot as the forecast predicted.

We are starting to get water warm enough to consider not fishing at all, or at very least, limiting forays to the high altitude white water sections, with a lighthearted attitude and an eye for birding, or photography.

I have just scanned my weather app for a cold front. I didn't find one.



### **Check in: 12 November 2023**

The rivers are flowing fairly well, but as at yesterday (before the widespread storms that may well have changed all this) they were all clean, and looking pretty damned good.

I bumped into a friend on the roadside who reported the Injasuthi in similar condition, and certainly the Bushmans, Mooi and uMngeni which I have seen this week, were looking great. Despite waters temps from 18 degrees C to as high as 21 degrees, fish have been on the move. Just yesterday they were taking dry flies, it would appear, in preference to our nymphs, even though hardly any fish were seen rising through the day.

### **Check in: 24 October 2023**

Current river conditions in pictures

(taken in the last 24 hrs)



The Mooi at Riverside (above and below)



Reekie Lynn stream



The uMngeni at New Forest



The Poort stream at Umgeni Poort



The uMngeni at Chestnuts



The Inzinga at Belmont



Lotheni River

### **Check in: 22 October 2023**

I was up on the uMngeni on Thursday...right up at the top. After the 40 or 50mm of rain a few days prior, the levels were good, but the water in the main river was clear again. A friend of mine had visited Chestnuts on the week-end and found it like liquid chocolate. The Furth stream was flowing stronger and just a little coloured. I got a look in at the top end of Chestnuts and Boundary Pool was looking absolutely sublime: deep green and cool.

But an hour or two before that I shot this quick video much further up:

[Video](#)

## **Check in: 14 October 2023**

Some rainfall has arrived, but thus far it is scattered (the weather forecast says more this week, but for now there are still dry zones).

Underberg is dry, and it seems that the uMkhomazana, uMkhomazi and Lotheni are still clear and low, with no evidence of runoff.



*uMkhomazana River 14 Oct 2023*



*uMkhomazi River 14 Oct 2023*



*Lotheni River 14 October 2023*

The Inzinga and uMngeni however , have had some runoff, and it shows because a slug of winter's road dust has entered the rivers (certainly down at the bridges on the Dargle/ Impendle/Stoffelton roads) and has turned them an awful opaque colour . But the levels have hardly risen, so they look awful:



*uMngeni at Chestnuts 14 Oct 2023*

There is quite decent rainfall forecast over the next week or so, so let's wait and see.

### **Check in: 06 October 2023**

some footage showing the upper uMngeni today, so that you can get an idea of conditions:

[Oct 2023 video](#)

### **Check in: 15 September 2023**

OK, so we had a bit of snow , but I think the volumes were small. I looked at the berg above the uMkhomazi on Wednesday and there were just dustings left, and it was warm again. There really wasn't enough moisture or rain with it to lift flows at all. So rivers remain low and clear, and the algae is becoming prevalent. For NFFC members, The Mooi is closed at Reekie Lyn as is customary for that beat: it opens when we have had some rain. A couple of uMngeni beats are unfortunately lost to the club. High up the river, water is really thin. So its kinda the Bushmans in the community area in terms of rivers, otherwise stick to the stillwaters until we have had some rain.

### **Check in : 10 September 2023**

It seems that not a lot of people have ventured out onto the rivers, and I guess that is understandable. Water levels are low, and visibility is high. That is to say the fish can see you coming, and I think most flyfishers crossing a bridge slowly (as we do) would think "Heck no!".

My mates and I have had a couple of ventures onto streams, and sure enough, they can see you coming. Mulling over my fishing yesterday I postulate that when the sun was behind me, or a steep bank cut my silhouette, added to some wind-riffle on the surface, was when I caught fish. Anything else and all I did was spook them.

Water temps on the Bushmans have been up to 17 degrees C, but a 13 degree reading came from a friend of mine yesterday. The algae on the Bushmans down on the tribal water (which is where you go to find more flow) is something else! Big gobs of it floating down at you like rock-snot. Not pretty, but my-oh-my the fish are hungry when they are not spooked!

The uMngeni isn't as full of algae for some reason, and the Mooi....I'm afraid that is a bridge I haven't crossed. If you have, please do drop me a line.

I see from social media that one particular NFFC stillwater produced two monster fish on the same day recently. A high altitude lake which I have access to continues to produce fish, but not of any great size and everyone who visits seems to use different flies and methods, so I can't really nail that "silver bullet" method to feed your curiosity

### **Check In: 3 September 2023**

It seems the fish have been "on the prod".

While I was on the uMngeni river on opening day, my pal Scotty was just above me on a stillwater. He conceded that his time was easier than mine. I found thin water in the high altitude trickle that calls itself a stream. It was crystal clear and the small fish I found hiding in shadow lines and rare patches of depth were skittish as hell. Scotty did better . Damned well in fact, with two fish over 20 inches.

That same day my pal Ray was out on the river (17 degree water temp), and he posted pics on our group of some browns that met with a number of single syllable exclamations in reply.

For mere mortals who had to wait until the second of September, things were no less glorious. My friend Richard sent me a pic of his 14 incher from the river, and Neil and I had lots of action down on the lower reaches of the uMngeni.

There I struggled for nearly 2 hrs with a dry fly, before meeting up on the bank to hear that the fish were after more calories than that, and would eat a chunky thing sunk deep. Results followed.

Rivers are low, but those who have fished a few decades will tell you they have seen much worse. The good summer rains replenished the water table such that flows, all be they low, have some sticking power, if you know what I mean.

### **Check in : 25 August 2023**

Au\_GUST it is. Blowing like hell today, and yesterday up at Impendle was pretty bad too. We have had our fair share of the wind one can expect at this time of year. Also, notwithstanding a great summer in terms of rainfall, the rivers are dropping very low. That is because autumn was actually quite dry, and because the snow we have had so far has not been significant enough, or has not been accompanied by enough rainfall, for us to get runoff.

September is the month of the year in which we are most likely to get snow, so I am watching the weather forecast eagerly and hoping for a flush of cold water to kick the river season off.

So I have been stopping on bridges and peering into rivers of late, and to be honest, they don't look great. Clear, sure, but low!

And with the warmth having already crept into the season, the algae is starting to grow.

So for opening day on the rivers, I am honing my sights on some of the lower beats, where there is more water and big post spawn fish may be out looking for calories like a student after a night out.

In the week of "stillwater only" that is left before the season opens, I may have a throw somewhere, but I must say I haven't done well in the last few trips out, so if the warmth and wind is anything like today, I might dismiss my usual advice of "get out there" and stay home and tie flies for the river season. Or not.....

### **Check in: 10 August 2023**

Right....That problem I had, as described in the post below...I have fixed that...I have been fishing..

Winter can be a somewhat random time. By that I mean, you can arrive at the waters edge, see little action, try out a few things, and sometimes you hit the jackpot, sometimes you hit zero.

A week back I hit the jackpot, and I thought I was very clever. It was at a particular spot along the shore, in a howling gale, with the pressure plummeting, and I made a pig of myself. The next trip (predictably perhaps): Niks. And the next trip. Niks. Then yesterday I picked up 2 very nice fish on a small brown dragonfly nymph (yes...that pattern of mine).

What the above doesn't tell you, is that in between the long dull hours were patches of rising fish. Unlike some summer hatches, they were spread out. So a fish here, one 300 metres over there, another 50 metres out, and so on. You only get a few rises within casting distance, and that in itself is frustrating. The other frustrating part is that the 3 or 4 chances you have, don't make a decent sample in terms of experimenting with fly changes. So in my case I put on a team of flies...a floating parasol midge, and behind that a midge larva. I give it 3 tries on rising fish. It doesn't work. I make a subtle fly change, and then I don't see another rise. So I go back to fishing a dragonfly or a Woolly Bugger for a few un-eventful hours.

That's winter for you!

What I can tell you, is that the season seems to be quite late. In other words the last week showed barely a glimmer of warmth. Water was ice cold and clear as a bell, and fish were full of eggs. We saw fish following the fly, and yesterday spotted fish cruising along shale areas near the dam spillway. Mid winter stuff. In August.

But I suspect that as I type this, the warming will be starting. The weather forecast shows max temperatures of 21 to 24 degrees C in the next 7 days.

Snails and Corixae. Time to add those into the mix.

## **Check in : 25 July 2023**

I just haven't got out a whole lot lately, so I am having to rely on what my mates tell me.

They are telling me that there are a few dams in the Kamberg that are producing fantastically, but only on the right days. Go fish them when its pre-frontal, or on falling pressure, or whatever it is that the fish don't like, and you would swear the dams are devoid of fish.

The next day some other guy goes and gets an 8lb fish, or 10 fish over 4lbs....yes...that really happened, and in the last 3 weeks!

I suppose you just have to go and try...put in the hours. That's what I am doing wrong at the moment...not putting in the hours. Gotta fix that.... but there is more snow predicted...oh well...

### **Check in : 10 July 2023**

As is to be expected, we had some pretty balmy weather in the lead up to today. During that time a few farmers confirmed my fears....that it is just my poor circulation that makes me believe we are having a cold winter, and in fact they are battling to burn firebreaks, because the grass is too green. I had some fair fishing on a mild afternoon up in the hills. You could call it warm if you like, but hell, when the sun disappeared over that hill.....Anyway....it is snowing as I write, so all that changed in a heartbeat.

### **Check in : 13 June 2023**

A friend and I were on a stillwater at the top end of the Dargle on the weekend. We encountered water around 9 degrees C, and air temps topping 16 degrees and down to 4 degrees when we left with the bakkie lights on. So I guess you could say winter is in full swing.

We bumped and scratched, and landed a few stockies, and one better fish, plus one stonker got off. It wasn't fireworks. I am told that the Kamberg competitions (Corporate trophy leg 1 and Trout festival) , saw some unfortunate weather, at least for part of each event, which put the fish down. As always though, a scattering of big fish were to be had. That's winter for you!

### **Check in: 29 May 2023**

A friend of mine gave the Mooi one last try on the weekend, and reported it as dead as a doornail. So with rivers pretty much done, attention shifts to the stillwaters.

I have heard a dearth of reports, just the odd sprinkling here and there. We have had some pretty cold weather, and I guess that has kept many people home.

### **Check in: 22 May 2023**

The water temp plummeted on the uMngeni on Friday, and measured just 11 degrees yesterday (up to 13 later in the day). The water was clearing after being very milky on Saturday....just enough colour in the water to help a bit with skittish fish. Fish of 3 lbs + continue to be spotted on the uMngeni, and reports of a 24" fish near Tendela on the Mooi...so a bit of excitement, and maybe you could be forgiven for going trophy hunting in the last week of the season!

### **Check in:19 May 2023**

The long awaited cold front has struck. It is 10 degrees and raining here in Hilton. The weather station I watch at the top of the uMngeni, says that its 8 degrees up there, and that there has been 6mm of rainfall in the last 24 hrs. So not enough to swell the rivers, but in any event, as soon as these skies clear, the frosts will start. And the Browns will surely be in full breeding mode.

The river season is pretty much done.

### **Check in: 17 May 2023**

I have been out and about over the last few days and have looked over some bridges, and dropped in a thermometer here and there. I have seen temps from 13 to 19 degrees up and down the Mooi and Little Mooi, and clean low water everywhere. It has been quite dry lately, so the Mooi, Little Mooi, uMngeni, and I should imagine all the others are all running quite thin. It has been damned cold at night too. The river season really is running down now!



### **Check in: 30 April 2023**

Its still perfect! Everywhere. If you haven't already gone: Go!

By all accounts the berg streams were (and are) rather busy with fishermen this long week-end. I have certainly encountered plenty of people with news of days out, from the Bushmans, Mooi, uMngeni and other streams. Everything is clean and and cooling, with flow levels dropping fast.

There have been a lot of small fish reported everywhere, but I had days on all three of the abovementioned rivers, where I either saw, spooked, lost or landed some great fish amongst them. To get more specific: 4 fish of 15 inches or more, dozens around 10 inches, but a lot more than that of the tiddlers. Really big fish (19 inches or more): Mooi 1, Bushmans 1, uMngeni 1.....that I know of.

Many thanks to those who shared their news and pictures. Your secret fishing spots are safe with me!

**Check in: 16 April 2023**

Its perfect! Everywhere. Go!



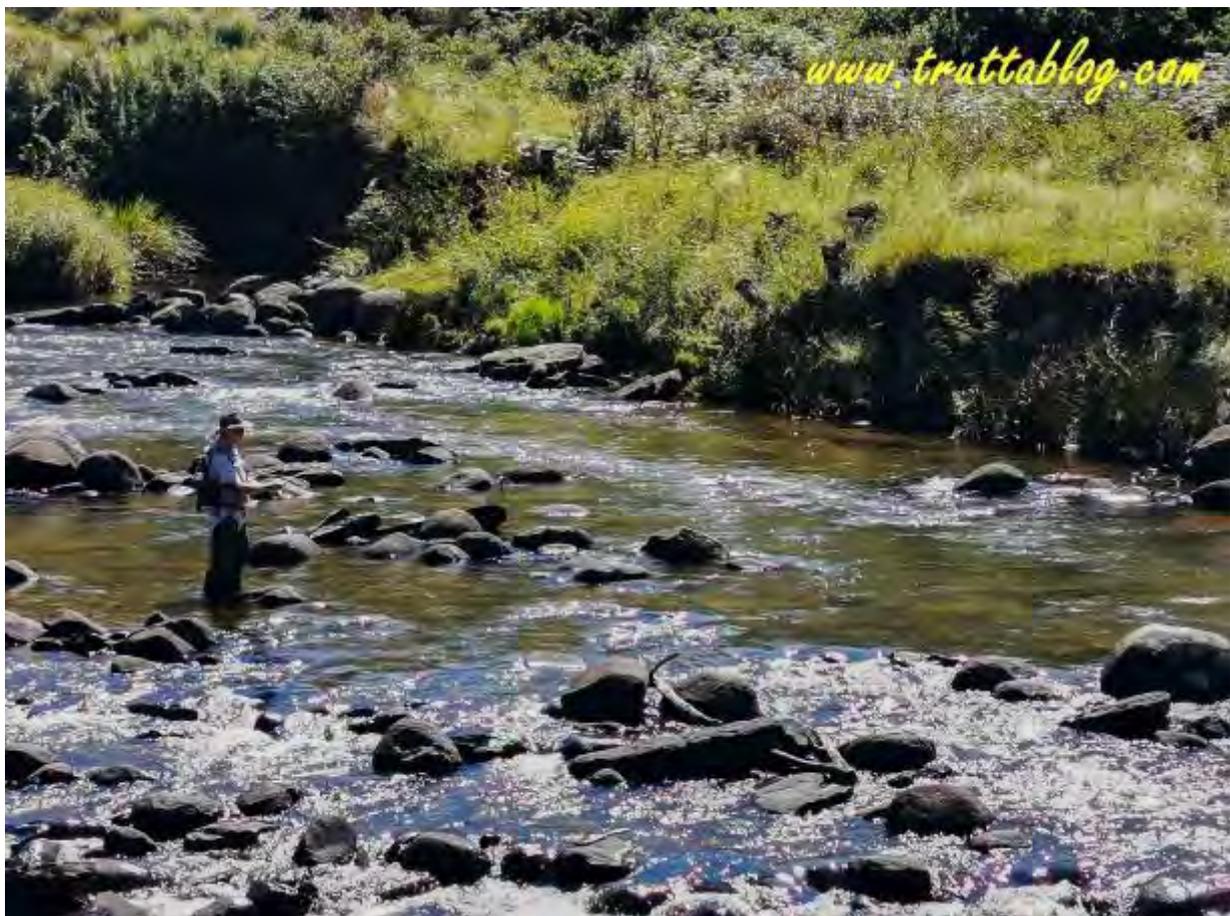
### **Check in: 11 April 2023**

More of the same: perfect everywhere from what I hear. The news from the uMngeni, Mooi, Bushmans and Lotheni is all good, and plenty of Browns around. We have had some storms and rain, but I have not heard of anything blown out.

### **Check in: 2 April 2023**

I managed to get onto some Trout river water twice in the last week. On both occasions the conditions were sublime in terms of flow, clarity and temperature. Temps from around 17 degrees in the early morning up to a max of 20 degrees.

I know for a fact that the Bushmans and uMngeni are looking great...I think it is fair to assume that they are all in fine fettle. But cooler weather will be here in a matter of weeks, and flows are dropping, so there is no time to waste.



### **Check in: 28 March 2023**

My Friend Richard tells me that the Bushmans was blown out on the weekend, or at very least flowing too strongly for his liking and chasing him to the tributaries where he caught some nice fish.

The Lotheni and its tributaries were looking great over the week-end, and I suspect that would have held true for all the uMkhomazi system rivers. Water temps were between 18 and 19 degrees.

Sunday evening's cold front has touched the air with the brush of autumn: sublime weather that tastes like Trout, if you know what I mean.



*A Lotheni tributary*

### **Check in: 22 March 2023**

The uMkhomazi tributaries were all looking magnificent over the week-end. The Inzinga, Hlambamasoka, Hlatimbe and Lotheni. On Monday night a wave of storms came through, which seemed to circle the berg and Malungane and dirtied the Lotheni and uMkhomazi, and probably the Inzinga on Tuesday. Lotheni was rather busy on the week-end, with quite a few anglers, and even more swimmers. The fish seemed to be in the pocket water, rather than the pools this time. Water temps hovered around 19 degrees C, and flow levels were perfect. The Hlambamasoka was as clean as cut ice, and also yielded some decent Trout.

The uMngeni and Furth were crystal clear on Sunday when I crossed them, and were still that way on Tuesday morning.

Pictures on various groups show the Mooi was perhaps fuller than the rivers to the south, but clean, and reports of good catches from a number of different spots along the river.

Here's a thought: If you are fishing a river and discovered that someone has fished the piece above you, leaving you no option to fish water that has already had a fisherman pass that day, or perhaps the afternoon before: What would you prefer...a fisherman who picked off a few fish and moved along....or one who scoured every pool and run to see how many he could catch (leaving a high percentage of the fish pricked)?

That question was pertinent this week-end when conditions were sublime and more fly fishers than usual were out enjoying our rivers.

### **Check in: 16 March 2023**

With the abatement of heavy rain, and a scattering of reports of rivers looking "mighty fine", I think it is fair to say we are entering that sweet spot of the year when you need to be on a river. Reports from the Bushmans and Mooi are of beautiful conditions.

### **Check in: 12 March 2023**

After storms both Thursday and Saturday nights, the uMngeni was coloured again at Chestnuts on Sunday morning. The Furth Stream however, is full and clean!

If you go to fish this piece, I recommend fishing the first 3/4 (three quarters) Km above the confluence with the uMngeni. Then skip the next bit of slow, log and bramble infested river....take the farm track and walk about a km or more upstream and cut back in at the stream. When you start getting to the "staircase water" of plunge pools between jumbled rock, and you can hear the waterfall and see the forest on the south bank.....then you are in the sweet spot.

Furth dam was also a bit coloured by the rain, and the water temp was 22 degrees!

### **Check in: 6 March 2023**

Saturday's recce took me over the uMngeni and Furth stream (which were both looking great), and also over the uMkhomazi at Stoffelton bridge, where the river looked fabulously full and clean.

The Lotheni was almost as clean as the uMkhomazi, but also very fishable indeed. Especially so up in the park. The Hlambamasoka was slightly more milky than that, but fish still came up for a dry fly there. Water temps up there : 18.5 degrees C, which is pretty respectable.

I heard that stillwaters in the upper Dargle area are still at around 21 degrees C first thing in the morning, and on a sunny day the surface areas will get warmer than that. So I am not rushing off to a stillwater just yet.

I am getting excited about the rivers though. While it is 29 degrees (air temp) here in Hilton today, our nights are definitely getting cooler, and all the more so up in the berg.

I think, rainfall permitting, our rivers are fast entering that autumnal sweet spot that is always so fleeting.

Use it or lose it!

### **Check in: 27 Feb 2023**

I checked out the uMngeni on Friday afternoon. While its tributary, the Furth stream was sort of fishable, the main river was not....still quite considerably off-colour and very full..

The Lotheni was very full too, but clean, and apparently the Inzinga was showing signs of a significant flood event having taken place. Hopefully, as we enter March, some more predictable and ever so slightly cooler weather will come our way.

### **Check in: 17 Feb 2023**

Reports from EVERYWHERE indicate excessive rain, and rivers blown out...from all the uMkhomazi tributaries, the uMngeni, Mooi, Bushmans..the lot. The prospects of a clean and fishable river this week-end are very low.

### **Check in: 13 Feb 2023**

I was up on the uMngeni at Sheardown this morning. It was humid and cloudy, and I thought rain was on the way. I was not wrong: the afternoon saw another downpour to add to the already swollen and off-colour river.

### **Check in: 7 Feb 2023**

I did a drive across the upper uMkhomazi catchment, and stopped on some bridges and hills to look at Trout streams on my way. [VIDEO](#)

### **Check in: 30 Jan 2023**

It would appear that the heat wave is over. Forgive me for the lack of updates, but I was jaded, or wilted, or melted, and have only started to function normally now.

I did go fishing though:

The uMngeni, being a bit lower than the berg streams, was cooking. Meaning it was hot as hell...and fishing well too. Our Trout really have adapted. I Googled it and apparently all the Trout are dead. But they aren't, because they are tough African trout.

There must have been some rain somewhere Friday eve, because the uMngeni flow was up and it was cooler on Saturday, and slightly coloured. Saturday afternoon there were vicious storms scattered randomly around. So while the rivers were running down and crystal clear on Saturday morning, who knows what they look like now. I do know that mates were having action on dry flies in clean water on various berg streams the last two week-ends. They got some heatstroke too, but hey, didn't we all.

The uMngeni has materially altered after the floods of December...massive rocks have moved, as have logjams. New areas have opened up, new scouring, some pools deeper, some more shallow than they were. I don't know how other rivers have been affected but with generally cooler weather predicted over the next 10 days, I can't wait to get out and explore. That is the beauty of an ever changing river.

Its all new!

Expect water temps from 16 or 17 degrees C after a cool night up to 21 (not 25 again I hope. Yes twenty five!)

Dams: forget it...a big body of water doesn't cool down quickly like a river. Dams are too hot....off limits.

### **Check in: 16 Jan 2023**

It remains fiercely hot in the midlands and the berg. Even up at 1500 to 1800 m altitude, temps are reaching 30 degrees C . Surprisingly though, water temps in the uMkhomazi and Giants Castle area, inside the park, are measuring as low as 18.5, even in the early afternoon.

The flow on most rivers is still high. The Ncibidwana and Bushmans were still very full and a bit slate-coloured yesterday, although definitely fishable. Rivers in the uMkhomazi are better. The uMngeni at Chestnuts on Saturday was still off colour, but much less opaque and getting towards fishable quickly, no doubt more so higher up.

So really the main thing holding back fishing exploits is the human discomfort of this heat wave. Oh, and the fact that you are back at work....

### **Check in: 11 Jan 2023**

It is fiercely hot at present. Temperatures, even at altitude are hovering at 30 degrees, and there is no respite on the weather radar.

The flow on most rivers is still high, and I reckon a few more days without rain for them to run down should improve your chances. There may be some reasonable water by the week-end, but the weather will still be searing hot.

Here is a quick look at the 2 branches of the very upper uMngeni as at today:

### **Check in: 5 January 2023**

I checked on the uMngeni on Tuesday, and it was starting to clear, but still way too coloured for me. That was down at my usual check-in spot at the Chestnuts bridge. Then my friend Lynton checked in with me and told me about his fishing (and his son's) just prior to Christmas: He confirmed...dirty water everywhere. But he did use a big black fly (for maximum contrast and for pushing water), and he had some luck on that.

Heavy rainfall warnings again for today and tomorrow. This season really is unbelievable isn't it!

### **Check in: 1 January 2023**

The Mooi was flowing fast today. Only slightly coloured, but going like a steam train:

Entries from July 2022 to January 2023 were deleted from the site without being saved due to technical difficulties. All future entries (appearing above) are saved without images, due to the time it would take to copy the images one by one from the site.

### **Check in: 21 July 2022**

There's not much to say in winter!. The weather is uber stable. Its cold at night, warm during the day. The water temps are hovering around 8 degrees or so, and its as clean as you get. That's about it. I suppose I could add that the dams remain full, and the off-season river flows I have seen are respectable for this time of year...the sign of a wet autumn past. A forest I walk through regularly still has little trickles flowing that often don't even flow in summer. Another thing I have observed is that farmer's firebreaks are starting to green up where they cross sunny hillsides. This all points to the exceptional water table. The fishing..? I don't know. Kinda slow most of the time, but the patient are definitely the ones who reap the rewards. Small flies, low profiles and dead drifts with the minimum of casting, and longest leaders possible.....that is the name of the game.



**Check in:** 8 June 2022

So 1 June kicked off with serious frost, it has been winter ever since, and the streams are a weirdly distant memory. Funny how that works..

On the last week-end of May some friends and I fished a stillwater in the Dargle for many hours with disappointing results, but hey, a few days later others were on the same water and caught more fish in 2 hours than we did in a weekend, with one big fish in the mix. Likewise a private festival that same week-end apparently produced a lot of only small fish, but the Kamberg Festival the week-end just passed produced its usual range of fish of all sizes, including some impressively large ones out there. One of the NFFC dams produced awesome fishing like it used to in days gone by, so there's a counter to anyone who bemoans how its not as good as it used to be! My friend Wayne tells me they were variously eating minnows (which surprisingly were still around on at least one water), snails at other venues, and I have no doubt the ubiquitous Woolly Bugger in between. Does anyone know the latin name of the thing the Woolly Bugger represents?

So generally your typical winter situation. Icy mornings which are often still. Invariably a north wind that gets up and persists for much of the day, but otherwise pleasantly warm sunny days. And fish that turn on and off seemingly without reason, but there is never a good reason not to go out and keep experimenting.

**Check in:** 20 May 2022

I have been laid up with COVID and have missed the last 2 weeks of life on the water....right in the middle of what is arguably the sweetest spot of the year! That would be sweet whether

you were on a stillwater or a stream. I have seen pictures from friends of absolute stonkers coming from all manner of stillwaters around the province. In addition a few friends have been on the rivers, and found fish feeding and not the least bit "turned to breeding" . There have been good reports from the upper end of the uMngeni, where fish have been witnessed feeding on very small flies, and it seems, rejecting hoppers. The water is startlingly clean, but flows are still very good for this time of year. (Midmar is still overflowing). The forecast is for a cut off low, and cold weather to arrive this afternoon (just ahead of the week-end as usual!), and perhaps that will usher in the turn, and the end of the river season.

**Check in:** 10 May 2022

The uMngeni was looking superb yesterday. That is at Chestnuts, where it has been off colour for so many months now, together with everything upstream of that. All crystal clear, but with strong flows. You could not hope for better. I have no doubt that all the other Trout streams look the same, as we have had clear stable weather, with very little rain for a while now. But water temps are dropping, and there are only 20 days of river season left.

**Check in:** 1 May 2022

I took some footage of the uMngeni at "The Glides" on Friday afternoon, narrated and all, in which I said that the river was flowing strongly, but a tiny bit off colour. That is out of date now (Sunday)....I just met the owner at breakfast, and he said it is crystal clear this morning. In a similar vein, I can confirm that the Mtshezi is crystal up in the reserve, albeit a little "slatey" on the tribal water lower down. The Furth stream is full and crystal clear. The Mooi is looking magnificent . All the above confirmed by guys on the water who have described it or sent me photos. Consensus is that the water everywhere is a little quick, but that you can use a dry fly at least somewhere, and water is clean. The weather forecast indicates sunny mild weather for the next 10 days across the berg and midlands. There are no more than about 3 weeks of season left on the Brown trout streams. As advised by Boo Gilbraith : "call in sick".

**Check in:** 28th April 2022

What a pleasure to have a public holiday mid-week! I crossed the uMngeni and it was still off colour, but clearing, as was the Furth stream. Add to that, no appreciable rain is forecast for the next 10 days or so, as shown on the YR weather app. So I reckon we are going to sneak in a maximum of about 3 weeks of autumn fishing at the tail end, and before the late May cold sends the Browns into breeding mode. Yes, it is as limited as 3 weeks...and then it will be stillwater season. (Did you know that the end of season date here in KZN has varied widely over the years, but during a good chunk of my formative years it was 15th May).

And talking of cold: I have measured water temps of 14 degrees C in 2 high altitude stillwaters in the last 7 days. I often consider 11 degrees C as a switchpoint. That happens to be the water temperature reported by my friend Richard from the upper Umzimkulu where he was in recent days. He reckons the rivers were clear as a bell and looking superb though.

**Check in:** 25 April 2022

Friday night it poured with rain again, just as the rivers were starting to drop and clear! It seems that this was the case over a wide area. The Bushmans, and the uMngeni were both in

spate and off colour on Saturday, and I can only imagine that the Mooi between them was in a similar state. Pictures from the Lotheni show it high and "slaty". I saw the uMngeni late Friday and it was still off colour, but starting to gain transparency. Saturday morning it was the colour of a road drain and totally opaque. Of course they would have started clearing in the higher reaches on Sunday, but last night (Sunday night) there was widespread rain again. In between all this, guys are getting in some fishing here and there, like my friend Neil who got a big rainbow (hatchery escapee) on the Bushmans on Sunday ....but you really have to pick your days, go upstream, and throw some tungsten. You will definitely find some fish, the number probably proportional to how much weight you are happy to chuck. If, like me you shun beads over 2.5mm, you will be limiting yourself, but a Mepps is heavy and I have managed to shun those .....

It is starting to feel as though the golden weeks of autumn river fishing will have been washed out completely! I suppose there is always a stillwater. Those are full, and cool and looking pretty damned good. I was on one of them in the Dargle on Saturday. Interestingly I got a hen fish with its ovipositor protruding, and I just heard from a mate that at another water the cock fish are displaying winter colours.

**Check in:** 20 April 2022

The uMngeni, Inzinga and every tributary you can name in those catchments were full and dirty over the weekend. We have had some sun since then. In fact glorious autumn weather, but I reckon the lower beats will take a few more days to settle. I see some blokes have caught Trout up in the higher reaches on the weekend, but as far as I could see it was done in grey coloured water and with big beads. The water is no doubt clean now, but I think you will still need those beads

**Check in:** 15 April 2022

Apologies. Its been a bit of a hiatus. I know. I have received calls.

There was a work thing. Then there was a fishing trip. Then there was more work stuff. But as you can all know, in between has been a flood big enough that my mate Brett has been watching it on TV in Oz.

I crossed the uMngeni at the Chestnuts bridge yesterday, as well as the Furth stream higher up. They were totally blown out. And as I write this our two and a half days of sun are over, and it is raining again. The weather forecast reckons its going to be 9 degrees C and raining at the high altitude lake I had my eyes on. I've just tidied my tying desk and I am sitting down to tie something with beads.

**Check in:** 18th March 2022

<https://youtu.be/VlrKDALTJwM>

**Check in:** 14 March 2022

Wet, Wet, Wet! Saturday saw the Mooi at Riverside flowing very full and a bit milky. The Reekie Lyn Stream even fuller, and by the looks of the video a mate sent, a bit more than milky. On Thursday the Inzinga, Furth stream and uMngeni were all unfishable, and the

Inzinga in particular dirty beyond what you would ever fish, and not safe to put your toe into. On Sunday the very upper uMngeni near the Lyndhurst road was beautifully clean, despite running full, but after the Poort joins it, and on down through Sheardown, it was just too fast and coloured to tempt me. A friend caught some feisty rainbows at Injasuthi on the weekend, but he confirmed that it was too full to wade and would have been dangerous to attempt a crossing. I was also sent a video of the Bushmans at the clinic, going over the road bridge on the 6th March. I have not seen that before!

Then yesterday the temperature in the Dargle and elsewhere reached 30 degrees C, and as I write we are having a sustained downpour with lots of rain predicted around the province.

I don't often admit defeat, but right now my focus is on fly tying!

**Check in:** 4 March 2022

Last Friday night, the Reekie Lyn stream came up over the bridge to the extent that it was impassable. As the flood waters receded, it left a badly damaged road, but by late on Saturday, the stream was running clear again, and there were anglers on the river below! There were also anglers out at Stillerus, Tendele and Kamberg, and even before the Reekie Lyn stream had cleared, they got clean water, as did anglers on the Bushmans. With the downpours Friday evening, water temperatures were as low as 17 degrees C on the upper Mooi on Saturday. By Saturday night there were storms again, and traversing the area on Wednesday there was evidence of heavy rain all over the place. The uMngeni was brim full and off- colour, and even up at the top, where it simply wouldn't have been true to pass it off as merely brackish. The road up through the Dargle is in a state, as are those across the Inzinga and Lotheni catchment, where streams were all coloured on Wednesday. The last two days have seen intense heat, and starting today, more rain.

But I just saw a video of a Ukrainian farmer stealing a Russian tank and towing it away with his tractor; so are there fishing opportunities out there on the streams this week-end?

Hell yeah!

**Check in:** 22 Feb 2022

Things really are a mixed bag. Last Wednesday, after a seemingly long break in the rain (i.e. a few days), I fished the upper uMngeni. It was full, brackish and 20 degrees C with a fair bit of detritus in the water, but certainly not muddy. That night there were storms all over the place, with rainfall in the Kamberg from as low as 5mm to 25mm, and a spot near uMngeni vlei getting 48mm. We have had storms most afternoons since then, but not consistent rainfall across the area, so its impossible to know which river is clean when. I am told the uMngeni was dirty at Chestnuts yesterday. As for the rest: the Mooi, Lotheni, Bushmans.....I really don't know, and if I did and reported it here the news could be outdated within hours.

**Check in :**9 Feb 2022

<https://youtu.be/qtNbXnjDSU8>

**Check in:** 7 Feb 2022

My mate Richard was up on the Bushman's on the week-end and sent me a clip of the river down at the clinic bridge. It was going like a steam train, but a slate colour rather than plain muddy. Richard reckons lower down, and with the contribution of the Ncibidwane, it was muddy. The Mooi is also full to its banks and off colour, and I'm told, was packed with competition fishermen at Tendele on the week-end. The uMngeni was still off colour at the Chestnuts bridge yesterday, but there too, not chocolate. Speaking to a farmer up on the Furth stream, he reckons they got 27mm of rain over Friday/Saturday.....significantly less than the 60mm reported much further downstream. But the Furth Stream was flowing very strong, and possibly contributing most of the colour to the uMngeni. So I reckon if you go high enough, you will find some water to fish, but it will definitely be fast! It may be cool though. Richard tells me the Bushman's was 16.5 degrees, a whole lot better than stillwaters which are reporting surface temps of up to 23 degrees after last week's heatwave. NFFC has closed its stillwaters and rightly so!

**Check in:** 31 Jan 2022

OK, so I crossed the uMngeni at Chestnuts (again!) today just after sunrise. The catchment clearly didn't get the crazy storm Friday afternoon, because while it was still off colour there, it was only slightly so. The next cool day we get: Sheardown.....go.

**Check in:** 30 Jan 2022

On Friday afternoon, here in Hilton, we had 85mm of rain in about two hours. It was an utter deluge. The rivers that all feed into the uMkhomazi however, were unaffected, had dropped well down from their spate flow of the week-end before, and were all looking absolutely magnificent. I didn't bother taking a water temperature (because that would have cut into time when my dry fly could have been in a drift!), but the water felt warm...lets say 20 degrees C. That's what we would expect with all the hot weather we have been having.

**Check in:** 23 Jan 2022

<https://youtu.be/ZwRZoOd3tfk>

**Check in:** 20 January 2022

<https://youtu.be/JtvMxK80dek>

**Check in:** 15 January 2022

My friend Ray was up on the Mooi yesterday looking for some water to fish. It had been raining Friday night. This is what he found:





Thanks for the pics Ray.

It is raining again now, and the weather forecast that I follow predicts over an inch over the entire region in the next 24 hours. Time to tie some flies!

**Check In:** 12 January 2022

A Recce up the uMngeni catchment today revealed the river still in spate and blown-out at Chestnuts. The Furth stream was also going like a steam train, and the roads were rutted with storm damage. There were signs of sheet wash, erosion off maize fields, and silt at the bottom of slopes. I'm guessing you will find clean water if you go high up the berg streams, but it is all likely to be fast water.

**Check in:** 30 December 2021

Yesterday, I was at a stillwater in the Inzinga catchment, and noticed that the dam was not overflowing. I spoke to the farmer, and he said that while rains have been very good, they haven't had the damaging deluge storms that the likes of the Kamberg and the Dargle have had in recent days. The Inzinga itself was clean (but still pleasingly full). The Lotheni is clean in its upper reaches, although, my mate Ray says that he crossed it with the utmost care, and judging by his video he was wise to do so. Along the Lotheni road, just before the end of the tar section, there is evidence of severe sheet-wash coming off the north east slopes of Spionkop, and the stream at Staybraes was running brown yesterday afternoon. The fact that the Lions river was still spilling its banks down at Lidgetton yesterday evening also talks to the fact that there must have been an enormous storm in the vicinity of War Common (Those

4 distinct hills that run eastwards from Spionkop, and mark the watershed between the Lions and the Mooi). That will almost certainly have muddied the lower stretches of the Mooi, just up from Springgrove, and the uMngeni too. I know the uMngeni and the Furth were both still off-colour on the 27th. A friend of mine runs a weather station on the hills near the source of the uMngeni, and he told me this morning that they have had 465mm of rain since the 10th November. That is pretty significant rain! I know the uMngeni will still be dirty.

I had an afternoon on a stillwater in the upper Elands catchment just after Christmas. The water was clean, but the dam was full. The water temp at this as well as the Inzinga water, was running 20 degrees C at the surface. On both dams the minnow were active, and so were the trout chasing them.



A well chewed Muddler Minnow

We nabbed a few of them...it was exciting stuff, with smash takes and wild fights. A ten pound Brown caught by my buddy made it all the more memorable.

I would imagine the upper stretches of the streams will mostly be clean, but very full. Has anyone heard any news from the Incibidwana and Bushmans? Please do drop me a note if you know. (truttablog@gmail.com)

My dry fly friend says he has still been able to get fish in side eddies and quiet pockets on a well placed dry fly. He fishes these on a 10 foot rod, allowing him to almost drop the fly into a pocket from behind a nearby rock...kinda tenkara style.

For the rest, you are going to need some tungsten to get down. Just be careful of your rod tip! A friend and I both broke rods last week, after a direct hit with a bead. Mine is fixed, and I fished it yesterday. It has a bit of a set in it, but it withstood a few fish, and some long double haul casts, so I reckon all is OK. Now I just have to keep it away from hail storms and lightning....both of which are predicted this afternoon (by my insurance company, who seem to be running scared)

**Check in:** 23 December 2021

<https://youtu.be/JaTat9zs0PU>

There was overnight rain across the whole midlands and berg on the night of the 21st, and the Mooi was brim-full, and slate coloured at Riverside bridge on the morning of the 22nd, but fishable higher up, although it was running quick, and the water temperature was 15 degrees C. Two storms on the afternoon of the 22nd put paid to that. This video was taken around 3 pm, when the slug of brown water had just arrived down from the mountains, and before it had reached Riverside. There were widespread heavy storms on the afternoon of the 22nd, making clean water an unlikely prospect anywhere.

**Check in:** 20 December 2021

The infrequency of my reports here is partly because the conditions change so quickly, that if I leave it a day it hardly seems worth passing comment. Also, when you get in a fair bit of fishing, the time in-between can easily get gobbled up catching up on work, rather than filling in the conditions for your mates.

Five days back, after good solid rains, and people talking about the rivers being washed out, the Mooi was looking superb. Yesterday, after 4 days of mostly soft rain, and reports of the rivers being washed out, all the rivers in the uMkhomazi catchment.....were looking superb. Well...they were a bity "slaty" at the road crossings, but higher up they were as clear as glass, and full too. I have been measuring 17 degrees C water temps in the mornings, and in the sunny patch before the rain....20 degrees by mid afternoon. Now that we have had 4 cool days at a trot, it could be cooler. But as I write there is another rain shower, so who knows if the river you have in mind will be clean.

If you get there, and its not clean....go higher. When you find clean water, no matter how fast: Try the pockets (even dinner plate size pockets). And try a dry fly. That is all I am saying.



**Check in:** 10 December 2021

Last week-end, the rivers were all looking great. Between Friday and Saturday reports from the uMngeni, Inzinga, Lotheni, Bushmans , Mooi, and uMkhomazi were that the rivers were clean, even as late as Saturday early afternoon, despite driving rain all day Saturday. By late Saturday, lower reaches were reported dirty in places. But I can report that the whole upper uMkhomazi catchment (all tribs) were still clean late Saturday, and that less rain fell in this zone than in the Underberg area to the south, and Giants Castle area to the north.

The uMngeni (and its tribs the Furth Stream and Poort Stream), were crystal clear again by Wednesday, despite 15mm of rain the night before:



While water temps of 17 degrees were reported on the upper Bushmans, the uMngeni at Furth was at 21 degrees on Wednesday afternoon. One has to remember through, that river temperatures are FAR more variable than stillwaters, and early morning temps can be expected to be around 17/18, with evening temps after a hot day at 20/21.

Wild storms were reported Wednesday evening. We are in that time of year where info like that typed above can be rendered inaccurate within the hour! You just have to get out there, and have a plan B up your sleeve.

The timid will have fewer experiences and catch fewer Trout.

**Check in** 27 Nov 2021

<https://youtu.be/EKEyBMrZM2Y>

**Check in:** 14 November 2021

The Mooi was looking great yesterday. A bit low, one could argue, but given that we have had constant good flow, and no really low water or excessive heat since the start of the season (1 Sept), it actually doesn't get better. The water was 19 degrees (mid morning), and as clear as it gets. Wading was a tad more slippery than it sometimes is, but the fish are plentiful and looking up at dry flies.

The uMngeni has slightly more water, and I experience it as less slippery. Water temps this week reached 20 degrees late in the day, but again here the water is crystal clean and the fish are looking up.

**Check in :** 10 Nov 2021

<https://youtu.be/OomqtjWm9qE>

**Check in:** 28 Oct 2021

<https://youtu.be/R6CXDqr-yV0>

**Check in:** 19 Oct 2021

<https://youtu.be/Rbs7y7p9oYU>

**Check in:** 10 Oct 2021

<https://youtu.be/wXXuu5VQoM8>

**Check in:** 1 Oct 2021

<https://youtu.be/M6AvLGkeyBg>

**Check in :** 18th Sept 2021

<https://youtu.be/dYSBkVU9-G4>

**Check in :** 11 Sept 2021

[https://youtu.be/poAt1Uc\\_Bj0](https://youtu.be/poAt1Uc_Bj0)

**Check in:** 5 September 2021

The opening of the river season this week seems to have gone well for many people I have spoken to or heard about. The water temperature in the Bushmans was reportedly at around 14 degrees on opening day, and yesterday the middle uMngeni was 13.5. We had widespread rain, seemingly an inch in most places, in the week leading up to opening day. That may or may not have brought levels up, but it certainly stopped them from dropping. Despite the rain, waters seem exceptionally clean, as one would expect that this time of year. Flow looks rather good.



The uMngeni at the Dargle bridge

Yesterday there was a report in of good fishing at The Bend on the Mooi, where a friend got 11 browns, two of which looked like superb fish. Social media has sported some pictures of nice fish from the Bushmans, and we got a handful on the uMngeni.

We seem to have been having a mix of hot berg wind days followed by cloud. Friday was 30 degrees C here at my home in Hilton, with a howling north wind and the following day it was dead calm and the air temperature started at 11 degrees, peaking at 16, under clouded skies.

In years gone by I have done both spectacularly badly, and spectacularly well on berg wind days. I put it down to when we hit the lowest atmospheric pressure, and when that nice steady rise begins. According to my weather app, our pressure is at a low point as I write this on Sunday afternoon, and it looks like a steady rise right the way through until Tuesday, as the cooler, weather moves in , bringing cloud and drizzle.

That sounds like Brown Trout weather to me!

**Check in:** 23 August 2021



My pal Sean was taking a pre-season walk on the Mooi on the week-end and sent me these. With the prospect of rain and snow in a few days time, water levels could be superb come

opening day. One farmer let me know that the uMngeni level rose pleasingly after the last moist-cold snap a week back. Things are looking up!

**Check in:** 21 August 2021

<https://youtu.be/vbE5jTInCjg>

**Check in:** 19 August 2021

August is always tricky. The water is clear as ice. It is not yet warm. I measured water temps of 9 degrees C at the surface, in the shallows at 3 pm this week. But we did have a wild caddis hatch, and fish were going dilly. That only really happens when it is calm, and in Au" gust" that doesn't happen often. A week ago I fished in the wind and didn't see a thing (except the otter). Then a few days later two of us got some lovely big browns in relatively calm weather. And then this morning, I see another water (in the Dargle) reported a big Brown. Maybe its a thing.

**Check in :** 8 August 2021

You will notice that my winter (stillwater) condition updates are less regular. This undoubtedly has a lot to do with the prediction I got so very wrong in the post below, in which I suggested that we shouldn't let a minor protest get us down, and just go fishing. Well! I didn't see that one coming. I don't think anyone did. The province was rocked by violence that you normally see on TV taking place in some place across the other side of the world, and for me it was surreal.

The other reason for few updates relates to how stable winter weather can be. Sure we had that parcel of arctic air that crept in on the one week-end my buddies and I decided to go stay in a waterside cottage. And YR weather app is predicting big rain and snow for next week-end. But in between it has just been cold and sunny and dry, like winter always is.

The fishing though is unpredictable. One day looks like the next when it comes to the weather, but catches are just so damned variable, and I for one am normally at a loss to explain why. The moon and tide guys will be quick to offer their help, but they know that I can discredit their theories faster than a rainbow takes a dry fly on the upper Mooi river.

Anyway....I just know that I have had some really slow fishing, and that guys seem to go fish the same water a day or two later and show me up properly. That has me itching to get out again soon to see if I can turn the tide, and maybe have one of those cracker days myself. And that has be beside the water soaking up the sublime winter sunshine and marveling at the clarity of the water for hours on end. They call it fishing.

As we slide into August, expect water temps to start rising very slowly from the current levels around 8 degrees. Within a few weeks that curve will steepen and I expect that the fishing will be kick started a little.

I have been dropping tippet diameter to 5X on waters with smaller fish...4 X on the ones that sometimes produce hogs. I have been drifting small midges under terrestrials and pulling dark coloured dragons deep behind small nymphs. And I haven't cracked it. So don't go listening to me. Rather go fishing.

**Check in:** 11 July 2021

The last water temperature I took was 8.5 degrees last week-end. It hasn't been any warmer. We have had mostly balmy days, but a few cooler afternoons followed by more frost in the morning. Many mornings have been calm, but generally the wind is up by 11 am. If you are lucky you will get a still evening, and the fish will then most likely go mad on midges.....well, that is what I have witnessed anyway. A few pictures are coming in of some monsters. Most don't tell you where (I support that). But if you know the waters, the background gives it away. My own results have been slow. I take that as normal, and accept that you just have to put in the time. Most winters are like that.

Protests have caused many people to cancel their fishing trips. That is a pity. While I don't advocate taking risks, most of these things endure for an hour or two here and there. I make it my business to stay informed and choose routes and dally until its over...that kind of thing. (but NEVER cancel.)

**Update:** 22 June 2021

In recent weeks there have been two festivals (aka competitions) on the stillwaters here in the KZN Midlands...The Kamberg Trout Festival, and the Boston/Dargle Festival. It is not my position to analyse the results, so I thought I would rather deliver this [less analytical] commentary. Participants in the "KTF" were bitterly cold and many were disappointed, bitterly or otherwise. Several, including some I spoke to, were calling for a change in stocking policy by the organisers. A strange thing that. It is the same stocking policy that made them so happy in previous years. I liken their baying to a sports fan who calls for the coaches head after a single game is lost.

It was simply a windy, cold, slightly offish week-end.

While the guys were packing up on the Sunday, a friend and I fished another dam just over the hill and did rather well. We caught on woolly buggers, GRHE's, Black DDD's, and some obscure green thing, to name a few. Some deep, and some off the top. A day or two later a trophy (8 pounds or so I think) was caught in one of the NFFC dams that fared badly in the competition.

The vagaries of fishing!

"The Boston", this last week-end, produced some good fishing. Scanning the results table I see strings of fish over 19 inches (50 cms). ok...I just tallied the string quickly...about 50 fish of that size or bigger. There was a lovely Brown of 23 inches...one of 4 fish of that size. And seemingly lots of fish caught. Clearly a much better stocking strategy! :)

Of more interest to me was the pattern of the catches. Like, I mean the pattern the numbers made on the page. It was lekker. Sort of a geometric thing that caught the eye. Closer inspection revealed that the rows were listed per "session" (why do I hate that term?) ..so slot 1, then 2, then 3, then 4...then the next water. So The pattern was showing lots of fish in session 1, fewer in no 2, even fewer in 3 ...etc...on the same water...then the next water starts with session 1..lots of fish,...and so it went.

Rather than hang this byzantine pattern on my wall, I choose to interpret it as follows:

**When someone has been walking around a trout water all day, he ruins it for his mate who visits the next day.**

There is a lot of info in the above statement.

- Waters kept un-fished until the day of a competition will fare better
- Waters trying to provide year-round sport will do worse
- Lots of visits to a water will diminish the success of the next visitor
- even if a water only receives say, 4 rods a month, if they were 4 days in succession, the results might not be so good
- baaaa

I think of it like the law of diminishing returns that I was taught in first year economics. It is a progressive curve, and I reckon fishing pressure quickly takes the graph to a point where the results dip off exponentially.

The point of all this theorizing of mine is this: Go fish waters that no one has been to. Don't be a sheep.

Here ends the lesson.

Dams are full. Water is clean. A bit of frost. Water is bloody cold. Weather is stable and comfortable at the moment. I reckon you should stay home and wash the car. Gotta go.....

**Update:** 1 June 2021

As the river season clamps to a close, let's look back on the last few weeks.

We had fantastic rains right into April, and even early May. This saw streams hold their levels particularly well, and if a generalisation had to be made, it would be that the water only started getting a bit "thin" in the last 10 days of the season. My own experience was that even with good flows, the stream clarity was fantastic, but the fish got so spooky it was unbelievable. Water temps on the uMngeni held up around 13 degrees, and every evening I was there, I saw at least some fish rising, but damn they were fussy! I didn't get onto the Mooi, Lotheni, Bushmans and others in the last weeks of the season, so I have a blind spot there, but I did see pictures and I think that my comments on the water levels and clarity at least hold true for those too.

For me a small highlight in the last few weeks, was a fish I spotted on Brigadoon. It was over a crack in the bedrock, not moving a fin, but I spotted its eye, of all things and video'd it. That's all. Didn't catch it. Didn't even try for it. ...I will put up a post to explain why that was a highlight.

On the stillwaters: I had a two days out in the last month. On both occasions we saw plenty of fish, but we didn't catch a lot. Other waters I know of, have been almost completely dead. Some waters in the Kamberg suffered inversions in May, and were looking dreadful, but a friend was out looking over the week-end and he says they have cleared up nicely. For a while a few dams produced absolutely no fish at all, making us believe the inversions had caused a fish kill, but then a couple of guys have started catching fish there again (albeit mainly tiny stockies). The Kamberg festival comes up on the weekend, and that will give us a

quick litmus test of what the fishing is like, and which dams have indeed gone mysteriously quiet.

The air has turned really cold in the last three days, and winter really is upon us. There is snow predicted for the mountains tomorrow. It is time to wrap up warm and head for the stillwaters.

**Check in :** 21 May 2021

The uMngeni has dropped a bit but is crystal clear. still around 13 degrees, and fish spotting conditions in the mornings is perfect.

**Check in:** 16 May 2021

The uMngeni is on fire! Crystal clear water; good flows; 13 degree water; and trout rising in the evenings in every pool. I suspect all our rivers are similar at the moment, although the berg rivers might be colder, and as 1 or 2 fishing returns indicate, the action a bit slower as a result.

**Check in:** 5 May 2021

The Inzinga was running much cleaner yesterday, and I am told the Mooi was clean at Reekie Lyn. The good rains caused Midmar to run over strongly again and the Lions was near breaking its banks at Lidgetton on Saturday past. With its source so close to the uMngeni, one can expect that river to only be clearing now. Either way, most rivers will be clean now, and as the cold grips the end of the season, you want to get out on the rivers while you still can, and while the browns are still active.

Stillwater returns remain disappointing, but with the odd ray of hope here and there, when some lucky blokes buck the trend. There just seem to be a lot of small fish around, and many (but not all) of the better fish are not showing....in general...there are definitely exceptions here and there....and us fishermen are eternal optimists, so don't let this stop you getting out there and trying.

**Check in:** 2 May 2021

Sorry, its been a while: Frontal storms that preceded the current cold snap saw widespread storms on Thursday night, and rain persisting through Friday (30th April). For those who were out Saturday morning, you may have been lucky enough to have a break in the clouds and see the berg decked in snow. If you crossed any trout streams, you would have seen them all (I think) flowing high and discoloured. While that put paid to stream fishing this weekend, it is a great sendoff for the coming dry winter.

On the stillwaters there were reports of water temps of 16 degrees early in the week, and as low as 13 degrees on Saturday. One angler reported fish showing spawning behaviour in the spillway of a dam, and that was before the rainfall and cold, so chances are fish are going to be colouring up and developing kypes quickly, with all the "calling water" and cooler times.

The weather is spectacular right now, cool and bright and with a rain-washed landscape ahead of winter's inevitable dust. While the next day or two might need to be on a stillwater, the streams will be the place to go thereafter, and in the dying days of the season.

**Check in:** 6 April 2021

There were a number of reports over the Easter week-end of dirty stillwaters. It seems the Kamberg had a deluge ahead of the holidays, and many dams were off colour. Presumably the rivers were affected too, but they seem to be clearing, while dirty stillwater reports continue to come in.

**Check in:** 1 April 2021

I am told by a local that the Bushmans this morning down at Bhungane beat, is "like Sprite". Good news for the Easter week-end!

The Inzinga was a tiny bit milky and flowing strong. Midmar dam's overflow was going like a steam train.

Yesterday I measured a water temp at the surface of a high altitude dam, at 19 degrees at 3 pm. That is promising!

**Check in:** 29 March 2021

In the last week there has been a sudden drop in air temps, and water temps are certainly following. There were big rains last Sunday that blew out the lower stretches of the Bushmans and the Mooi,



A tributary of the Mooi on Reekie Lyn a week ago

but oddly the uMngeni was looking fine.

Since then, more rain has fallen and there are reports of the Inzinga, Amanzinyama and Mooi all being blown out, as well as many stillwaters being off colour. As soon as those clear, autumn fishing, both for stillwater and streams, should be at its absolute peak

**Update:** 21 March 2021

We have had a few weeks of warmth, and for a change, limited rainfall. So while the streams warmed up a fair bit, they had a fortnight of lovely clean water. I noticed that Midmar's overflow had slowed down to a trickle three days back. The problem is that this covers two week-ends at best, and then late last week we had storms again. I wasn't aware of the extent of the storms upcountry, but a foray over the last two days revealed off colour water. Midmar is pumping over again.

On Thursday, I found the uMngeni tinged slightly with a mid brown muddiness, and coupled with that , strongly stained with its usual summer peat stain.



The uMngeni from the bridge below Chestnuts

From a distance it looked totally blown out. Up close I could see the bottom four foot down. I have come to appreciate that the subtlety of water colour as nuanced as a photographer's light!

The Furth Stream (tributary of the uMngeni) was a lot cleaner, and I took a water temperature mid afternoon of 19 degrees C.

The Furth stream at Brigadoon farm on 19 March 2021

What is interesting about that is that a few hours earlier, at higher altitude, I took a surface water temp at a stillwater and got 22 degrees. It goes to show how a tumbling, partly shaded, running stream is sometimes more hospitable to Trout than an impoundment.

Back to colour: The Bushmans yesterday was surprisingly off-colour too.



The Bushmans at the bridge on the eClinic beat on 20th March 2021

Its colour was slightly more on the yellow/fawn spectrum, at least down at the Clinic beat. Higher up, it had more of a slate-like colour.



The same Bushmans some 9 kms upstream at the parking spot on Ezibukweni Kwaundaba

I attribute the difference to the extent of the bare earth, wattle and overgrazing in the tribal area, vs the thickly grassed state of Snowflake and the park above.

Either way the river was fishable in my view, and the catch returns of two parties on the river yesterday bear testimony to that.

A temperature reading at Ezibukweni kwaundaba showed 17.5 degrees C.

Across on the Mooi, we were back to slate grey flow at the bridge at Riverside, and the river was full.



### The Mooi at Riverside

The dairy stream looked like it was contributing much dirtier flow, but interestingly the centre pivot was running, suggesting that most of the rain fell in the berg. No farmer would waste electricity pumping water onto soil that is already saturated!

The Reekie Lyn stream was flowing strongly and arguably a tiny bit more tinged than the main river at Riverside.



The Reekie Lyn from the road bridge

As I left the valley late yesterday, dark clouds were massed over the berg. Who knows what it will look like tomorrow!

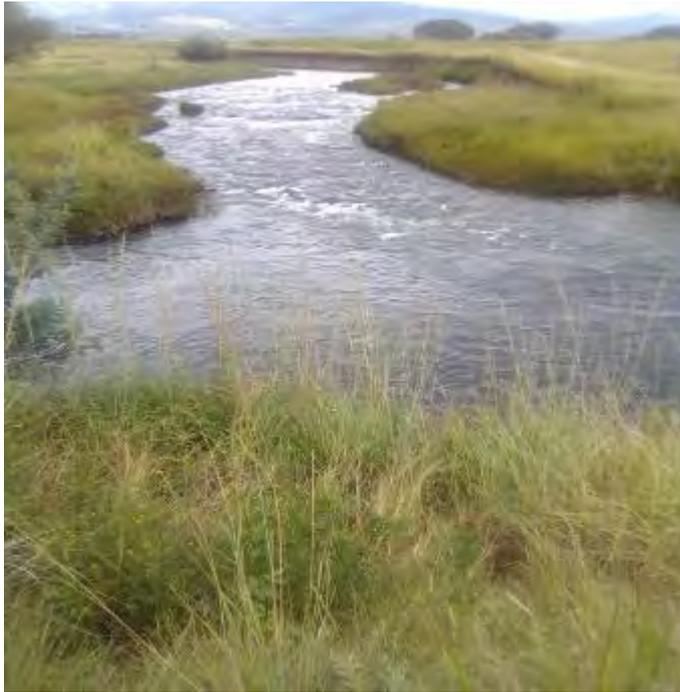
Generally you are going to find the rivers cooling and dropping, and the bankside vegetation particularly rank after a very wet summer. I was shocked to see how bad the bramble and wattle growth is on the upper Mooi and upper Umkomaas in recent weeks. The uMngeni and the Furth stream have a 'fine crop' of blackjacks this year (an expected aftermath of alien invasive clearing in recent years). If you can put up with these things, you are in for some mighty fine autumn fishing. Already some superb fish have been caught in the last two weeks on various rivers (and no....I am not tattling as to where!)



For those less inclined to brave the chest high growth along rivers, the NFFC has just opened its stillwaters after the seasonal warm water closure. The opening is arguably premature, but as I write a cold front has moved in, night temperatures are down to 11 or 12 degrees, and the water temps will be falling below 20 very soon indeed. Enjoy!

**Check in :** 16th March 2021

It has been mighty hot this past week! Even up in a high berg stream, water temps of 21 to 22 degrees C have been recorded in the late afternoons, coming down to about 17 or so as at early morning. Air temps, even in the berg reached 30 degrees on Saturday and Sunday. On the positive side, the rains have abated for a while, flow has dropped, and clarity has been magnificent everywhere. From the Bushmans:



The Bushmans at the Clinic today

To the Mooi to the uMngeni and the rivers to the south: Clear everywhere. I looked in on several of them last week from high up to low down, and without exception, they looked great. Except that is the Bushmans where I am told that someone marked off beats with plastic danger tape, and left the markers behind after they left....at a pristine a world natural heritage site. I don't know who did that, or if it is still there. Sies!

**Check in:** 9 March 2021

The Umgeni, the Mooi, the Bushmans, the Lotheni....all "Sprite"...beautifully clean. Water temps are sitting at 20 degrees by midday. Flow is good. There's just a hot week predicted this week, but I was up at 1800m yesterday and the air temp was 23 degrees, while in Maritzburg it was 32...so I reckon there's no excuse at all. Go fish a river. Its beaut! (some good fish coming out too).

Stillwaters: 24 degrees C measured in a dam near Giants a few days back. At the surface no doubt, but the stillwaters still need time off.

**Check in:** 4 March 2021

News in from the Bushmans, is that the community waters are full, blown out and off colour from a storm last night that stretched from there to Kamberg and probably across to Lotheni. The upper stretches will be fishable, but there is a lot of white water for a few days.

**Check in:** 3 March 2021

News from my mate on the banks of the Bushmans near the "e-clinic" beat yesterday, is that it looks like "Sprite"...in other words, crystal clean. The Mooi at Riverside yesterday was ever so slightly milky, but spotting fish was definitely possible, so very acceptable. The uMngeni at Chestnuts is stained (usual for summer), but you can see the rocks on the bottom off the bridge, so as you go up to Furth and Sheardown, it will no doubt be perfect.

Water temps: 19 degrees at Riverside on the Mooi yesterday at 3pm. Highmoor has been hovering around 18 degrees in the early afternoons, so temps are definitely dropping.

**Check in:** 27 February 2021

The Bushmans at the Clinic is full and brown this morning after extensive rain yesterday and last night.

Water temperatures of 17 degrees were reported yesterday morning in a high altitude dam on a syndicate in the upper Dargle.

**Check in:** 25 February 2021

A friend tells me they have had rain on and off all week up on the Bushmans, and that it is currently running high and milky.

**Check in:** 21 February 2021

The Mooi, uMngeni and Bushmans are all looking perfect at present. After some substantial rain, we have had it hold off long enough for the rivers to clean up. We have seen some very hot days, but night time temperatures in the mountains are helping water temps. The upper Mooi measured 15 degrees C yesterday morning.



**Update :** 17 February 2021

It has been a wild ride! The week-end just gone was devilishly hot, and it followed floods in northern KZN (Winterton area) and in southern KZN (Underberg), but nothing noteworthy

rain-wise in the central area (uMngeni and Mooi). Then the heat was followed on 16th Feb, by a cold front which was preceded by a morning of heavy rain in some places (but not all). So 2 days back the Bushmans was clean. Yesterday it was chocolate. Yesterday, when I crossed the uMngeni and the Furth Stream, they looked perfect, but the day before a fisherman on the Furth stream reported it dirty. And so it goes....

Either way, I can tell you that KZN has had magnificent rains, and water is pouring out of everywhere. What this means is that the water table is up, the ground is saturated, and any additional rain quite quickly runs off, dirtying the rivers. In between the rain, we have had some really hot days, so water temperatures haven't been great for Trout, certainly not in stillwaters, and on the lower reaches of our rivers. If I had to sum all this up, I would say your best bet has been to go high in the berg and fish the rushing mountain streams. Even those have been blown out their fair share, but at least they clear quickly. If you get them at a low ebb between storms you may be lucky and be able to fish a dry fly, but for the rest it has been nymphs and heavily weighted ones for the most part. The fish have been either on the bottom, requiring lots of lead to get down there through the white water, or, perhaps the more appealing option: in the slack margins and eddies tight against the bank. But here is something to think about....If you own that wonderful old book titled "Masters on the Dry Fly", go and read the chapter by Art Flick. It is about fishing pocket water, but at some point he covers fishing rushing white water....with a dry fly...and having success to the amazement of his colleagues. I am just putting that out there.

In the meantime, we have a sunny but cool day today following the cold front, and it feels autumnal. But not being March yet, I think it is an anomaly, and I expect a lot more heat before I can start claiming to feel the change of the season. We just have to sit this out for another 3 or 4 weeks, and then.....!

**Check in:** Thursday 11th February 2021

The Mooi at Riverside is full and strong and a bit "creamy", but it is fishable. Kamberg definitely didn't have the radical storms of 2 days back.



**Check in:** 11 Feb 2021

Videos and pictures are pouring in of the floods to the North and South of KZN's berg.....Garden Castle and the Umzimkulu river basin down at Underberg, and Winterton to the North. Storms of 130mm, bridges washed away etc etc.



In the middle, a report of the uMngeni looking perfect yesterday. A picture of the Bushmans near Giants Castle from a passer by suggests the river is full and dirty, but nothing like those others.



**Check in:** 5 Feb 2021

The uMngeni right up at the top was flowing full and strong. The water is clean, but there is a particularly strong tannin stain at the moment, which might put people off, because they will think it is muddy. It is not! A mate reported that the Mooi at Stillerus is looking superb at the moment, just the odd batch of milky water coming through, probably from activities upstream, but eminently fishable. I suspect the Bushmans, Lotheni, Umko and everything else will be similar, since I am not aware of any major downpours in the last 5 days or so.

**Check in:** 29 January 2021

My friends at the Bushmans confirmed that this afternoon the river is still muddy brown and pumping full. I reckon the week-end is out everywhere. Of course all club stillwaters are closed due to peak summer water temps, and the private ones that aren't, arguably should be. Time to tie some flies.

**Check in:** 27 January 2021

The Bushmans today was milky down at the clinic, but clear enough to fish comfortably up at Thandabantu.



The Little Mooi was as clear as a bell, as was the Mooi at Riverside and the Reekie Lyn stream.



The Reekie Lyn beat of the Mooi was clear too. All were of course flowing strongly and water temps were around 18.5 degrees C. BUT: Heavy clouds hung over the berg, and before the day was over there were widespread downpours. Coupled with this, heavy rain is predicted over the next 3 or 4 days.....

**Check in** : 24 January 2021

The uMngeni was remarkably lower today than a week ago. The water was crystal clear, and it was looking beautiful. The water temp was however at 22 degrees!



The Injisuthi was also reportedly running beautifully clear. But of course cyclone Eloise is on the way and Injasuthi is likely to be more affected as are other Northern streams....let's see how much rain it dumps on us!

**Check in** :21 January 2021

The Mooi at Reekie Lyn and at Riverside was looking superb today. Levels good and water clean, but for a slug of milky water mid afternoon. Should be perfect for the week-end, as should be the Bushmans, Lotheni, uMngeni et al.....unless it storms of course.



**Check in:** 17 January 2021

The uMngeni is looking wonderful at the moment. Water temp: 19.5 degrees C.



The Mooi is looking superb up top, but a bit milky down at Reekie Lyn. The Bushmans is just too strong. Forget colour...its just pumping!.

**Check in:** 15 January 2021

In the last week, I haven't been up to the Mooi or Bushmans, and there have been just a trickle of reports indicating that flows have been abating and clarity improving since last Friday's/ Saturday's significant storms. I expect they will be looking superb this week-end, and my best guess is that the Lotheni will be similar. The uMngeni, and by the looks of things, chiefly its tributary the Furth Stream (which joins at Brigadoon) received an absolute deluge last Saturday. Small streams running into the Furth were still dirty on Wednesday when I crossed them, and the main uMngeni at Chestnuts was clearing but still unfishable yesterday. I would try the uMngeni above the Furth confluence, where I reckon you will get some clear water.



uMngeni below Chestnuts on 14th Jan

**Check in:** 8 January 2021

The Bushmans and Ncibidwana were in full flow this afternoon and milky, and storms broke over the Giant in the afternoon, no doubt worsening the situation. Stream temps were at 18degrees C . The Mooi is very full, and was cleaner than the Bushmans, but storms were swirling around the catchment. The Reekie Lyn stream was crustal clear today, but around 4 pm a big storm broke in that catchment. Looking from there to Spionkop, it looked possible that the uMngeni maybe escaped the storms, but info in showed a massive storm hit the slopes of Inhlosane Mountain, blowing out the Furth stream and the uMngeni below the confluence completely.



The "Mavela stream" that feeds the Furth Stream at 5 pm 8th Jan.

**Check in:** 7 January 2021

The Bushmans confirmed flowing strongly and a bit milky this morning.

**Update:** 6 January 2021

December hit us with all the heat, drizzle, wild storms, and rain that it is known for. Anglers staying over for Christmas will have had days when it was too hot to go out, followed by ones that were too dangerous on account of the lightning, or too miserable due to the drizzle. That is summer for you. You grab the opportunities for an hour in the early morning, or after the storm. In between you are dealing with rivers that are blown out, sunburn and purple patches that lasted a few minutes and which you missed on account of some turkey, revelry, or family obligation.

But you know what...I have been missing typical wild Decembers for years, and it has been so good to have one again. A December of extremes. Wild, wet and beautiful. I don't mind that the fishing had to be eked out in between.

I had a few days on a Stillwater where, when it was cool and pleasant, the fish were down. Then it was too hot, and the fish were on the prod for a while, and then an east wind came up, or a storm, and it was over.

These times are best spent in a cottage beside the water, where your rod can stay rigged and on a hook under the eaves. Its expensive, in that you may pay for a week's worth of accommodation and total only a few hours here and there.

I fished the Mooi one day where it was hot and humid and stuffy, but the water pulling at my legs was clean and refreshing, and the lightning a few hours later wasn't all that frightening. My companion got a few little browns on nymphs. I blanked. The amount of time spent behind a camera lens or catching up on my pal's news may have had something to do with that. We spoke about going back a few days later to do it again "but properly this time". Then the heavens opened, and I am not sure if the river has cleared up yet.

A call to the Bushmans yesterday yielded news that it was very full and "The colour of Stoney Ginger Beer". I am trying to picture it. I reckon you could nymph it, unless they too had the downpour we had yesterday. Maybe high up will be better. It certainly cleans up quicker up there.

Even on the top beats though, the flows are strong, and it will be a case of dropping a fly into the pockets of slack water or in the back eddies. For the rest it will require nymphs heavier than I care to fish. If you catch it for a day before the next deluge, the Gods may shine on you and you will get to fish a dry.

River temperatures are highly variable. From just after a hail storm, to the evening after a stinker of a day, you can expect anything from 14 degrees to 22 degrees C. If I had to report an average of what I have experienced it would be 19.5 degrees. That will do. In a strongly flowing river the water will be fully oxygenated, which as you may know, means different things depending on the water temperature. Either way, the temps are better than the stillwaters, and so is the oxygenation. That is why the Natal Fly Fishers Club has exercised their annual Stillwater closure thing. So for now it's the rivers.

And who knows what you will get.

Go anyway. Just do it.

**Check in:** 3 January 2021

The uMngeni, and probably every other river in the region, is blown out after all the week-end rain.



**Check in:** 29 December 2020

The upper Mooi, Bushmans and uMngeni are all running clear. Ncibidwane and Furth are introducing a little colour to the Bushmans and uMngeni respectively, below the confluences. Water temps (rivers) 19.5 or thereabouts. Air temps: HEATWAVE!



**Check in:** 26 December 2020

The Inzinga was running full and clear and storms seemed more isolated than in the week prior....clean water in the streams seems likely. But it is HOT!

**Update** as at 24th December 2020.

Talk is that the upper Mooi had whopper storms around 18th 19th...two days in a row, and was to all intents, flooded. There has been rain about since, so while it might have cleared, the river is fast and full. The Bushmans is apparently the same, and a friend who went up high caught fish (on nymphs, not dries), but he said it was really full.

I was on the uMngeni at the bridge below Chestnuts on 23rd Dec, and it wasn't really fishable....not quite anyway. The Furth stream was cleaner, and arguably fishable, and the very upper river (uMngeni) near New Forest was clean as a whistle, but like the Poort Stream, going like a steam-train.

Grantchester dam (NFFC...in the Kamberg) is, unbelievably, still not full. It seems that valley has been in a rain-shadow, which is so hard to believe if you know how much rain we have had of late. Every other dam I know of is overflowing strongly, from Underberg all the way up to Breezie Brae.

The stream temps have been around 18 to 20 degrees, but unlike the stillwaters (which have surface temps hovering around 20/21 degrees), they can drop quickly after a cool day or two. In early December I measured 15 degrees on the upper uMngeni!

As far as fishing results go: I had some really slow days between the 16th and 21st on a stillwater in the Dargle, and I have heard of plenty of blank days around, both on streams and stillwater. But amongst those are some good days. At the moment it seems to be about the weather and hitting it right. And the right weather might not be what you expect. For me on that stillwater, it was the hottest morning of the trip that the fish chose to go dilly!

Flies: Heavy stuff on the rivers to get down...Copper Johns and Troglodytes and the like. On the stillwaters: amazing hatches of dragonflies this last week, tons on those little copper beetles on the water, and winged ants hatching if you are lucky. Also, when the wind dies down, and if its humid and warm, the minnows move out of the shallows and it can be exciting.

This time of the year is highly variable, in terms of rain and temperature. It is probably best just to wing it. If you stay home waiting for conditions to be right, you may never get out, and remember, conditions up there on the trout water are often VERY different from even 20kms away, let alone Durban or Maritzburg.

### **The Weather:**

Below are several key links regarding recent weather conditions. These give you an idea of what water levels and temperatures may be if you are planning a trip. These are all from the Kobus Botha website, which I encourage you to explore for amazing insights on weather, both past and predicted, short term and long term.

Last complete 6 months: % of long term rainfall

[https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis\\_monitoring/regional\\_monitoring/3cpnp11.png](https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/regional_monitoring/3cpnp11.png)

The last week's rainfall:

[https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis\\_monitoring/regional\\_monitoring/wcpcp11.png](https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/regional_monitoring/wcpcp11.png)

Current rainfall over KZN: Updated every 15 minutes:

<http://www.weatherphotos.co.za/rain-hourly-freestate-natal.html>

And for wind and temperatures, check this out:

<https://www.windy.com/-Temperature-temp?gfs,temp,-29.917,23.862,6,a:FqFF3>

+630