

the fly line with Perfection Loops, leader to wire with an Albright Knot, and finally a Haywire Twist joining the fly to the wire. June and July's pre-season recce saw the first change to this set-up. We were losing too many big fish on the take, most break-offs occurring at the weakest point in the setup, namely the Perfection Loop. After a series of tests, we began to use Rimini Twists as the top loop attaching the 20lb leader to the fly line, which offered far more strength. However, we were still unhappy with the Albright Knot joining the #4 piano wire to the leader, since this now became the weakest link. The "improved" or "double" Rapala Knot was then used, and we achieved a breaking strength of around 18lb on this leader set-up. Job done – or so we thought.

Late August – the first couple of days of the season – and guests were popping this improved leader setup as though it were 6X tippet. The strength and speed of these fish proved too much for many anglers to handle in the heat of the moment. All leaders were then beefed up to 30lb, which is where they stayed for the rest of the season. For those who think this is overkill, imagine a 20lb fish hitting a fly that is moving in the opposite direction at 50km an hour –

Left: Rob Scott with a trophy tiger that fell to a black SF Blend baitfish pattern. Below: Stay focussed when you're about to land a fish as even the slightest slack in pressure will result in a fish lost.



Above: Brush Flies are a favourite in clearer water conditions. Left: With a beefed up leader, landing trophies such as this one became easier to achieve.



this translates into 140lb of force on the take! We would quite happily have beefed the leader up to 40lb if the risk of losing fly lines by snagging on structure were not a constant threat. Even using 30lb monofilament, snapped leaders were a constant reminder of the size of the tigers we were targeting.

FLIES

As with any new fishery, you always start with what you know about a species. To decode the feeding habits of the tigerfish of the Mnyera and Ruhudji rivers, we started with all the firm tiger favourites from other destinations. Black Clousers, Whistlers and Polar

Fibre baitfish patterns worked well early season due to the discoloured nature of the two rivers. With their ability to push water, black Whistlers were a firm favourite throughout the early season, especially in the late evenings.

With lower than average water levels, clarity on both rivers increased substantially over the first few weeks, requiring more thought on fly selection. More imitative patterns became the name of the game. We concentrated on tying flies based on the most prominent baitfish in the two rivers, namely the red-finned barbs which closely resemble the *imberi*

