

Fishing Knowhere
By Craig Ebersohn



My wife was left unamused when my alarm woke us before sunrise, and my response to her seeing me donning my fishing garb and asking where I was going, was Knowhere.

Me insisting I was going to Knowhere took some explaining.

Not having heralded from the Midlands I am often fascinated by those who do, but are blissfully unaware of the beauty and serenity that surrounds them, or just don't get it. The benefit of many of the NFFC waters is that they are so close, allowing one to work a full day and squeeze fishing the afternoon rise in, during the work week. During summer Knowhere is a splendid stretch of water just thirty kilometres from Howick, allowing me to allocate a few hours in the morning or afternoon to ply my skills against the stippled beauties of the Umgeni ... as Andrew Fowler calls them.

Knowhere is characterized by long slow-flowing pools, fished from the banks. In the mornings I approach the river stealthily, not only to avoid being spotted by the wily browns, but to hopefully catch a glimpse of a resident Bushbuck which I often see before sunrise along a stretch of the river. On my first visit to Knowhere I was introduced to a very exuberant local resident. While my attention was focused on selecting my dry fly setup for the morning, there was suddenly a commotion behind me and I almost jumped into the river to avoid a ferocious Ridgeback that had snuck up on me, ready to pounce. This was my first meeting of the Riparian Owner David

Mann's ridgeback Ben. As you pass the farmhouse Ben makes a point of running across the fields to greet visiting trout fishermen. I now look forward to his over-zealous greeting every time I visit Knowhere. The Umgeni borders on cattle pastures as it meanders through David's farm, and the other regular spectators to my pursuit of the stippled beauties are the inquisitive cattle, the most of which seem to be the young calves.

I always carry an armoury of two rods with me, my trusty 3wt with floating line, and 5/6wt with intermediate fly line. I have enjoyed success fishing various techniques. A dry fly setup on my 3wt often fished with a dropper fly is always exciting but a loooonnggg leader with an Olive Beaded Nymph or GRHE (a favourite of Anton Smiths) with a slow figure 8 retrieve has yielded success as the day warms up. When the 3wt fails me I will revert to my favourite 5/6wt with an intermediate fly line, fishing with patterns better known in still-water fishing. With the lack of rain the river will flow slowly but in summer an intermediate line helps to get the fly down to where one anticipates the fish to be.

So, if you are looking for a water that is closer that the exquisite waters of the Kamberg for a quick morning or afternoon fishing session, I highly recommend giving Knowhere on the Umgeni a bash.

Keep a keen eye out for Ben, lest you end up taking a swim when he surprises you. Tight lines.