

Estimating the Economic Impact of Alien Invasive Fishes: Recreational Angling in the Amatola Region

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Abstract

While South Africa possesses a well developed marine fishery supported by policy, legislation and appropriate institutions, no inland fisheries policy exists and its potential has not been considered from a development perspective. The transfer of the mandate for fisheries to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has opened a window of opportunity to develop policy to promote rural livelihoods based in inland fish resources. The research presented here forms part of a broader initiative by the South Africa Netherlands research Programme on Alternatives in Development, which aims to guide emerging inland fisheries policy by considering the social, economic and ecological consequences of stocking aquatic systems with alien invasive species. Specifically, this paper estimates the economic impact of alien invasive fishes in the Amatola Region, a historically marginalised area of South Africa, by considering how they have stimulated the recreational angling industry. In addition to considering this overall impact, the paper contrasts two distinct models of recreational fisheries development: a top-down corporate driven bass fishing competition and a bottom-up community initiated trout fishing lodge. The results will feed into a decision making tool, the purpose of which will be to aid in efficiently managing South Africa, inland aquatic resources for optimum socio-economic benefit.