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21 November 2017

Dear NBAA Members  
Dear NBAA Executive Council  
Dear NFFA President

### Chairman's Report 2017

2017 will go down as one of the worst years in the history of the NBAA in terms of the angling. The crippling drought was interrupted by good rains in the beginning of 2017 and our bass impoundments eventually received the water that the eco-systems desperately needed. Hopes were high, the water had come and the promises of amazing bass angling were bound to materialize soon. The angling didn't improve and in fact became even worse than what it was during the drought. The goalpost was shifted into hoping that the dams needed time after the rains to settle and here we are a year later wondering what went wrong. I have never seen the morale amongst members so low in all my years of being a member of the NBAA, to a point where I lay awake at night doubting the future of the sport that lies very deep in my heart in Namibia.

Despite the challenges the NBAA still managed to have an extremely successful year.

### National Tournaments:

The NBAA held 5 National Tournaments with 1 still to come in 2017. All National Tournaments throughout the course of 2017 were marred by exceptionally poor angling. 19 fish in total made it to the scales in all 5 National Tournaments held throughout the course of the year which amounts to an average 3.8 fish per tournament out of all anglers competing. Not even a limit. After the 4<sup>th</sup> tournament I started to realize that we might be facing serious problems with bass populations in Namibia.

Needless to say the poor fishing guaranteed for poor attendance at tournaments. The NBAA even lost some members in the process and the fishing basically resulted in no juniors being present at any of the tournaments in 2017. Ladies attendance at tournament also dwindled and the NBAA also lost a lady member.

The Executive Council of 2018 and the years to come will have to pay a lot of attention into recruiting juniors and ladies back into the sport of bass angling in Namibia. Unfortunately the drive for the recruitment of junior members depends solely on the improvement and expansion of bass angling in Namibia. The Executive Council of 2017 is utterly disappointed at the loss of junior members as we are aware that the juniors are the future of this sport.

The Development Officer of the 2018, 2019 & 2020 Executive Council will have to work hard at recruitment. Development events such as 'Dads & Lads' and a possible 'NBAA School Development Event' have proven to be the most successful recruitment tools available and serious emphasis must be placed on such events to achieve targets set.

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#### Other Tournaments / Events Hosted / Events Attended:

In addition to the National Tournament hosted in 2017 the NBAA also hosted / attended the following events:

- i. The Inaugural NBAA Coastal Golf Day was held at Rossmund Golf Club in Swakopmund on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2017. Unfortunately there was some poor planning leading up to the event which meant that the Executive Council had to scramble at the last minute to pull a rabbit out of a hat or the event would have been a failure and an embarrassment for the NBAA. Vice Chairman, Alec Williams, and I managed to pull some strings and call in some favors which managed to rescue the inaugural NBAA Coastal Golf Day from imminent disaster.

The golf day turned out to be a success and the NBAA showed a total profit of N\$ 28205 which was made possible by auction income N\$ 23650. The golf day would not have been a success if it wasn't for the auction. The auction was carried by goods sponsored by FrameTique at far below cost price. I would like to thank Alec Williams for his time, his expenses and for the use of his vehicle to ensure the success of the event. In addition to all the time spent organizing the event from Windhoek, Alec also sacrificed 3 full working days in Swakopmund putting the event together. I would also like to thank Andre van Vuuren for driving down to Swakopmund specifically to support the event.

The Executive Council will have to start the planning of the 2018 NBAA Coastal Golf Day very early should the decision be made to host the event in 2018.

- ii. The annual NBAA Windhoek Golf Day was held at the Windhoek Country Club 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2017, 3 weeks after the Coastal Golf Day. The event promised to be the biggest fund raising event that the NBAA has ever hosted including a serious hunting auction to raise funds for the stocking of our dams. An entertainer was flown in from South Africa to promote the event and golf teams, tables and holes were being sold at a furious pace. There were some snags which held the table sales back with other events being held all over on the same date and on close by weekends, with our entertainer even returning to Windhoek on the following week-end.

In the end the table sales were poor and the success of the event hinged on the amount of golf teams entered, the amount of holes sold, the normal auction as well as the hunting auction. Here again, Alec Williams, proved to be instrumental in securing a record amount of team entries. The team entries ended up being the saving grace as it turned out to be the golf teams that drove the auctions. I would like to thank Alec for his time, his resources and his effort in ensuring the success of the Windhoek Golf Day.

The event turned out to be exactly what it promised to be and is officially the most successful fundraising event ever hosted by the NBAA. The total profit made at the Windhoek Golf Day was N\$ 152377 which is staggering. Included in this amount is the profit made from the hunting auction which amounted to N\$ 77064. The normal auction showed a profit of N\$ 29875 and was once again largely dominated by sponsorship from FrameTique.

I would like to thank everyone involved in ensuring the success of the golf day. I would also specifically like to thank Mr. Nic Kruger and Mr. Neil Engelbrecht for putting the hunting auction

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together. Neil was also auctioneer on the evening and it always helps having the best auctioneer in the country running your auction.

The bar has been set and future Windhoek Golf Days will have to be planned early and carefully to outshine the 2017 event.

- iii. National Championships / National Trials was held at Lake Oanob from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2017. For the first time this year there was some hype before the tournament with some anglers seeing cruising fish for the 1<sup>st</sup> time and even finding some bedding fish. I saw a glimmer of hope in many members' eyes for the first time in 2017. The hype and hope was however short lived with only 18 fish being weighed in weighing a mere 16.928kg. The mood on Saturday evening was somber for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in National Championships / National Trials history. It was becoming more and more evident that the bass populations at Oanob Dam were running thin.

Congratulations to James van Rooyen who was crowned National Champion after running away with the event.

- iv. The 2017 Old Mutual Corporate Bass Challenge was held at Lake Oanob from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2017. The poor fishing made for the worst Old Mutual Corporate Bass Challenge with only 4 teams scrambled together. The event was marred further with not even 1 bass showing itself at the scales. The mood at the function / prize giving can once again only be described as somber and as a result the auction was not really profitable. The event still managed to raise N\$ 31058 in profit largely due to the immense sponsorship from Old Mutual for the event. The auction managed to raise N\$ 11800 and was once again driven by sponsorship from FrameTique.

Thank you to everyone involved with the success of a disastrous Old Mutual Corporate Bass Challenge.

The Executive Council of 2018 will have to be careful when planning the event for 2018. A repeat of the 2017 event could lead to the loss of the Old Mutual sponsorship.

- v. The 2017 B.A.S.S. Nation Qualifier was held at S. Von Bach from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of November. The event was marred by poor attendance with only 7 anglers competing. Tough fishing was once again the order of the day with only 5 fish making it to the scales. All fish were caught in one bay in Von Bach with only sharptooth catfish being caught in the rest of the dam. Once again, the mood was not positive.

Congratulations to James van Rooyen for winning the event.

Congratulations to Alec Williams who will be representing Namibia at the 2018 B.A.S.S. Nation Championships in the USA as 'boater'. This could be confirmed, even before the last tournament.

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### Cancelled Events:

The Executive Council of 2017 was forced to cancel the Annual NBAA Winter Bass Classic which was scheduled for the 17<sup>th</sup> of June at S. Von Bach as well as the Annual Christmas Cup which was scheduled to take place at Lake Oanob on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December.

In addition to this the NBAA was forced to cancel the Radiowave Summer Bass Classic which was scheduled from the 28<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of October at S. Von Bach. The planning for event was in full swing and some sponsors had already been secured. The Executive Council was planning to host the biggest and best Summer Bass Classic in history which each competitor receiving a proper Radiowave Summer Bass Classic fishing shirt, and even a 'mini iCast' at the event. As the time drew nearer it was decided to rather postpone the event to 2018.

All events cancelled were cancelled due to the poor fishing. In hindsight, the decisions made by the Executive Council to cancel the events turned out to be a godsend as hosting the events above would have probably caused more harm than good to the NBAA.

In addition to the events mentioned above, the Clanwilliam Winter Bass Classic was also cancelled due to the drought which the Cape Province in South Africa is still facing.

### International Events:

- I. The Namibia National Bass Angling Team travelled to Claw Dam, Kadoma in Zimbabwe to compete in the annual Region V Bass Angling Championships from the 22<sup>nd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2017. I was fortunate enough to be part of the team. Namibia ended 4<sup>th</sup> for the tournament. The NBAA proposed new rules for National Team members that all members accepted.

I would like to congratulate the team captain, Alec Williams, for keeping the team together and ensuring that the spirit was always high. This was my 7<sup>th</sup> Region V tournament and I can honestly say that the 2017 event was the best so far in terms of team work and team spirit. Well done Team Namibia, you can all be very proud.

- II. The Namibia National Bass Angling Team also travelled to the Vaal River, Gauteng Province, South Africa to compete at the FIPSeD / CIPS Black Bass World Championships. This was Namibia's first world championships and hopes were extremely high. The team was 100% committed and even travelled to the Vaal River before the cut-off to practice for the event. In incredible amount of time and money was invested by each and every team member. I was also fortunate enough to have been in this team as well. The same rules set for the Region V team were applicable for this team.

The team performed superbly under the leadership of captain Alec Williams and ended in a very respectable 7<sup>th</sup> overall out of 13<sup>th</sup> countries from around the world competing. I would like to also congratulate Max Pieper for catching the 4<sup>th</sup> biggest fish of the tournament and would also like to congratulate Max Pieper and Ricardo Abrantes for ending 4<sup>th</sup> best boat out of 39 boats.

- III. The NBAA once again sent 2 anglers to the 2017 B.A.S.S. Nation Championships held at Lake Hartwell, Anderson, South Carolina in the USA from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2017. James

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van Rooyen represented Namibia the 'boater' and Thinus Williams represented Namibia as 'non boater'.

The event turned out to be a nail biting affair and many members stayed up till the early hours of the morning to watch the live weigh-in every night. James ended up being the very first Namibian representative to make the cut and compete on the final day of the tournament. James is also the 1<sup>st</sup> African to make the cut in 5 years. James ended up in 8<sup>th</sup> place overall which is also the highest finish ever for a Namibian competitor and was a mere 3lbs from qualifying for the Bassmaster Classic.

I would like to congratulate James on an exceptional performance and would also like to congratulate Thinus for his performance. Unfortunately, Thinus was 'non boater' and couldn't make any decisions which is always difficult as an angler. Both James and Thinus held Namibia's flag high at all times and I am proud of both of them.

#### Executive Council of 2017:

Vice Chairman, Alec Williams, once again performed well considering the circumstances which we all were faced with throughout the course of the year while juggling the captainship of 2 National Teams. Alec once again shined at both NBAA golf days and once again and was the driving force behind a good portion of the revenue made. Thank you Alec.

Secretary, Collette Carstens, managed once again to keep all the loose pieces of string together. I am not sure what the Executive Council of the NBAA will do without Collette. Her organization is impeccable. I take my hat off to Collette, business owner, wife (of an angler), mother and an incredible secretary. Thank you Collette.

Treasurer, Neels van Tonder, has once again been the level head of the Executive Council throughout the course of the year. Neels is very analytical which is most certainly a very valuable asset to have in any Executive Council. Thank you Neels.

Development Officer, Anton de Wit, has had one of the toughest years ever. Development of the sport of bass angling could not take place at all due to the poor fishing. Anton has also come to the end of his 3 year term as Development Officer. Anton has done well in the past 3 years, with many successful development events under his belt. I would like to thank Anton for the past 3 years of loyal service to the sport of bass angling in Namibia.

Fortunately for us all Anton has agreed to start a fresh 3 year term as Development Officer. The Development Officer portfolio is one which will be absolutely instrumental in re-establishing the sport of bass angling in Namibia, particularly amongst the juniors, ladies and previously disadvantaged. Anton will have a lot of work to do and will not be able to succeed without the support of the members. Thank you Anton.

Conservation Officer, Hendrik Pretorius, had also faced a really tough year. Watching a resource, which you are meant to conserve, seem to disappear before your eyes is gut wrenching. Hendrik has also come to the end of his term. 3 of the toughest years in the history of the NBAA as his term started when Namibia was in the middle of the drought. Hendrik will be handing over the reins this year and a new

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development officer will take over for the next 3 years. The Conservation Officer portfolio is going to grow substantially in 2018 with the addition of Fisheries Management. The next 3 years are going to be the most vital years ever for the Conservation Officer of the NBAA. It is going to take hard work and commitment to restore the NBAA to its former glory and then require constant Fisheries Management to ensure constant sustainable fisheries as well as the expansion of sustainable fisheries. Thank you Hendrik for your contribution in probably the toughest Conservation Officer terms in the history of the NBAA.

Public relations officer, Andrew Hall, has only been in the position for 1½ years and is absolutely excelling in everything he does. Andrew has reached audiences all over the world through social media and has taken the NBAA's Facebook page to new levels. Andrew has also been extremely active in written press and has been able to put the spotlight on the NBAA throughout the course of the year in spite of the tough year that is almost behind us. I want to thank Andrew for his time, effort and commitment to the sport of bass angling in Namibia. Fortunately Andrew has accepted his nomination for 2018 and his amazing work will continue.

Tournament Director, James van Rooyen, only joined the Executive Council at the end of 2016 and has also had one of the toughest jobs though out the 2017 angling season. James has not had much work to when it comes to scoring at statistics, which unfortunately in this case is not a good thing at all. James' experience in bass angling all over Southern Africa has helped the NBAA make progress in the right direction. Unfortunately James' work commitments have led to James having to resign from the Executive Council. Thank you for your efforts in 2017.

#### Ministry of Fisheries & Marine Resources Applications:

The Namibia Federation for Freshwater anglers received a letter from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries & Marine Resources, Dr Moses Marihungirire in response to the applications which were handed in by the NBAA in which the NBAA requested for permission to initiate operation 'Save Von Bach' when Von Bach was almost empty, permission to stock S. Von Bach Dam, permission to stock Oanob Dam, permission to stock Swakoppoort Dam as well as permission to stock Hardap Dam with Largemouth Bass. The feedback from the ministry is a moment in my career of chairman of this association that I will never forget. 2 years of hard work and lots of very late nights has eventually paid off. The letter from Dr Marihungirire can be summarized as follows:

- i. The ministry would not allow the initiation of operation 'Save Von Bach' based on the risks involved. Fortunately Von Bach did not dry up and received considerable inflow.
- ii. The ministry would allow the legal import of live Largemouth Bass for the purpose of stocking S. Von Bach Dam, Oanob Dam and Swakoppoort Dam they these dams already have healthy populations of Largemouth Bass. The NFFA has subsequently registered with the ministry and is now an officially recognized importer of live aquatics. As soon as our dams are ready and we have sufficient funds the NBAA will purchase live Largemouth Bass for the purpose of stocking. Stocking will be done in accordance with recommendations from Dr Deacon.
- iii. The ministry would consider allowing the stocking of Hardap Dam with Largemouth Bass provided that a risk assessment be conducted

Through the whole process mentioned above the NBAA established a vital link within the MOF&MR. Mr. Francois Jacobs, son of a legend within the NBAA, Mr. Naas Jacobs has been instrumental in all

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dealings with the ministry and also assisted tremendously in getting Dr Deacon to Namibia. Mr. Jacobs also assisted tremendously by arranging the meeting with senior officials at Hardap.

#### Dr Neil Deacon's visit to Namibia:

I have been fortunate enough to have been in contact with Dr Deacon PhD since having the pleasure of meeting him at Lake Chicamba in Mozambique in 2015. Dr Deacon's presentation at the Region V in 2015 was fascinating to me and I immediately could tell that he is absolutely passionate about bass. I managed to corner Dr Deacon and he was only too happy to hear me tell him about how bad the fishing has become in Namibia as our dams shrank due to the drought.

Dr Deacon was recommended to conduct the risk analysis by Dr Olaf Weyl, South Africa's leading ichthyologist who in fact contacted us when he saw the survey we conducted in 2016. Dr Deacon was requested to quote the NBAA for conducting the risk assessment on Hardap and the quotation arrived with an offer to access all our other dams free of charge. I met with Dr Deacon at Lake Claw during the Region V tournament to discuss the finer details. Unfortunately his father passed away and he also had to undergo some minor surgery which delayed his visit to Namibia and eventually led to him only arriving on Namibia on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November. The schedule was jam packed and an exhausting week lay ahead of us.

The 1<sup>st</sup> stop was Von Bach Dam on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November. We managed to get a fin sample from live bass which have been sent away for genetic laboratory testing. Dr Deacon conducted many other tests throughout the whole of Von Bach and is in the process of providing the NBAA with a plan to restore Von Bach to its former glory. The full report on his findings and recommendations will be made public. The most important immediate problem with Von Bach is that it is overrun by a formidable army of African Sharptooth Catfish and that the population must be radically decreased immediately before losing more bass to predation and before importing bass as barbel food.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> stop was Oanob Dam on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November. We unfortunately did not manage to get fin samples from large bass, only from very small bass that were netted. Dr Deacon conducted a whole range of tests and the report on his findings and recommendations will once again be made public. The biggest concern Dr Deacon had at Oanob was the PH level of the water which is only 1 point from being lethal to most freshwater fish. The only way that this can be corrected is by inflow flushing the dam out.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> stop was Swakoppoort Dam on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November. We were accompanied by Max Pieper, president of the NFFA, for a scouting mission. Dr Deacon's full report will be made public on his findings on Swakoppoort Dam.

Dr Neil Deacon conducted the risk assessment on Tuesday the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 and is in the process of compiling the final report and recommendations. Max Pieper, president of the NFFA and me accompanied Dr Deacon to Hardap Dam. It turned out to be an exceptionally productive trip and the NBAA established good contacts with various officials at the MOF&MR offices at Hardap. Various matters were discussed at an important meeting with all the officials at Hardap Dam. The possibility of starting a breeding program in government owned facilities was also discussed and Dr Deacon's report will pay specific reference to the value of a successful breeding program. Dr Deacon flew out on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November.

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I found that the time spend with Dr Deacon was invaluable to the future of the NBAA. Dr Deacon is exceptionally knowledgeable in his field and has an absolute passion for bass. Although the bulk of the reports on our current bass fisheries will not be good, the positive is that Dr Deacon believes that with hard work and dedication we could restore our fishing within a relatively short time period and I echo his sentiment. Dr Deacon has made me realize that competitive bass angling without fisheries management is just simply not possible and at some or other stage everything will come crashing down as it has in Namibia. The drought is nobody's fault. I realized in 2015 that the drought that we hopefully have just come out of was going to do some damage which is why I initiated the process of the survey with the intention of using it a basis to apply for permits to legally import live bass. Fortunately the entire process turned out to be successful or bass angling in Namibia might just have died a slow death. I believe that with the support of the Executive Council and the members of the NBAA, with hard work, dedication and funding WE will turn all of our bass angling venues into trophy venues.

#### 2018 Perspective:

In my opinion the entire focus of the 2018 EXCO should be on the following:

- I. Re-establishment of Von Bach as a sustainable bass angling venue
- II. Re-establishment of Oanob Dam as a sustainable bass angling venue
- III. Start the planning to establish Swakoppoort Dam as a sustainable bass angling venue
- IV. Formulate an effective 'Fisheries Management Plan'. Execute the plan constantly without fail
- V. Formulate an effective 'Fisheries Expansion Plan'. Execute the plan constantly without fail
- VI. Establishing a breeding program at Hardap Dam

I wish the Executive Council of 2018 the wisdom and strength to be able to lift Namibian bass angling back up onto the pedestal it should be on.

Yours sincerely,

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Richard Grant (Chairman – NBAA)

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