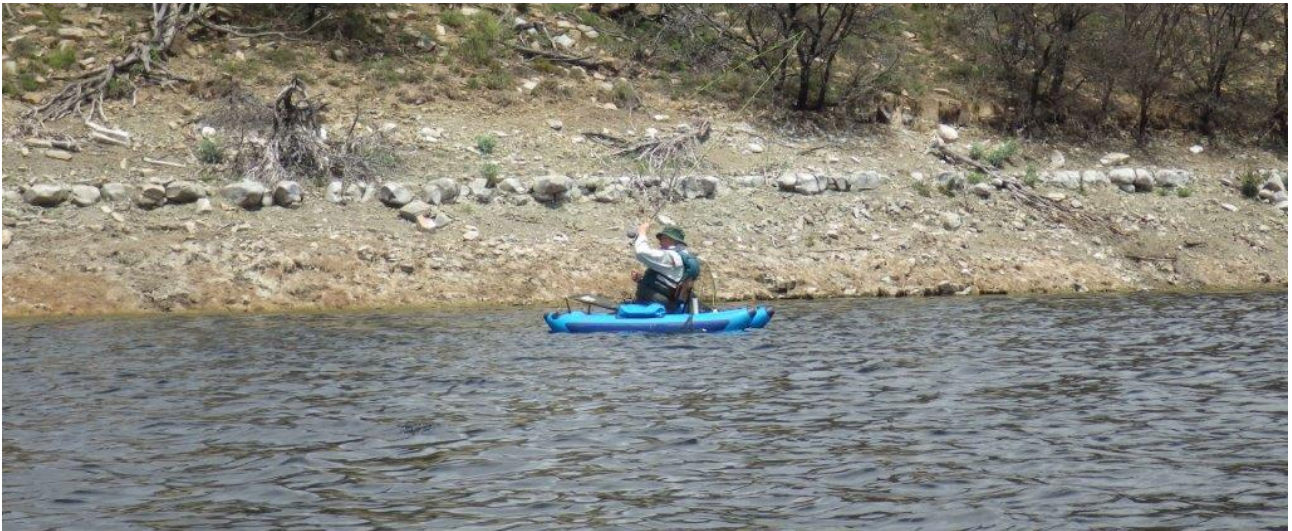


# Eastern Cape Journey

By Ian Cox



Steve Brooks at Groot Dam near Somerset East

I don't know if it is just me but fly fishing trips always start over a drink. This one was no exception. Last may saw me enjoying a well lubricated lunch with a bunch of mates at Velorenkloof. Talk, not unnaturally, turned to hogs and where to catch them which of course brought up the Eastern Cape. And so it was that I found myself offering a trip to fish the meanest best big fish still waters in the country. Everyone was in until I asked if they were really in when it turned out that only Russel could make it. Stevie Brooks stepped in and martin Davies offered to arrange the fishing and so away we went at the beginning of January on a 2 500km ten day expedition through some of the best stillwater fishing the Eastern Cape has to offer.



On top of the Banksberg in Somerset East

Now January is not the best time to go fishing still water. The water is getting warm and then there is the drought. January, however, was the only time we could get that kind of time off. My fishing mates might all be retired or semi-retired but it seems that simply means that you fill your diary with different things. I did bank,



back in June when I planned this trip, on the water being somewhat cooler high up in the Winterberg. I also thought the drought would have broken by then. After all El Nino was on the wane.

I got it half right. The weather was relatively cool for most of the trip which meant the warmest trout water we had to contend with was 21C. However it hardly rained. The drought was really bad. The fishing was surprisingly good considering both the time of the year and the lack of water.



My 70cm string bean caught at Ventnor

I will write on specific venues in more detail in future editions of the Bobbin but in broad summary, we started in Somerset East at the [Angler and Antelope](#) and then went to the Winterberg where we fished first the [Morgan's](#) dams Ventnor, Delton and then Thrift and Fairfield. I got my longest fish ever, some 70cm at Ventnor and Stevie made a pig of himself at Delton Thrift was full of fish but they were not feeding. Perhaps the dam being half empty had something to do with it. Steve and Martin both pulled 3kg monsters out of Fairfield. From there we went to Hogsback, ostensibly to fish Loch Lochy but it was uncharacteristically poor so we fished [Lowestoffe](#) instead.

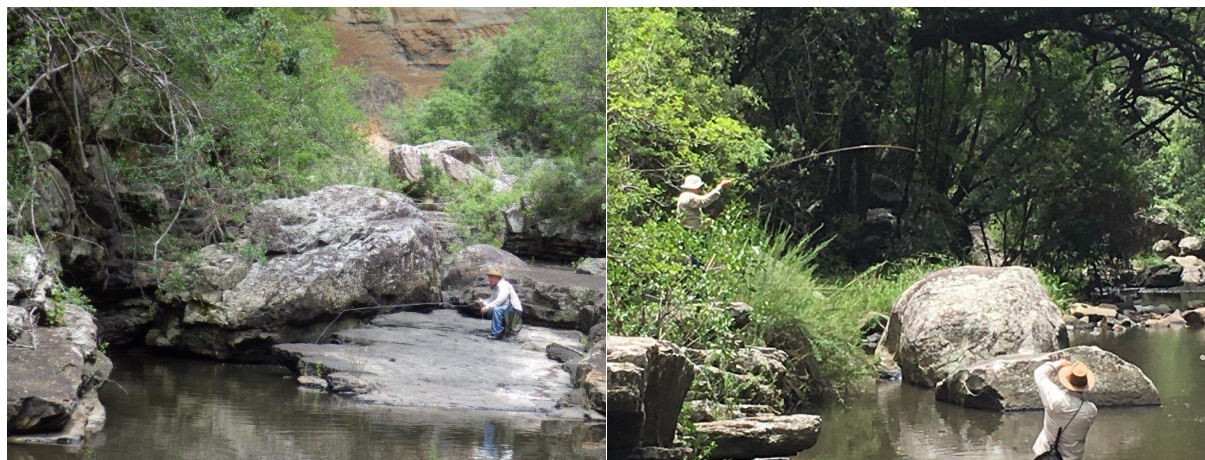


Thrift Dam and Martin's fish caught at Fairfield



Loch Lochy in the Hogsback

The itinerary was overambitious in retrospect. 4 different bases in 10 days, takes some getting used to. Russel who you will note does not feature in the above account chose to do the trip in a Land Rover which of course broke down. He had to bale early on which left 3 of us packed into Steve's Prado. This did not help. The trip was also far from cheap. We travelled first class with catered accommodation most of the way. Martin who secured us the water also came as a non-paying guest.



The fishing was hard but productive. The best fishing was on small dams, Ventnor and Delton providing the best fishing of the trip. The most interesting fishing was in Somerset east with the morning fishing the stream below Glen Arvon falls being the highlight of my trip.

