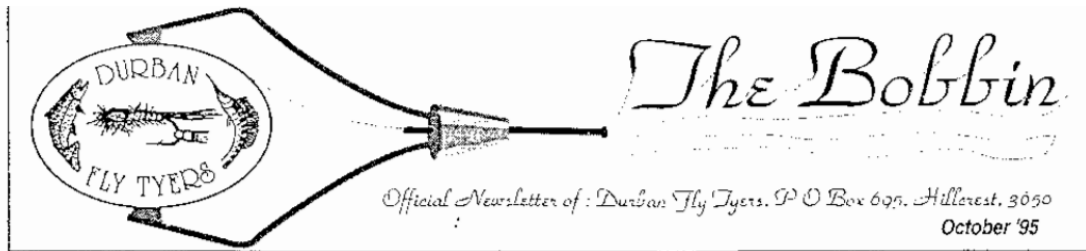


Cape Vidal Memories

First reported Trip October 1995



Vidal... Here we come

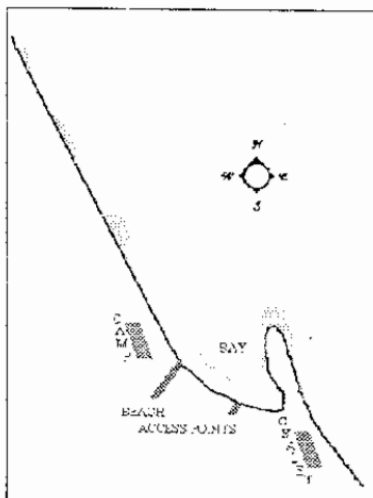
Yes, the long awaited trip to Cape Vidal is finally almost here. I would like to convey special thanks on behalf of all club members, to Howard Abrahams for co-ordinating and organising the trip. **THANKS HOWARD.** All indications are that it is going to be a fantastic trip, with a little over thirty members going.

For many, the trip to Vidal will be their first and also, for many it will be their first attempt at saltwater flyfishing. Many members will also know and associate the names Allen 'O' Connor (D.A.D. and not S.A.L.T.) and Steve Lang with that of Cape Vidal. In true Allen style, he has given a complete concise guide to Vidal and general fishing prospects there.

Tides:

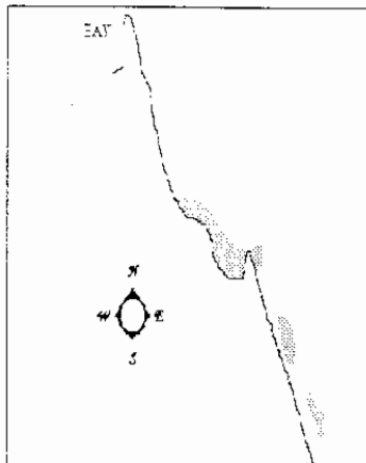
| Date | High | Low |
|-------|-------|------|
| 03/11 | 13H24 | 7H15 |
| 04/11 | 14H03 | 8H00 |
| 05/11 | 14H38 | 8H15 |

Fishing Area:



North of the bay is sandy, with bays and rock ledges. The BAY itself is big and protected from the elements, with lots of baitfish and good fish.

The south area is a big long flat rock ledge, broken up in a few places. The fishing in this area can be very good. These sections are deep with some sections devoid of rocks.

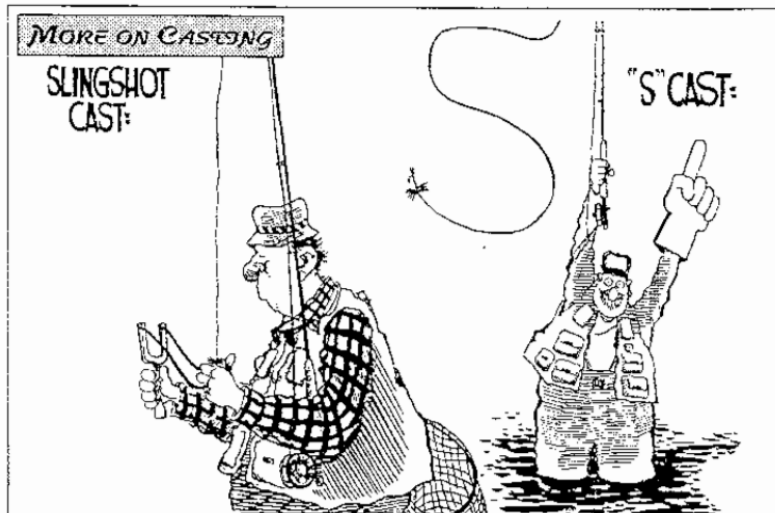


Tackle Requirements:

- * Any size rod, depending on the species targeted on.
- * Any reel (if targeting gamefish, the reel must have a rim, be balanced and have 250m of backing)
- * Intermediate line
- * Quick sinking line
- * Stripping basket
- * Rock shoes
- * Light shock tippet (8lb)
- * Heavy shock tippet (30lb)
- * Flies - Big deceiver, shrimps, sealice, poppers, minnows, squid, halfbeaks, clousers

Targeted Species: Kingfish, shad, queenfish, halfbeak, stonebream, blacktail, threadfin mirrorfish, wave garrick, smelt, queen mackerel, bonefish???, pompano???, garrick.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Letters to the Editor

THE VIDAL TRIP

Friday morning, one of those grey days – with the rain just holding off. The red-eye from Durban arrived with a contingent of seven, all eager to wet a line to see if their new specially tied fly would tempt that big one. Gordon and Craig had also decided that the day would be better spent with feet in the surf than in a stuffy office or classroom.

The tide had turned an hour earlier and with the threatening rain, it was agreed to get the necessities over with first and to pitch camp before flinging flies.

Onto the beach and round the point to the South, a likely spot was found and nine bodies disgorged onto the sand all eagerly scrambling to put tackle together and be the first into a fish. Honours for the first strike went to Bradley Morgan, who landed the first of many Large-spot pompano to feel the sting of a hook that weekend. His first saltwater fish had to be recorded for posterity, so camera out and a picture of the denizen of the shallows – all 12 cm of it. In quick succession most of the rest of the party also landed fish, all Large-spot Pompano (wave garrick to the totally parochial).

High tide was not far off and the mob

headed for "the bay", the stretch of water protected from the open sea by a fairly substantial rock reef extending from the beach at the southern end and curving northwards for a couple hundred yards. Somebody let out an excited yell as his rod was bent by a hard hitter. A short fight and out came the first shad.

Long rods congregated in the area and one rod after another showed that the shad were not shy to hit flies. Some of the crew did not use strong enough shock tippets and predictably lost a couple of flies to the shad's razor sharp teeth. Unfortunately, shad season being closed and the fish mostly being on the small side, all were returned to the water.

The wind was up some, the rain started coming down and there were many growling tummies, so it was back to camp for a well deserved lunch.

There was much talk of strategy for the afternoon session and even more sage advice from the lucky to the not-so-lucky. The bull and mickey-taking had also started.

The afternoon strategy was to scout the 12 kms of the north beach to Leven Point, the start of the sanctuary and the furthest north that fishing is allowed. On that trip we saw that a large sand bank had been built about 150m

offshore. It stretched all the way from the southern end to Leven Point. Not a good sign – no decent sized fish, especially kingies, would casually venture between that and the shore and if they did, it would be in direct pursuit of prey and they wouldn't hang around.

Friday evening and the rest of the contingent – 36 in all – started arriving, including three die-hards from as far away as Pretoria.

Skottels out and hissing, beer, braai and lots of bull and the weekend was off to a really good start.

Saturday and Sunday were much the same as Friday had been, lots of wind and lots of fish, all small, but some interesting new species for many. Fish caught included blacktail, flagtail, halfbeak, kitefish, kingfish, shad, smelt, stone-bream and wave garrick.

The most successful fly appeared to be a creation by Russell Coote – a Crazy Charlie design with a translucent seal fur and flash dubbed body and white wing tied with or without eyes on a small hook.

Sunday morning the rain started about ten, so everybody decided to call quits early. The campsites were cleared, last drinks shared and farewells said.

Some great new acquaintances had been made, lots had been learned and a good week-end had been had by all.

— Howard Abrahams

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LESSONS FROM BEGINNERS

It's a long Friday morning journey to Cape Vidal. The ride to images of hungry, neglected kingfish and long stretches of Zululand coast, beginning to merge into Sodwana and the lower reaches of the Maputoland coast. And beyond that the home of the Kingfish - Mozambique. Howard's crew planned for a 2:00 am start, but did not leave Durban until after 4:00. Most others arrived mid to late morning. By 3:00 pm, most were in, tents up, and a few sorties to Vidal bay to watch what the outgoing tide might offer off the reef. There were stories of some shad taken mid morning.

Friday night had some choices - go to the big tent or go to sleep. The North Easterly was in full swing as clouds

rushed past the moon and the trees bent and groaned. There was little doubt that the North Easterly was pumping. The big DFT tent was looking very neglected. Some were wondering whether some expertly orchestrated fly tying demonstrations would unfold followed by a formally prepared talk by some local official on marine line-fishing trends in the Vidal Greater St Lucia Wetland Park area. Thankfully, we were spared that. Instead, outside the tent on deck chairs and against Pajeros and Sarnies, another side-show was put together. It was the Allen and Steve and other wise-crackers dialogue. The object of the exercise was, aided only by cold beer, to completely disregard any logic or coherence. There seemed to be a conversation somewhere in it, but Steve, Allen and the youngsters refused to allow anything like fly tying or fishing cross any ones minds. Despite this (or maybe because of it), the Transvaal gang went off and tried some night fishing.

Howard's lot was summonsed, just to show a face. Which they did, merely to wish the side-show a good night - having been up since 2:00 that morning. Their non-participation that evening was excused. The evening wound down and clocks were set for 4:00.

By Saturday morning at 4:00, the North Easterly had matured well. Some went North others went South - the 4X4 brigade. The water was clean but a sand bar ran up North. Some went as far as Leven Point. A morning fishing into a freshening North Easter with not a cloud in the sky. A great morning but not many fish except for some small wave garrrick and a story about Allen and some small kingfish - mostly on Deceivers and small Crazy Charlies in a variety of personal versions.

As the tide began to turn after midday, and the Zululand heat turned itself on to bake, an after-lunch sortie back to Vidal bay for some afternoon sport seemed like a good idea.

The action in the bay took a while to get started. Everyone seemed to be there for the afternoon main event. The bait fishermen were power hurling sardine and lead at the horizon, snorkelers bobbed about and 4X4s were lined up and being leaned on by

beer clutching spectators. Fly fishermen held back a bit as the North Easterly continued to pump across Vidal bay, and the Cape Vidal Yellow Billed Kites sailed overhead in the breeze.

There are theories about how and when the action started. One story is that Sudesh stopped and looked at the water at one point and said, "There are shad here". James Wesley-Smith, a self confessed novice to salt water fly (yet to catch anything in the sea to date) happened to be next to Sudesh at the time. To James this was the wisdom of experience talking so he did what common sense suggested - he fixed up a Deceiver rig, and went down to the shore break. What followed can best be billed as a great afternoons salt water flyfishing.

The bait fishermen suddenly began to strike hard. The shad had arrived. But it was James who landed and returned the first shad. When James returned another one, something began to stir in the rest of us. Then it was on. Other flyfishermen were in and Allen was seen striding, whistling down to the beach with what might have been a Deceiver. Lynton Cawood was flaying about wildly, his Deceiver receiving equal pain on the beach behind him on his backcast as when it struck the water in front of him - the Backman,

"pause", totally absent in this backcast. And James, the novice, continued to land shad.

The bait fishermen began to land and return a few slightly larger shad, fly fishermen were landing smaller but far more. The bay seemed alive with fish. Snorklers were coming out of the water between fishermen and talking about "hundreds of fish out there" - shad, caranteen, wave garrrick. Lynton had a turn at goggling and rushed back out of the water and flayed even more vigorously. At one point he was seen in the water snorkeling and fly fishing at the same time.

The afternoon went on, the North Easterly began to ease up and James continued to catch shad. The shad seemed to circle the bay in wide arcs and were being caught where this arc passed just behind the shore break. As the tide began to turn in earnest, the arc began to move out of the bay followed by the fly fishermen who continued to work them. Down South a front was building, the wind dropped and it was over.

James, the novice, had landed and returned ten shad. His seer, the wise Sudesh, for reasons know only to fishermen, did not land one. It goes like that sometimes.

Back at camp Saturday night arrived

continued on page 4

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with a promise of rain. Braais and beer and many satisfied fishermen shot the breeze. It was a great evening, and the rain held off. Early nights seemed to be the order of the day.

Sunday morning was uneventful and grey. The tide was out, the South Westerly well set in for a long, freshening blow, and a few 4X4s could be seen plying up North. It seemed a good idea to do a slow midmorning pack-up, and head for home around midday before the rain arrived. The trip back was through good rain at times to a dryer Durban readying itself for Guy Fawks night.

A great weekend indeed - exactly what the doctor ordered. Salutations to the Durban Fly Tyers for getting us up there for some really good salt water flyfishing fun. Only one question remains - when is the next trip ?!

— *Ralph Tyrrel*

Fifteen Years later

CAPE VIDAL TRIP October 2010.

Report back by *"The Old Ballie"*

You should have been here yesterday. We have all heard that before but this time it is true. In fact you should have been here on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. There were lots of fish, mainly Cape Moonies, with some new species for some lucky fishermen, as well as mixed bags.

The wind was its usual self and blew at 40 plus km on Friday. On Saturday there was a southerly, which had us back casting. This died away in the late afternoon and set us up for several hours of fly-fishing happiness. Jay, Bruce and I arrived just to the left of the beach access road at around 3.30pm. The tide was still pushing and there was a sandbank further out with a sand gully between us and the sandbank. Waves were breaking on the sandbank and rolling gently through the gully. This gully was full of Cape Moonies and a few other species. The receding water would have the fins of the fish showing, and this became the target to cast to. I was being taken on at least every third cast, with hookups at least 90% of the time. Fish size ranged from palm size to double that and a few bigger ones. My personal tally was in excess of 30 Moonies, one small shad and one bastard mullet.

I started off with the trusty favourite; the ABC. This soon lost its underwing, (*it must have been the shad that bit it off, and not my bad tying techniques*) but the Moonies continued to take the remains of the fly. After an hour or so I decided to change my fly, and I tied on a Sea-lice pattern which Graeme had done the demo at a DFT meeting. As the Moonie has a very small mouth, I selected a fly tied on a SC15 hook in size 6. Two throws resulted in two fish, both of which swallowed the hook deep, and needed forceps to remove the hook. I then went back to the ABC, and continued to catch at the same rate. We fished until we could no longer see, and made our way back to the cabin in the dark.

On Sunday we were back to the same spot at first light, with the action continuing as before. At 8.30am we went back to the cabin for breakfast and packed up, then down to the beach again. As the tide dropped, the action moved out into the deeper water, with bigger sized Moonies taking the fly. We eventually stopped fishing at around midday.

For myself, this has been my best outing; with a tally in excess of eighty fish over the weekend. If you add the fellowship and fly tying to this then please put my name down for the next trip. Even though we may not catch as many fish, the whole experience of a Vidal trip is about having fun with your buddies, and I'm in, rod, reel, flies and all.

And guess what!!!! *"YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE YESTERDAY"*

Haydn

VIDAL TRIP

by *Tom Gifford*

Cape Vidal has always been a special place for me since it was there, some years ago, that I caught my first fish on fly. However, I have never had a session anywhere quite like the Friday morning of our arrival.

Being extremely excited about the trip, we decided to leave an hour earlier than originally scheduled and then also bunked the traditional stopover for brekkie at St. Lucia with the rest of the lads. The Vidal car park was deserted when we arrived and we quickly rigged up and headed down to the main bay. Derek had to pop back to the car to fetch his hat and by the time he had returned, I had already released half a dozen Cape Moonies. The bay was literally teeming with these little fish as they fed aggressively on the sprats and other tidbits washed sideways into the hole in front of us. We could actually see them breaking through the surface while scattered shad showed themselves in the mid-break here and there. Derek managed a couple of Shad but I was bitten off and then dropped another one. We nailed several more Moonies until the water dropped into an unproductive low tide. Then Derek and I hiked down to Maiden (aka "Shad") Bay, which usually fishes well on the bottom half of the tide.

The wind was a pumping North Easter, as is so typical of spring time at Vidal, heralding the imminent arrival of a cold front, which eventually reached us late that afternoon.

Once again the first cast produced a fish, but this time it was a Stone Bream. Thereafter, we proceeded to catch fish after fish, mostly nice fat Stone Bream, many "blue" Wave Garrick, and a couple of Bastard Mullet and Blacktail. On previous trips we worked out that the Stonies really enjoy tiny (#6) Orange Charlies and we fed them to the fish in bunches. The wind picked up to what could have been about 50kays an hour and sadly put the rest of the gang off and they turned back to the main bay before reaching us. Despite the wind blasting past us, we carried on like this for two hours and reckoned a tally of about 60-plus fish each. It was an absolutely incredible time for both of us, leaving our arms aching. Eventually the incoming tide pushed us off the northern banks, bringing the big surf right up to the beach. It became impossible to get a fly into the zone and in any event, we were so totally satisfied with the morning's catch that we called it a day. Making our way back to the main bay was one long slog with the wind forcing us to lean forward at about 45 degrees to avoid being blown onto our backs!

I can only imagine that the low tide together with the cold front making its way towards us, had caused the fish to go into a feeding frenzy because for the rest of the weekend we had to work hard for our fish. Besides a fairly nice shad, which I took in the main bay the following morning, it was a case of Wavies, Moonies and Bastard Mullet for the balance of the trip, none of which were of any epic size.

Well, I hope that I have whetted your appetites for the next trip and hope to see more of you joining us.

Tom

