Habitat Integrity of Selected Rivers of the North West Province

Habitat Integrity Results: Great Marico River

In general, the tributaries in the upper Great Marico catchment (Shosonina, Makalal and Limpopo, northwest of Mafikeng) are not tributaries of the river system, except for local wetlands, and therefore not habitat areas. As such, the lower reaches of the river are more naturally impacted by agricultural activities, such as irrigation. From these tributaries, the river is formed and essentially increases in size from these points. The rivers are generally not a good quality when they flow through towns.

The lower river reaches are occupied by large dams (Klein Marico, Boskop, and Marico) that provide for domestic and agricultural water supply. This results in severe flow modifications that impact on both the instream and riparian zones. The river system is formed from the Marico Dam and has a high sediment input to the river, both being impacted by developing activities. The river is significantly impacted on the upper reaches of the river. Current flow releases and the impoundment of the Tswa Pan in a new grazing reserve, result in large areas at the river channel being inundated.

Habitat Integrity Results: Crocodile River

The Crocodile River system is largely utilised and the impacts of the river are mainly due to the high use of the river for agricultural use and returns from agricultural use, urban waste and mining activities.

Heavy alien plant infestations in the riparian zone and riverbed, alien vegetation, and flow modification are severe problems. The river’s habitat integrity gradually improves in the downstream direction in the Crocodile system.

Habitat Integrity Results: Klein Marico River

The Klein Marico River contributes to a deterioration of the habitat integrity to a category D of the river system. The lower reaches of the Klein Marico River are severely impacted as a result of the abstraction of water from Kolaghel Dam. The ecological flows are released from these dams. The sediment load of the river increases at particular river sections as it is causing many large riparian trees to die.

Habitat Integrity Results: Schoonspruit River

The integrity of the Schoonspruit River varies from a largely natural (Category A) downstream to a category D upper reaches. The river system is formed from the Lindelwynspoort Dam and has a high sediment input to the river, both being impacted by developing activities. The river is significantly impacted on the upper reaches of the river. Current flow releases and the impoundment of the Tswa Pan in a new grazing reserve, result in large areas at the river channel being inundated.

Habitat Integrity Results: Volkspruit River

The Volkspruit River is subject to various impacts, mostly relating to the riparian vegetation and the modification of flows, with water abstraction and alien vegetation encroachment being the major problems. Alien vegetation encroachment is a particular problem downstream of the Lindelwynspoort Dam and Baars Dam.

Habitat Integrity Results: Randspruit River

The Randspruit River is subject to various impacts, mostly relating to the riparian vegetation and the modification of flows, with water abstraction and alien vegetation encroachment being the major problems. Alien vegetation encroachment is a particular problem downstream of the Lindelwynspoort Dam and Baars Dam.

Habitat Integrity Results: Elands River

The Elands River is subjected to various impacts, mostly relating to the riparian vegetation and the modification of flows, with water abstraction and alien vegetation encroachment being the major problems. Alien vegetation encroachment is a particular problem downstream of the Lindelwynspoort Dam and Baars Dam.

Habitat Integrity Results: Mooi River

The habitat integrity of the Mooi River is varied from largely modified (category D) downstream to a category C upstream. The river system is formed from the Elands Dam and has a high sediment input to the river, both being impacted by developing activities. The river is significantly impacted on the upper reaches of the river. Current flow releases and the impoundment of the Tswa Pan in a new grazing reserve, result in large areas at the river channel being inundated.

Habitat Integrity Results: Loopspruit River

The Loopspruit River is subject to various impacts, mostly relating to the riparian vegetation and the modification of flows, with water abstraction and alien vegetation encroachment being the major problems. Alien vegetation encroachment is a particular problem downstream of the Lindelwynspoort Dam and Baars Dam.

Habitat Integrity Results: Wolwefontein River

The habitat integrity of the Wolwefontein River is considered to be largely modified (category D). The river is largely utilised for the abstraction of water, which results in severe modifications to the river system. Water hyacinths and filamentous algae growth deteriorates habitat integrity substantially.

Habitat Integrity Results: Vaal River

The Vaal River system is subject to various impacts, mostly relating to the riparian vegetation and the modification of flows, with water abstraction and alien vegetation encroachment being the major problems. Alien vegetation encroachment is a particular problem downstream of the Lindelwynspoort Dam and Baars Dam.

Habitat Integrity Results: Limpopo River

The habitat integrity of the Limpopo River is considered to be largely modified (category D). The river is largely utilised for the abstraction of water, which results in severe modifications to the river system. Water hyacinths and filamentous algae growth deteriorates habitat integrity substantially.

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