



Even a nembwe will rarely say no to a Copper Clouser fished right to its lair.

triggered response may well come into play when fishing the Copper Clouser. Tigerfish are highly predatory and will not hesitate to attack one of their own. Small tigers (8cm - 20cm) show very vivid colouration, their tail displaying distinct orange to red to black, and their large brothers may well lock onto this combination of colours when feeding – another argument for the success of this fly.

FISHING TACTICS FOR THE COPPER CLOUSER

This fly is best fished in areas one could expect to find bulldogs and in a manner that one would expect them to behave. Since bulldogs are by no means great swimmers, they are not fast and do not dash around in the main channel. One must therefore concentrate on fishing this fly with a medium strip retrieve in the appropriate areas. On the main channel of the Zambezi River, this fly is best fished in the eddies and on any distinct change of current line close to vegetation and structure. Anchoring above an eddy or current line, I like to cast out into the fast water, let the fly sink and swing through into the eddy or current

line. You will often get a hit on the swing as the fly enters the slow waters where the tigers are waiting in ambush for hapless fish being carried down the current. Once you're through the swing, best results are had by retrieving the fly with slow to medium strips up the current line, or tight up against bank vegetation.

When fishing the Copper Clouser over rocky bands (as found in western Zambia), typical down-and-across wet fly techniques are employed. When fishing the rapids (as in the upper Zambezi area below the Caprivi), this fly must be swung through all fishy-looking lies. Tigerfish hold in lies typical to trout, so all eddies, deep pools off the main currents, change of current lines and any other good-looking lies must be prospected. Again, across-and-down wet fly tactics work best, followed by a steady strip back before commencing another cast. Fishing the fly in this way will result in strikes from a variety of fish species. Nembwe and other largemouth bream species attack the Copper Clouser with gusto. As with tigerfish, over the past three seasons this fly has accounted for

an above-average number of trophy-sized predatory bream.

THE WHOLE

In my experience it's the combination of the parts of this pattern that makes it one of our most successful tiger flies on the Zambezi River system. In the Copper Clouser one has an excellent example of how incorporating a variety of features (attractor, imitative and trigger) within a tried-and-tested style of fly (Clouser), then adapting it to suit your requirements and fishing it correctly, all contribute towards a highly successful pattern.

I've been tempted by clients and fishing mates to name the fly Clover's Copper Clouser (CCC), but I am extremely averse to naming flies after oneself. Not only would long-term failure of the fly leave my name on the tattered heap of past egotistical fly-tying wannabes, but the fly needs to be tested for many more years to evaluate just how productive it really is. So, at the loss of great alliteration, let's just keep it as the Copper Clouser. Try it – hopefully you'll catch some good fish!