



“BUT THAT MORNING, WHEN HEADING OUT AT FIRST LIGHT, I COULD ALMOST TASTE THE PRESSURE.”



Above: A 15-pounder off the bat for Brian Shaw set the scene for the second trip's fishing.

Insert above right: The author on his recce trip tying flies while waiting for boat spares.

Insert top right: Variations on the Whistler tied on #2/0 hooks with weed guards were the most productive flies, but a black Clouser was the downfall of the biggest fish landed on the recce trip.

Top: Brian and Grant fishing a productive-looking seam line. Good success was had fishing the seams between the slow water on the lee side of sandbanks and the faster water on the outside bank.

THE BUILD-UP

Landing fish of over 20lb on fly in fresh water is not a common feat – well, for me at least. Firstly, not many fresh water species grow to over 20lb, and those that do are few and far between. Tigerfish are one of the few fresh water fly rod targets that can reach the elusive 20lb mark – on paper, that is. In the past ten years of fishing and guiding on Africa's prime tiger waters, from the trophy-rich lower Zambezi, Mputa Gorge and Cahora

Bassa to the Caprivi and Barotse Floodplains on the upper Zambezi, I had not yet landed or seen a 20lb tiger landed on fly. However, acting on a hot tip from a good friend, I headed up to East Africa in search of the real monsters. Landing in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, we commenced the epic overland drive to our final destination. Arriving there three days later, I was disappointed to see that the water was murky brown with less than 15cm visibility. Memories of past reconnaissance trips, all

