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Historical Niche Tourism: Consumptive Wildlife Tourism in South Africa, 1890-1939

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Abstract

Historical studies on niche tourism are limited in existing international scholarship. The aim in this paper is to provide an historical perspective concerning the development of consumptive wildlife tourism in South Africa. The novelty of the contribution is its historical perspective and in tracing the establishment and active promotion of hunting and fishing as niches within the evolving South African tourism economy. Using historical guidebooks and archival material the research focuses on the period 1890 to 1939, formative years for early tourism development. The niche of consumptive wildlife tourism is differentiated into hunting and fishing tourism, the latter segmented between sea fishing and inland trout fishing. The research discloses that from the last decade of the nineteenth century until the outbreak of the Second World War, South Africa was promoted as a destination for its assets for the 'sports' of hunting and fishing. The leading driver for building the niche of consumptive wildlife tourism was the agency of South African Railways and Harbours. Arguably, the assets for hunting and fishing were part of wider promotional initiatives taking place to grow international tourist arrivals in South Africa.

Keywords: historical niche tourism; consumptive wildlife tourism; hunting, fishing, South Africa

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Introduction

The terminology of 'wildlife tourism' encompasses an array of diverse activities such as wildlife viewing and photography, hunting and fishing, the use of wildlife for entertainment, zoo visitation, and of tourists travelling to protected areas or visiting animal sanctuaries (Newsome et al., 2005; Stone & Stone, 2024). As van der Merwe et al. (2021: 219) point out "wildlife tourism has been defined in different ways". Often wildlife tourism is conceptualized as either a 'consumptive' or 'non-consumptive' phenomenon (Meletis & Campbell, 2007; Rizzoli, 2023; Tremblay, 2001). The latter refers to human recreation that does not remove wildlife or activities not involving the killing of animals (Duffus & Dearden, 1990). Unquestionably, the establishment of protected areas such as game reserves, including South Africa's iconic Kruger National Park, was a major catalyst to the historical evolution of an economy of 'non-consumptive' wildlife tourism (Dlamini, 2020; van der Merwe et al., 2021). It is evident from the international record that the activity of non-consumptive wildlife tourism "whereby tourists observe wildlife, at close quarters, without purposeful effects on targeted individuals, has grown substantially over several decades" (Burgin & Hardiman, 2015: 210). As accompaniment of that growth a vibrant academic literature has appeared which scrutinizes different facets of the organization, impacts and environmental debates around such forms of tourism and its participants in various parts of the world (Duffy, 2008; Stone et al., 2020; Stone & Stone, 2024). By contrast to non-consumptive wildlife tourism, the economy of 'consumptive wildlife tourism' is defined as activities that result in wildlife mortality. Lovelock (2008: 4) delineates consumptive wildlife tourism as "a form of leisure travel undertaken for the purposes of hunting or shooting game animals, or fishing for sports fish, either in natural sites or in areas created for these purposes" (Lovelock, 2008: 4). Hunting and fishing are its leading constituents. Globally these niche activities continue to attract large numbers of tourists as participants despite considerable controversies surrounding most especially the operations of 'big game' trophy hunters in sub-Saharan Africa (Jerome & Sabuhoro, 2024; Mkono, 2018; Novelli et al., 2006; von Essen et al., 2019). Tickle and von Essen (2020: 1) assert that "trophy hunts and African hunting safaris have garnered significant controversies in recent years, inviting unease among the hunting community as to its implications on the public perception of hunting broadly". Among contemporary hunting communities of practice, trophy hunters represent a distinctive category. As von Essen et al. (2019: 16) point out, trophy hunters purchase hunting trips with the goal of shooting the big five and "are materially-motivated and attach themselves, their identities and their experiences to hunting artefacts" which generally are on the wall of their home. As compared to hunting tourism, fishing as a popular form of recreational sport remains a far less contentious component of consumptive wildlife tourism (Borch et al., 2008; Hall, 2021). Fishing tourism encompasses a broad array of different activities which operate in varying locations and under conditions such as sea, river and lake environs, and in freshwater or salt waters (Hall, 2021; Klarin, 2025). Fishing tourism shares with hunting tourism the fact that, as shown in recent writings, it generates a flow of academic literature around the nexus of (mainly) contemporary issues around tourism and fishing (Hannonen & Hoogendoorn, 2022; Hjalager, 2010; Mordue, 2013, 2016). In particular, the management of fishing tourism appears as a consistent theme in international fishing tourism scholarship over the years (Borch et al., 2008; Hall, 2021; Hannonen & Hoogendoorn, 2022).

Open Rubric

Against this backdrop the aim in this paper is to provide historical insight into the development of consumptive wildlife tourism in the setting of South Africa. The novelty of the contribution is its historical perspective and in tracing the establishment and active promotion of hunting and fishing as niches within the evolving South African tourism economy. The time-period under scrutiny is from the decade of the 1890s, when small flows of international visitors were beginning to be attracted to the country, until the outbreak of hostilities of the Second World War. In many respects it can be argued this fifty-year period represents the formative years for the tourism economy of South Africa. This is a phase in the country's tourism history when considerable promotional and publicity initiatives were undertaken to stimulate flows of tourists – mainly international visitors who arrived by ocean steamship and usually at Cape Town, the port of entry. The paper is structured into three further sections of material. As context the literature review examines the historical establishment of the tourism niches of hunting and fishing and of their role played in destination development across several countries. Following a brief discussion on methodology and sources, the results section is presented. The analysis centres upon an overview of the promotion and challenges of opening-up and maximizing the assets of South Africa for hunting and fishing and thereby to leverage early tourism flows across the study period. Overall, the paper extends further the body of recent literature – much of it generated by geographers – which sheds light on various facets of the historical evolution of tourism in South Africa (Drummond et al., 2022; Rogerson, 2024; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021, 2023, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d, 2024e, 2025).

Literature context

The literature context for this study has two elements. The first engages with the concept of niche tourism. The second furnishes a brief overview of key scholarship that deals with the historical development of the specific niches of hunting and fishing.

Niche tourism

Conceptually, this research is nested within the burgeoning international scholarship on niche tourism. Ali-Knight (2010) maintains that the roots of conceptual debates and academic research around niche tourism originate during the 1980s with discussions emerging around 'special interest tourism' which is viewed as the predecessor for niche tourism and setting the context for the identification of niche tourism markets. A landmark study in the progress of niche tourism scholarship was the publication of the edited volume by Novelli (2005). From the outset this study situates the concept of niche tourism as a counterpoint to mass tourism and asserting that it represents both a "more sophisticated set of practices" and that within "a globalising world of increasing sameness, niche tourism represents diversity and ways of marking difference" (Robinson & Novelli, 2005: 1). Unquestionably, the rise of niche tourism is inseparable from its popularity for destinations and preference among tourists (Farmaki & Singh, 2025; Novelli et al., 2011). The products of niche tourism are viewed as providing alternatives to those of mass tourism which involve large numbers of tourists and often occurs in staged settings (Novelli, 2018). Niche tourism products are considered as "tailored to meet the needs of specific market segments whose size and nature can vary considerably according to the demographic characteristics and the social status of the tours as well as the geography of the destinations involved" (Novelli, 2022: 344). Since the concept appeared in the late 1990s a substantial literature has accumulated around niche tourism as distinguished from mainstream mass tourism with its potential for contributing to both inclusive growth and sustainable development (Ali-Knight, 2010; Novelli, 2005, 2018, 2022; Novelli et al., 2022; Pforr et al., 2021; Rodrigues & Carvalho, 2023; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2024d). The advantages of niche tourism for the destination development of peripheral regions or 'left-behind' spaces are strongly suggested (Dinis & Krakover, 2016; Jacobs et al., 2020; Yiannakis & Davies, 2012). In the most recent edited volume to appear on niche tourism, considerable emphasis is given to "the potential socio-economic and environmental benefits it may offer to destinations" (Farmaki & Singh, 2025: xvii). In addition, Arantes et al. (2025: 55) contend that in recent years "sustainable niche tourism has emerged as a refined, impactful sector that transcends traditional tourism paradigms, redefining the traveler's journey into an ethical immersive experience". Across the international literature, policy issues around opportunities and challenges for destination development stand out as one major recurrent theme. Not surprisingly, therefore the dominant focus in existing writings overwhelmingly is on contemporary issues and debates concerning the business of niche tourism and how it might be maximized for destination performance. As has been argued elsewhere 'presentism' is a common feature of most international research on niche tourism (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2024a). Reviews of recent scholarship disclosed the paucity of research studies which illuminate the historical past of niche tourism as a whole and the evolution of specific niche products (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2024d).

Historical insights on the niches of hunting and fishing tourism

Comprehensive accounts remain to be written of the historical evolution of both hunting and fishing as niche tourism activities. This said, within the literature produced by historians there are several studies that provide valuable insight into aspects of the establishment and emergence of hunting and fishing as recreational activities that became associated with tourism. It is evident that for both the international rise of hunting and fishing tourism strong historical connections exist with Britain and its colonial expansion. Indeed, traditions of hunting, fishing and shooting for a long time were an established basis of recreation and what was defined as 'sport' in certain layers of British society. From at least the 17th century a significant proportion of the English gentry increasingly engaged in country sports including grouse shooting, deer stalking and fishing (Huggins, 2008). The countryside landscape was created and maintained for the purposes of shooting. In several works Durie (1998, 2008, 2013) traces the historical evolution of the elite sport of game shooting. Arguably, this was a popular focus of the titled and wealthy classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain when participation in a good pheasant shoot was seen a symbol of high social standing. Martin (2011, 2012) views this 'sport' as the exclusive preserve of the leisured classes of the time and highlights

especially the great shoots of the Edwardian period. In terms of the geography of these elite country sports in Britain, parts of Scotland became significant as locations. One significant underpinning behind Scotland's emergence as a tourist destination in the nineteenth century was its assets for a range of sporting activities including salmon fishing, grouse shooting and deer-stalking (Durie 2013, 2017; Lorimer, 2000). Of considerable significance was grouse shooting. Through much of the 19th and 20th centuries the sporting estate was a place in which the private indulgences of the aristocracy were enjoyed (Jarvie & Jackson, 1998). In the Scottish Highlands sporting estates comprised large tracts of land managed primarily for such 'sporting' activities as deer stalking, grouse shooting and salmon angling. A similar development occurred in parts of Ireland which also became a favoured location for grouse shooting by the English monied classes (Durie, 2017).

Arguably, foreign lands as a whole exerted a special power of attraction for the British in relation to hunting and fishing (Borch et al., 2008). From 1830 a flow of visitors from Britain occurred further outwards than Scotland and Ireland instead to penetrate the backwoods of certain parts of Scandinavia to partake in the sporting pastimes of hunting, shooting and fishing (Silanpää, 2002, 2008). The travels of Victorian and Edwardian sporting gentlemen from England to mid-Scandinavia are recorded in works by Silanpää (2002, 2008). Mordue (2013) shows that freshwater game-angling for trout and salmon, mostly fly fishing, has its origins in Victorian Britain. More broadly, Borch et al. (2008) offer a brief overview of the international history of fishing tourism which is closely associated with that of recreational fishing. It is argued that "the greatest influence in defining fishing tourism was the British Empire and the playground it established for 'sportsmen' across the world" (Borch et al., 2008: 270). For example, the international diffusion of fishing and the transfer and establishment of trout fisheries in New Zealand, North America and Argentina all were attributable in part to "some linkage to the Victorian period" in Britain (Borch et al., 2008: 270). Outside of Europe, separate historical traditions of hunting and fishing seemingly evolved most notably in North America. Consumptive wildlife tourism, including the shooting of a range of animals including bisons and deer, has been documented in several studies both in the United States and Canada (Cohen, 2014; Green, 2021; Lovelock, 2008). The elitist character of much of this consumptive wildlife tourism in North America is well-illustrated by Green's (2021) descriptions of 'pampered pleasure seekers' hunting in Canada's Yukon Territory during the early decades of the 20th century.

Methodology

This study deploys different research approaches. First, a literature survey was conducted of the available historical scholarship researching niche tourism as a whole and the evolution of past hunting and fishing tourism more specifically. As is apparent from the above review despite a mushrooming of academic writings on niche tourism only a small amount of attention has been devoted to the early development of niche forms of tourism. This gap in knowledge provides the rationale for this exploration of hunting and fishing as tourism niches in the opening of South Africa as a visitor economy. Second, the research on hunting and fishing tourism applies the methods of historical geographers, including the mining of primary source materials from archives and the gathering of other evidence in secondary literature. The benefits of archival research for geographers have been pointed out (Byron et al., 2024; Crush, 1992). This study builds from documentary material which was obtained from the National Library depot in Cape Town. This material includes a series of guidebooks published in Britain and for the use of tourists and 'sportsmen' travelling to South Africa in the pre-Union years. In addition, for the period 1910-1939 the analysis uses the collections of the South African Railways and Harbours (SAR & H) which are accessible at the Cape Town National Library depot.

Results

The results are organized separately for hunting tourism and then fishing tourism. In both discussions the source material is different for the pre-Union (1910) period as compared to the three decades that followed the amalgamation of four territories and establishment of the Union of South Africa. In the pre-Union period the major sources are those of the guidebooks produced in London and targeted at the community of mainly English sportsmen who took a sea voyage from Southampton in England to Cape Town from where they began their travels for either hunting or fishing. During the period which followed Union the major promotional activities for hunting tourism and fishing tourism in South Africa were undertaken through the initiatives launched by the Publicity Department of SAR & H. Following the ending of the hostilities associated with World War 1, in the history of tourism development in South Africa one of the key moments was the founding in 1919 of the Publicity and Travel Department of the railways organisation which was established to provide information that might encourage tourism (van Eeden, 2011). Throughout the first part of the twentieth century the SAR& H assumed a crucial role both in building an infrastructure for tourism development as well as publicising South Africa's tourist attractions (Foster, 2008).

Results: Early tourism and hunting

The foundations for hunting as a niche in the tourism economy of South Africa were laid in the mid-19th century with the introduction of the first protective measures for the preservation of game following the years of the massive slaughter of wildlife (Beinart, 1990). This dark history was made clear for sportsmen in the Brown's guidebooks which were produced on an annual basis from 1893 to 1910 (Figure 1). Among the objectives of the Brown's guide to South Africa was to advise sportsmen of the hunting possibilities and conditions for undertaking their favoured sport. Sportsmen were informed that at the time of first European settlement "the South African Continent swarmed with game in number and variety never equalled elsewhere" (Brown, 1893: 234). Nevertheless, as Adams (2009: 128) points out "by the late 19th century the depredations of colonial hunters in the African Cape had led to massive reductions in the populations of plains antelope and elephant". Sports hunters were told that by the 1890s lions "once so plentiful throughout Cape Colony, may be regarded as extinct south of the Vaal or

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Orange Rivers, but still exists in large numbers in the north of the Transvaal and in the territories beyond the Limpopo" (Brown, 1893: 78). The slaughter of elephants is similarly recorded. In the 1890s their survival in the Cape was only the result of strict preservation in the Knysna and Addo areas: "Elsewhere in the Colony and in the Transvaal, where 50 years ago they were met with herds of several hundreds, they have been exterminated, with perhaps the exception of a few in the neighbourhood of the Portuguese border" (Brown, 1893: 79).

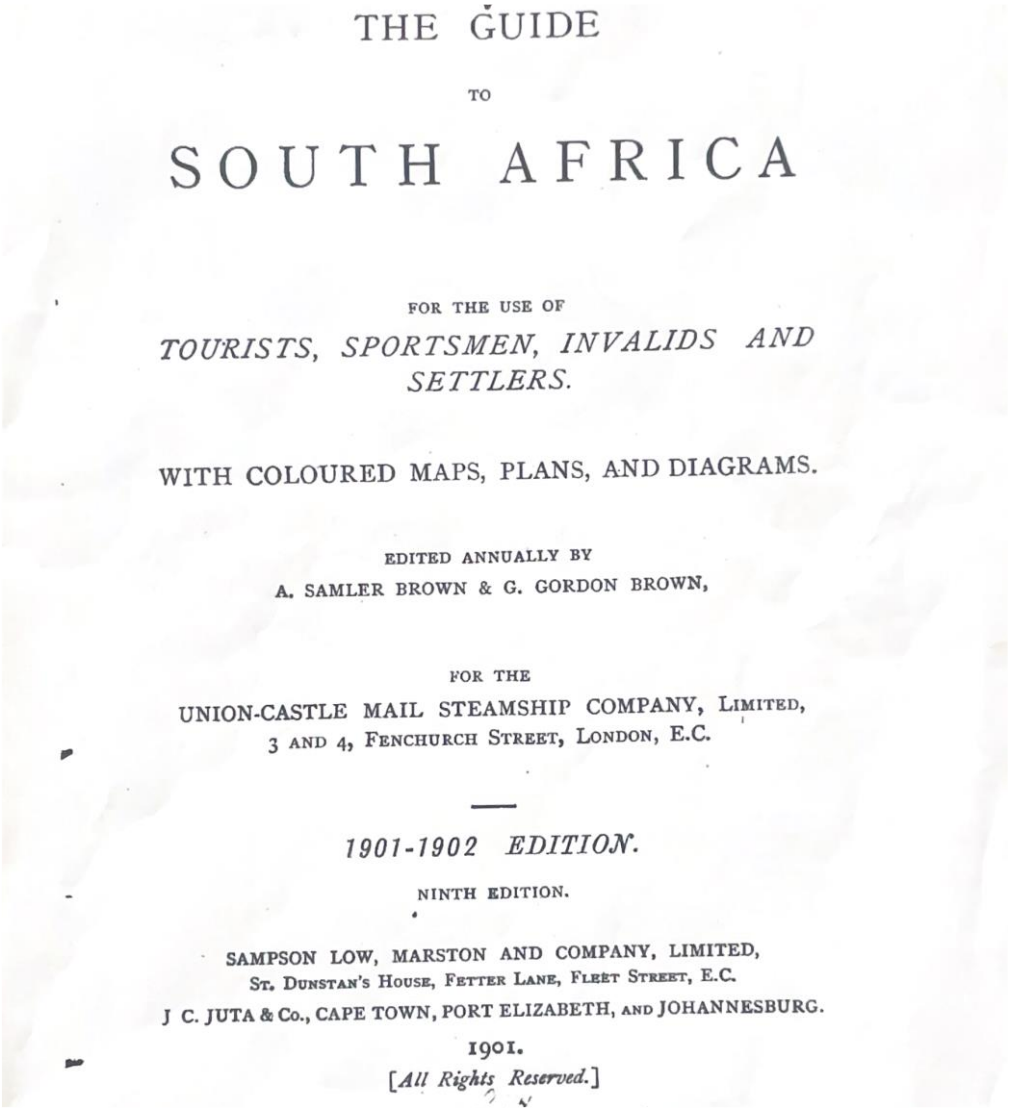

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Figure 1: Annual Guide produced in London by Brown's (Source, Brown & Brown, 1901)

Similar accounts were provided for other forms of wildlife. It was stated that the "hippopotamus formerly abounded in every river of the (Cape) Colony but it is now confined to the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Orange River. A few still exist in the Zululand streams in the neighbourhood of the seacoast and they are more plentiful in the rivers of the Portuguese territory" (Brown, 1893: 80). One aspect of wildlife in the Cape Colony that was reflected positively for game shooting related to game birds and the many varieties of francolin, bustards, quails and guinea fowl that might be had. Other attractions included wild duck, wild geese and widgeon. The sport of hunting korhaan, a form of bustard, was viewed as a special highlight for many (Brown & Brown, 1901). As Trapido (1984: 1) observes "by the beginning of the 20th century hunting had become a closely regulated pastime". The shooting activities of sports hunters arriving in South Africa were constrained by conservation regulations that included close seasons and requirements for permits or licences. Details were given of the close seasons for different classes of game which varied considerably by each district and often were amended (Brown & Brown, 1901). Frustration was expressed in the guidebooks that for game shooting in the Cape Colony "no decent free shooting is actually obtainable" because of the strict game laws. It was observed as follows "The owners of the soil, both English and Dutch, as a rule preserve the game on their properties, and any person found shooting without permission is just as liable to legal prosecution as anyone offending in the same manner in England" (Nicolls & Eglington, 1892: 119). This said, the positive impact on wildlife populations of the close season and protective measures was recognized. Brown's guide for 1893 stated that the results of implementation in the Cape Colony "appear to be eminently satisfactory as it is officially stated that 'the rarer

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and more beautiful antelopes are becoming in certain districts more numerous than at any previous time within living memory, while game generally is plentiful throughout the length and breadth of the land'" (Brown, 1893: 77-78).

Figure 2: Advertising clothing for hunting and fishing (Source, Nicolls & Eglington, 1892)

By the 1890s the prime recommended hunting areas in South Africa were in the "East and North-East of the Transvaal" (Brown, 1893: 234). Brown's 1901 guide identifies Pietersburg, along with Mafeking and Palapye, as the best start points for hunting trips including into Bechuanaland (Brown & Brown, 1901: 235). Much advice was provided as to the best equipment to be secured for hunting expeditions, how trips could be organized and recommended suppliers. Indeed, a whole network of suppliers of goods and services was organized around the hunting sportsmen. This included accommodation providers on their arrival in Cape Town and at basing points such as Mafeking for the organization of their hunting activities. Advertisements were placed in the specialist guidebooks of the services of these establishments. In addition, the advertisements for outfitters for hunting parties, the suppliers of specialist clothing for hunters, and of equipment such as cameras, water filters and above all of guns and rifles attest to the multiplier effects and growth of a service economy around early hunting touring trips in South Africa (Figures 2 and 3). It was made clear that hunters should purchase their required equipment from local suppliers: "All ordinary articles of wear, with one or two exceptions, can be obtained almost as cheap in Cape Town, Kimberley, Natal, Mafeking, and other centres, allowance in extra cost, of course, being made for the distance from England" (Nicolls & Eglington, 1892: 1). For extended hunting visits in the interior Brown's guide describes as follows that "the outfit necessary for such a trip includes a tent wagon and team of 12 to 16 oxen"; it continued that the "wagons are Colonial made, without springs, covered in with canvas and exceedingly strong. For upcountry trips a special wagon is made "giving extra breadth over the wheels and provided with lockers for provisions, which are far more commodious than the ordinary tent wagon in which sleeping accommodation is decidedly limited" (Brown, 1893: 86). In other guides it was put forward that the "success of a hunting trip in the Interior of South Africa largely, if not wholly depends on the sportsman being in possession of good shooting horses, and when such have been obtained every endeavour should be made to preserve them from the fatal ravages of African horse sickness" (Nicolls & Eglington, 1892: ii). On health grounds the recommendation was made emphatically that hunting trips be confined to the winter season albeit that "quinine should be taken for fever and chlorodyne for dysentery" (Brown, 1893: 88). Extensive advice was offered on the best guns or rifles that should be used as well as shooting angles if hunting for

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particular animals. Recommended for lions was that a "bullet behind the shoulder, although it may pierce the heart, does not always prove immediately fatal"; sportsmen were informed instead that. a safer shot is at the shoulder itself which disables the lion by breaking the bone but "the most deadly shot is between the eyes" (Brown, 1893: 78).

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Figure 3: Advertising equipment for hunting (Source, Brown & Brown, 1901, Nicolls & Eglington, 1892)

For the shooting of game birds such as francolins, dogs were essential and the recommendations included that "when shooting over a thick bush country, cockers are preferable to either pointers or setters" (Nicolls & Eglington, 1892: 98). Further advice was that "Experience will prove that the Francolins and Sand Grouse – although not so wild or more difficult of approach in the ordinary sense as feathered game in England of a somewhat similar description – one and all possess greater vitality, and require, so to speak more shooting. In consequence, a proportionately heavier sized shot should be used in killing them" (Nicolls

& Eglington, 1892: 98). The Caledon area of Cape Colony was mentioned as a fine location for the shooting of game birds. It was described that: "Good shooting is procurable, hares, springbok, quails and paaus being plentiful in and around the mountains, the quail shooting in particular is considered to be the best in the Colony" (Brown, 1893: 150). Overall, it was advised that hunters targeted at game birds "those desirous of shooting small game such as partridges, etc., will have poor sport unless they have a good dog or two" (Brown, 1893: 89).

In the three decades that followed Union great importance attached to the publicity material produced within South Africa to attract tourists from overseas. During the 1920s the publicity department of South African Railways undertook energetic initiatives to attract international tourists. The agency published a vast amount of brochures and guidebooks for prospective visitors to South Africa. Of note is that in 1924 it issued a special booklet to market South Africa as a destination for hunters and the shooting of game. This guidebook opened with the following caution:

> To lovers of sport and adventure the very word 'Africa' conjures up visions of big game and unrestricted shooting, in fact a hunters' paradise. Also, to those visionaries the word applies to South Africa, their knowledge of which is rather vague, then when they arrive in the Union they are woefully disappointed that the shooting does not turn out to be what their imagination painted. Many years ago such ideas were correct to a certain extent in connection with South Africa but such is not the case now, and the object of this brochure is to point out conditions as they are today and thus save intending tourists from disappointment (South African Railways and Harbours, 1924: 1).

The core narrative, however, was that hunting remained an attractive niche for international visitors to South Africa. It was argued that "excellent shooting can be obtained in the Union of South Africa during the open season if the proper and necessary steps are taken, which can be done without much trouble" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1924: 24). Prospective hunters were recommended to make contact with farmers or the land-owning companies that would allow shooting and at the same time to secure the necessary licence to shoot. For more extended tours and hunting parties it was advised that "Northern Transvaal, Zululand and Swaziland offer the best fields in South Africa and for these a wagon and camp equipment will be necessary" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1924: 28). These areas were highlighted as offering picturesque scenery beyond hunting and the advantage that "during the open season for game shooting the climate in these parts is at its best and camping is a real joy" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1924: 28). It was stated that "the slow trekking through a lovely country with a delightful climate is a colourful experience, the memory of which will last a lifetime" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1924: 29). The memorable experience for trekker hunters was detailed in the following manner:

> In these far away parts the roads are often not too good and trekking perforce to be slow, but the lover of the open, as a hunter must be, will not object to this; while the outfit is crawling along the track the man with the gun will find plenty of distraction and pleasure in making short excursions into the surrounding country where everything will be new and strange to the visitor, only the stranger to the veld must be careful not to go too far afield when alone as it is wonderfully easy to lose oneself (South African Railways and Harbours, 1924: 29).

Overall, the core message of promotional material produced during the 1920s by the SAR & H was that "there are still good game shooting to be found in the Union of South Africa in spite of, or rather because of the drastic restrictions against the wholesome slaughtering of game and, judging by the past decade, it looks as if the game prospects will improve year by year under the present protective policy, and that a moderate amount of shooting will always be available during the open season" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1924: 39). Although no further dedicated marketing was produced to profile the country's assets for hunting, it should be noted that throughout the 1930s hunting was included as one of the featured themes in national promotional material. In a major guidebook on South Africa produced for the railways agency in the 1930s under the heading 'big game and other hunting' it was stated that the Cape Province, Orange Free State, Transvaal and Rhodesia offered "ideal hunting areas when buck and other small game are the objectives" (Carlyle-Gall, 1937: 12). Moreover, the guide continued that in "Northern Transvaal and elsewhere in Southern Africa lion and other big game shooting is afforded" (Carlyle-Gall, 1937: 12). Of other regions in South Africa Zululand was commended for its opportunities regarding "excellent shooting for both feather and fur" (Carlyle-Gall, 1937: 74).

Results: Early tourism and fishing

The activity of fishing tourism in South Africa has two sub-components, namely of sea or saltwater fishing and inland freshwater fishing (Hall, 2021; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2024d, 2024e). Beginning in the 1890s with the English guidebooks for sportsmen the initial promotion of South Africa concentrated on its potential for sea fishing. It was proclaimed that "Lovers of sport in the shape of sea fishing will not be disappointed in this respect on visiting South Africa, as the Cape seas actually teem with a truly wonderful variety of the finny tribe" (Nicolls & Eglington, 1892: 133). In particular, during the 1890s Cape Town was regarded as especially attractive for sea anglers. The sportsman's guide stated enthusiastically that: "it is literally the truth to say that during certain times of the year it would be difficult to shoot an arrow from some of the landing stages without impaling some sort of fish, but more particularly those of the mackeral tribe" (Nicolls & Eglington, 1892:133). Indeed, this dedicated guidebook for sportsmen went so far as to remark:

> Whatever Cape Town may ultimately become, it is certainly not the liveliest city in the world, and without in the least depreciating its very beautiful surroundings, it is possible for one to tire of visiting the many places of interest in its neighbourhood, and of constantly viewing the stupendous grandeur of Table Mountain and its 'table cloth'. At such

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> times the monotony of existence may be happily broken by the excellent fishing in the environs; and of the numerous favourable places of enjoyment of such, none can be recommended so much as around Penguin Island ten miles out in False Bay, or off the Roman Rocks near Simonstown. In favourable weather in either of the locations mentioned, monsters – bearing almost every conceivable colour and imaginable shape – may be hauled up with surprising rapidity (Nicolls & Eglington, 1892: 133).

For pursuing such sport, sea fishers were advised that excellent seaworthy boats could be hired at Kalk Bay. Further, Table Bay itself was also applauded for its opportunities for sport fishing especially for snoek. Overall, the attractions of Cape Town were lauded: "Taking it all round, however, it will be a matter of difficulty to find one place more favourable than along the entire coast of South Africa for the indulgence of this pastime" (Nicolls & Eglington, 1892: 134). In later guides the possibilities for sea fishing at other locations were identified. The 1901 Brown's guide pinpointed that in terms of fishing "very fine sport indeed may be had round the coast, and in most of the estuaries and bays, as, for instance, at Knysna" (Brown & Brown, 1901: 260). It was flagged that for sea fishers around the Cape coast "steen brass has been caught up to 70 lbs in weight and the gheelbeek up to about 50lbs. The commonest fish, the snoek, weighs about 8 lbs" (Brown & Brown, 1901: 260). As compared to sea fishing limited enthusiasm was given to sportsmen during the 1890s and early 1900s about the prospects for inland or river fishing. In the Cape Colony and Natal, it was observed that "the angler will have little opportunity for displaying his skill with rod or line, as the varieties inhabiting the African rivers are few in number and afford little interest to the sportsman" (Nicolls & Eglington, 1892: 134). This assessment was confirmed by Brown's guides to South Africa. In 1901 it was recorded that "from the Orange River southwards the freshwater fishing is poor" (Brown & Brown, 1901: 260). The future prospects for inland fishing were, however, looked upon optimistically: "It is to be hoped, however, that matters will change for the better in this respect, thanks to the enterprise of a few gentlemen who, after going to considerable expense and surmounting numerous difficulties, have, we hope, at length succeeded in introducing trout into some of the streams of the Cape Colony" (Nicolls & Eglington, 1892: 134). It was argued also there appeared "no reason why the experience now started in earnest should not have an equally favourable result as in New Zealand" (Nicolls & Eglington, 1892: 134). During the early 20th century Brown's guide was cautious about the possible further opportunities for freshwater fishing. In one commentary it observed as follows: "Owing mainly to individual effort, trout have been introduced into many of the streams of Cape Colony and Natal, and there seems every chance of their doing well. Unfortunately, the rivers of the Western Province are not always suitable, though that public-spirited sportsman and brewer, Mr Ohlsson, has reared trout in his ponds at Newlands, weighing from 5 to 7 lbs. apiece at two years old" (Brown & Brown, 1901: 260).

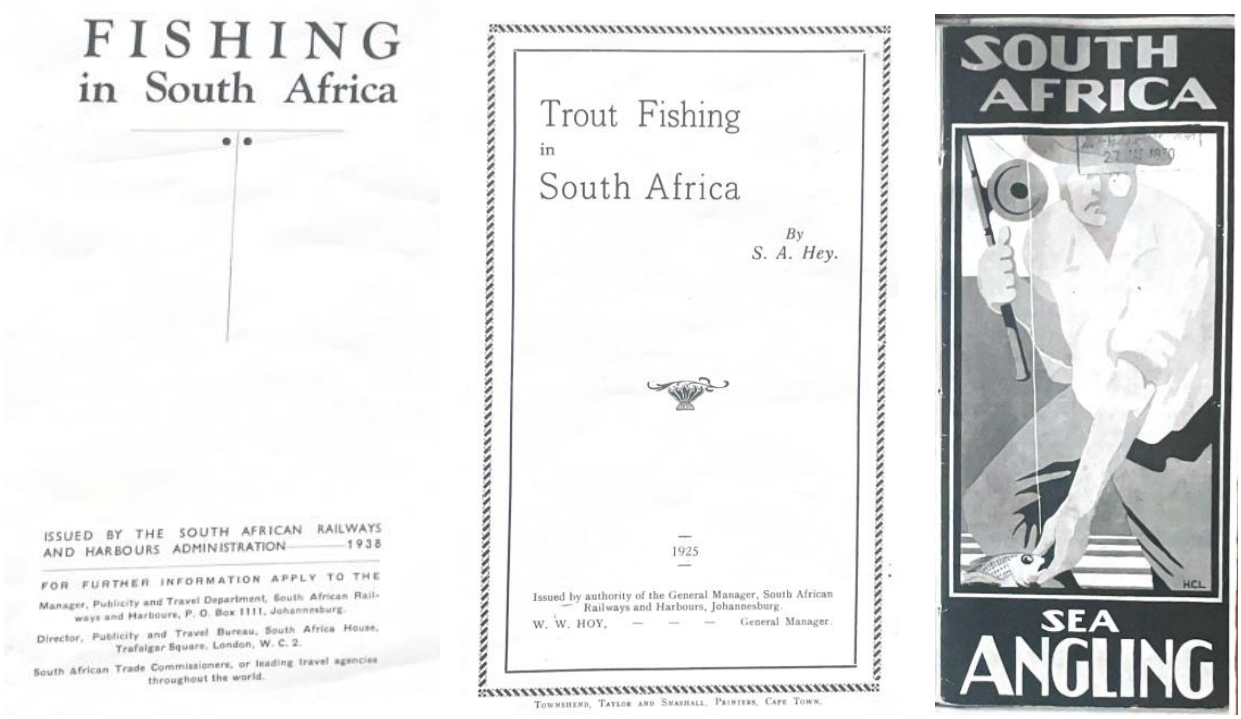

Figure 4: Guidebooks on fishing in South Africa produces by South African Railways and Harbours (Source, South African Railways & Harbours 1923, 1929, 1938)

By the 1920s with the success of experiments for the wider introduction of trout in South African rivers the country was promoted both for its assets of sea and freshwater river fishing (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2024d and 2024e; see Figure 4). During the 1920s the tourism promotional initiatives made by SAR & H Railways were extended energetically to encompass inland trout fishing (Hey, 1924, 1925; South African Railways and Harbours, 1929, 1938). In a major guidebook for international visitors which appeared in 1923 it was stated that the "impelling desire of the trout fisherman is that the rivers he visits shall

have plenty of trout in them" and that "on this score he may rest assured, so far as most of the South African streams are concerned" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1923: 227). Visitors from overseas (as well as domestic anglers) were assured of an abundance of fish and of "also rivers that will appeal irresistibly to him" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1923: 227). At this time, trout were flourishing in Cape and Natal "whilst an encouraging response has already been made to acclimatization enterprise in the Transvaal" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1923: 227). The trout fisherman "who comes from oversea for the pastime has his visit spiced with adventure, since the country has a fascinating spell, and its history is full of romance". The health-giving properties of the invigorating South African climate were a further attraction for international anglers (Figure 5). Overall, it was asserted that "of all holidays for the man who seeks change in a new country, or for the man already in South Africa who requires rest and quietness after strenuous work, none can beat a holiday spent with a fly rod on a South African river" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1923: 227).

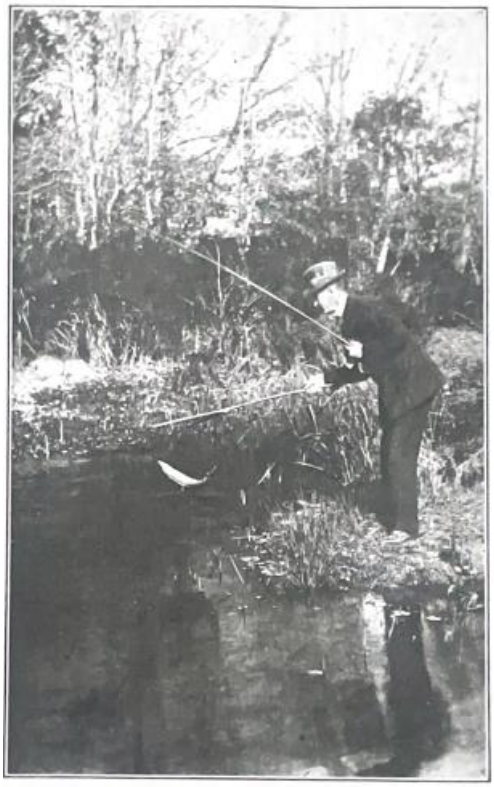

Figure 5: Fishing performance in South Africa (Source, South African Railways & Harbours, 1923)

In the waters around the Cape the promotion of the country's attractions for international visitors continued to be stressed. Sea fishing for sport had distinct seasons with different fish and varying experience for anglers. In winter sea angling typically focused on "the conquest of the red stumpnose, the Roman, the biskop, the wildepaard, and the galjoen" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1923: 231). By contrast, summer fishing was described that it "may be taken as meaning the capture with fresh fish bait, of the larger sporting species, such as Cape salmon or geelbek, the albacore or yellow tail, kabeljouw and steenbrass" (South African Railways, 1923: 231). The summer experience for potential angling visitors was well-organized. From November in Cape Town "fishing expeditions are arranged and timed so that the anglers reach the appointed rendezvous in the evening, when two or three hours of the best sport can be had before the twilight ends. With the coming of darkness the camp fire is lighted, and an impromptu meal, prepared in the open-air, becomes amazingly appetizing" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1923: 234). An extended description was provided of the potential delights awaiting anglers in the Cape summer by arranged fishing excursions:

> Let it be assumed that the object of such an excursion is to fish at dawn for Cape salmon or albacore at Rooikrantz, a favourite fishing spot near Cape Point. It means sleeping out under the Rooikrantz lodge, a fascinating experience in the clear and mild summer nights of the South. With the proper conditions, the waters of False Bay stretch below the angler like a vast mill pond. In the background the wonderful succession of peaks and ridges of the Hottentot's Holland range, ending in gaunt Cape Hangklip, stand out against the opposite horizon. Sometimes on calm nights the angler may awaken to hear the stillness broken by the heavy splashing of big fish, possibly the leap of a stingray, or the unforgettable booming of thrashers. From the Rooikrantz ledge he may look down and witness, in the phosphorescent glinting of waters, such memorable combats as have been observed on bright moonlight nights between large fish (South African Railways and Harbours, 1923: 234-235).

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s a series of promotional and information guides were issued by SAR & H to support the visits of (mainly) international tourists to leading fishing centres in South Africa both for sea fishing and inland trout fishing

(Rogerson & Rogerson, 2024d, 2024e). South African Railways and Harbours launched material specifically relating to the recreational fishing assets of the country for such activities (South African Railways and Harbours, 1923, 1924). By 1930 it was proclaimed that "the number of fishing enthusiasts visiting this country in search of 'records' to add to their lists is increasing yearly" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1930: 1). Promotional material targeted at international fishers considered that this growth "is hardly a matter for wonder, when one considers the exceptional opportunities that are offered, together with the ideal conditions under which such a quest may be undertaken" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1930: 1). For sportsman trout fishers the following inducement was offered:

The call of the outdoor life lures many visitors to South Africa, where a beneficent climate and rich scenic endowments contribute largely towards making the land a sportsman's paradise; and in this country, in conditions approaching the ideal, votaries of sport in all its branches find abundant outlets for their enthusiasm. On every hand are presented manifold facilities for recreational pursuits and the fisherman, in particular, finds a diversity of opportunities. Climatic conditions in the four provinces vary greatly, and it is possible for the fly-fisherman to obtain sport of the highest class through the greater part of the year (South African Railways and Harbours, 1938: 3).

Figure 6: Sea fishing at Hermanus (Source, South African Railways & Harbours, 1934)

Overall, it was asserted that for "those anglers who can afford the time and money necessary for a long holiday, South Africa offers, probably, greater inducements than any other part of the world" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1930:2). For sea fishers emphasis was given to the variety of available options as well as the diverse methods to enjoy sea fishing. The promoted tourism spaces for sea fishing now extended beyond Cape Town to incorporate now a range of destinations which included the small town of Hermanus which was highly rated for the sport (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020, 2024e; see Figure 6). During the 1930s the list of recommended destinations for sea fishing included Durban and East London. In promotional material from SAR & H in 1934 among the list of "outstanding features" for travellers to South Africa were listed "good sea-fishing" both in Durban and East London as well as Hermanus which was flagged for its "big sea fish and record catches" (South African Railways and Harbours, 1934). Further, it was asserted as follows:

> The fishing on Zululand's coast is superlatively good for wielders of both light and heavy tackle. At St. Lucia and Richard's Bay row-boats and outboard motors are available for hire, and fresh bait is always procurable. At both places the lagoons furnish a great quantity and variety of fish, many running up to 40 lb in weight, which will give the finest of sport to the light-tackle enthusiast. The more ambitious rodster generally makes for the seashore and the lagoon mouths in search of sharks, and, should fortune favour him, he may hook a sea pirate weighing anything from a hundredweight to a thousand pounds (Carlyle-Gall, 1937: 74).

Conclusion

This study builds upon an emerging geographical tradition of research in South African tourism scholarship which explores past tourisms. It contributes an examination of the historical evolution of the niche of consumptive wildlife tourism which was differentiated into hunting and fishing tourism, the latter itself segmented between sea fishing and inland trout fishing. The archival research discloses that from the last decade of the nineteenth century until the outbreak of the Second World War, South Africa was promoted as a destination for its assets for the 'sports' of hunting and fishing. Initial popularization of South Africa for hunting and fishing tourism occurred through an array of guidebooks produced in England and which became standard reading on the ocean steamships travelling from Southampton to Cape Town. A phase of more vigorous promotion of South Africa's assets for consumptive wildlife tourism was launched after Union. The leading driver in the country for building the niche of consumptive wildlife tourism was the agency of South African Railways and Harbours. Arguably, the assets for hunting and fishing were a part of much broader promotional initiatives taking place by this organization to grow international tourist arrivals in South Africa. The absence of any reliable data on international tourism arrivals to South Africa in the 1920s and 1930s makes difficult any evaluation of the success of the specific efforts to boost hunting and fishing tourism. It is observed, however, that whilst renewed marketing of the country as a destination for fishing occurred in post-Second World War years, official efforts pivoted away from wildlife hunting and instead towards support for non-consumptive wildlife tourism in protected areas. Arguably, therefore, the fifty-year period under investigation in this study represents the historical highpoint for promoting South Africa as a niche tourism destination for the activities of consumptive wildlife tourism.

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