

## Freddy and his beast of a Spotted Grunter



What has happened to our normally fantastic sunny weather? We have had wonderful weather followed by bouts of chilly and cloudy weather, with minimal rain, which has hindered our outside activities. Will summer please arrive properly.

The weather has certainly not affected the fish, the whales, and our avian friends. The whales are now starting to migrate south, but should still be performing for another week or two. There must have been at least 50 frolicking in the bay at any given time, Infanta Bay must be one of the best whale viewing spots in Africa, and it is a sight not to be missed.

The fishing has been steady with one unfortunate episode when approximately 150-200 large kob were slaughtered during a 3 day period. As far as we can ascertain not one fish was released and many anglers caught many more than the legal bag limit. This is obviously unsustainable and we wish that people angling at the river would look to the future of the species and their sport. No fish. No sport. The only positive is that the locals are now up in arms about this and hopefully will take ownership of their river. The Conservancy is working hard to increase peer pressure on visitors to our river. Education and a bit of heavy enforcement will help in this regard.

The spotted grunter have been active and all of our anglers who fish, have managed to catch a couple. I great example has been set by two of our younger guests who caught twenty and tagged and released 19 of them. We must be lucky with our guests as most want to release the fish they catch, and just keep the one for the pan. The biggest grunter so far has been caught by one of our gillies, Freddy, a giant of 78cms. This has set the standard for the season and we expect still larger fish to be caught.

The most interesting catch has been seven different species caught in a two hour evening session, by one

of regular clients, an environmental lawyer, that may have had some bearing on his success. There was a stump nose, black tail, kob, steenbras. Grunter, elf, and a Garrick, obviously all were released.

Our bird populations seems to increase by leaps and bounds, causing another of our clients to construct a new bird feeder as he was enjoying watching them so much. Hilary has been busy photographing them whenever time allows. She has some magnificent pictures of the Barn Owl, Malachite Sunbird, Cape Sugar Birds, Greater Striped Swallows, Common Waxbills, and the perennial Lesser Double Collared Sun Birds. Most of the pictures she has published on our face book page.

The fynbos has not been as stunning as in the previous years, due to the semi-winter drought we have experienced, but there were still some magnificent patches of flowering fynbos to be seen. The wild animals are still around, with a small duiker living in the bush next to one of our rooms, it startles our guests every now and then. He/she is fearless, it has never been harassed by humans, and happily stands motionless to be photographed at a distance of 1 meter.

The omens for the summer look good, and hopefully we shall see many of you this season to enjoy our estuary and surrounds.

Tim & Hilary



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