



Fat and in peak condition, the tigerfish of the lower Zambezi give a good account of themselves.

When fly fishing for tigerfish on the lower Zambezi, the following factors must be considered: water clarity, water temperature and water levels. These all affect the movement and feeding habits of tigerfish, and in turn the productivity of your fly fishing endeavours. Taking these into account, the lower Zambezi fishes best before the rains arrive. Water temperature and clarity increase while the level drops, resulting in increased mobility, hunting, and feeding as the tigers become more active after the colder winter months and prepare to spawn. In a nutshell, aim to be on the river from September to early November.

At the risk of getting too technical, different stretches of the lower Zambezi peak (in terms of fly fishing) at different times during this period. Some sections of the upper reaches of the lower Zambezi peak in late December to January – but don't plan for these dates unless you know the area well!

An added bonus of fishing the lower Zambezi over these dry months is the world-class game viewing. With the

Zimbabwean bank being a controlled safari area and national park from Kariba right down to Kanyemba, and the Zambian bank a mixture of national park, game management areas and tribal lands, fly fishermen find themselves in one of Africa's most pristine wilderness areas. A testament to this is the fact that most visitors to the lower Zambezi are photographic tourists.

#### TACKLE AND TACTICS

Much fishing on the lower Zambezi is done on the drift, and this differs from what you may be accustomed to on the upper Zambezi and Okavango where fishing down and across off-anchor is the norm. Drifting the structure-rich banks of the river, make casts perpendicular to the bank into likely looking lies both behind and in front of structure. Tigerfish are highly territorial along this stretch, and you will often get a shot at the same fish in the same lie for a couple of days. Do not overfish any one drift, since this will definitely put the fish down. Once you have completed a productive drift, try and leave it for at least a couple of days before fishing it again so that it remains worthwhile.

