

## KLIPSPRUIT KIDS

The Gauteng North Fly Fishing Association, (GNFFA) and the Jacaranda Fly Fishing Club, (JFFC), both of which are based in Pretoria, have been running fly fishing clinics for the children from the Klipspruit Combined Secondary School since 2011. We use the facilities at the lodge as well as the Crocodile River and the dams on the property to train these youngsters. Ages range from 14 to 22 and includes an even spread of both girls and boys. Typically we have between 20 to 30 kids at a session which takes place on a Saturday. These sessions are held 4 times a year.



The children have learnt to fly fish and were trained as controllers for the 2012 South African Fly Fishing Association, (SAFFA,) Youth Fly Fishing National Championships and the 2014 SAFFA Senior A Nationals, both of which were held at Verlorenkloof. Sixty children were trained for these two events. As controllers they had to measure fish caught by competitors, note the measurements on a scorecard and then ensure that the fish was released safely back into the water. We have since continued with expanding their fly fishing skills.



The coaching includes rigging tackle, knots, small stream fly fishing techniques, Stillwater techniques, catch and release techniques, basic streamside entomology and matching imitative fly patterns. And we've just recently introduced fly tying. Rods, reels and fly line is supplied by the South African Fly Fishing Association. Additional rods and reels supplied by coaches. Polarised sunglasses supplied by Solly's Anglers Corner, Pretoria. Leaders, tippet, flies and fly tying materials supplied by members of GNFFA and JFFC. SAFFA has also bought complete fly tying kits which will be used at the clinics.



Our goals are firstly, to teach the children the value of looking after the environment and an appreciation of nature. Some of the kids have expressed an interest in fishing competitively, earning provincial colours and going on to compete as a member of a National team. By introducing fly tying some may even consider this as a way to make pocket money or go further and turn it into a career. At the very least these clinics allow the kids an opportunity to enjoy a fun day outdoors.

One of our major challenges is funding; funding for further clinics and funding for advanced training to get the youngsters who are keen, up to competition standard. These youngsters will need their own tackle to enable them to practice on their own. This would include rods, reels, fly lines, wading boots and waders, appropriate clothing, including caps and hats, fly vests, fly boxes, leaders, tippet, fly tying equipment, fly tying materials and flies.

A second challenge is transporting the youngsters from their homes to the venue at Verlorenkloof. As they all come from a rural area this entails a round trip of 200km for some of them. At present these transport costs are carried by the GNFFA and JFFC coaches.

Verlorenkloof is able to provide transport for the youngsters within a 20km radius.

Funds for accommodation of the coaches is also needed, this amounts to between R6000.00 to R7000.00 per weekend session. We used to provide lunches and drinks for the kids, again out of coaches' pockets, however recently, Verlorenkloof has generously stepped in to provide meals and drinks for the children attending the clinic.

We are passionate about developing these youngsters, and we're not only looking at developing competitive anglers we're also introducing them to areas where they may make career choices in the fly fishing industry; whether it be as guides, tying for a commercial fly tying operation, working at a fly fishing lodge or merely instilling a love for the sport and the environment in which the sport is practiced.

Stuart Smith

