

“THE PURPOSE OF ANY PROSPECTING TRIP, HOWEVER, IS TO GATHER INFORMATION, DETAILS AND FIGURES THAT WILL ALLOW ONE TO MAKE AN EDUCATED DECISION ON WHETHER A CERTAIN PROJECT IS FEASIBLE OR NOT.”



Is this a nembwe or what! The Lungwebungu holds the promise of a real trophy on fly.

The riverine flora on the Lungwebungu bears similarities to both upper and lower Zambezi vegetation – not so much an exact species as a broad vegetation type. For the most part, the banks of the Lungwebungu are surrounded by the typical floodplains one witnesses in the Caprivi region (the fly camp is only 20km from the Liuwa Floodplains National Park). This system is much smaller than that of the Caprivi. I was surprised that many of the banks are heavily wooded, as one finds on the lower Zambezi. Mature forest with teak, ironwood trees and water berries intermittently line the riverbanks. Where the current flows deep and fast along outside banks, fallen trees provide great structure around which to fish, as well as potential prop-tearing, leg-bending underwater hazards.

STRIKING GOLD

After changing to a noisier all-black rabbit Zonker pattern, it was in such an area that Emil, fresh from the UK, struck gold. The ensuing mayhem was a delight to watch. Both fish and angler (first-

timers on both ends of the line) thrashed around as adrenaline charged through their veins. A beautifully conditioned tiger ripped itself clear out of the river in a desperate, head-shaking attempt to rid itself of the surprisingly sharp blob of rabbit's fur in its mouth. Emil was doing his absolute best to control the line shooting off the deck and to obey my instructions in an attempt to prevent his prize catch from realising its goal. The ferocity of a tigerfish hit never fails to surprise. For first-timers it is most often an adrenaline-drenched blur. Accordingly, it was only when the fish was on the reel and into the backing that Emil's nerves calmed sufficiently for him to actively follow instructions and begin his attempt to land this wonderful fish. A couple of minutes later, a feisty 8.5lb fish was brought to the net.

Arriving back at the fly camp in time for a late brunch, the results of the morning's prospecting were discussed. In addition to a couple of tigers, Grant and Doug landed a superb 6lb nembwe.

Over the course of the next three days we fished our way down to the confluence. Unfortunately the wind picked up at mid-morning each day and, as with tigerfish on the Zambezi, the Lungwebungu tigers were not very cooperative with a chop on the water. The confluence of the Lungwebungu and Zambezi produced some of the most consistent fishing of our stay. A couple of hundred metres above the confluence a rock bank stretches across the Zambezi, but the water levels were high enough to take a boat through and allowed us to make numerous drifts over this structure. Almost every drift produced a couple of 4 - 7lb fish. We were also treated to a number of feeding frenzies as shoaling tigerfish attacked the small baitfish seeking shelter under the rocks. On the second boat Doug and Grant decided to head upstream and to overnight on a sandbank. They went so far upstream that the local women evidently got shorter – according to their Lozi boat skipper, a sure sign that they were approaching Angola. Fortunately the fish in the river