

who hooked the smaller tiger, it was extremely exciting for the second angler on the boat. The angler lucky enough to be in the casting position then has to cast his fly directly at the distressed fish and strip it back as fast as possible. This technique was most productive where a shallow section holding smaller fish dropped immediately into deeper water.

same angle on the fish, meaning no sudden left to right movements of the rod and line. Anyone who has been hung up on impenetrable structure (hard wood or rocks) will understand this principle; very often when you get closer to the snag or even above it, your fly pops free. Except when you get a solid hook set through the scissors, most of the time

the beast. The massive jump from tiger fishing as you know it, to targeting fish of such speed, power and size, combined with the impenetrable jaw and river full of structure, often seems insurmountable.

Lastly, trophy fish that didn't initially run were often dropped when anglers shifted their focus from staying connected



Many big fish are lost close to the boat due to prolonged head-shaking, so keeping in contact with the line and fish at all times is essential to ensure the capture of a trophy tiger such as this.

FIGHTING THE FISH

Although most fish hit hard and fast, we witnessed a significant variance in the strike and initial run (or lack thereof) of some of the really large tigerfish. There were many occasions when "I think I'm stuck on a snag" quickly changed to "It's moving slowly - is it a croc?". Many tigers swam directly upstream on the hit, causing one's line to rooster tail towards the boat as the fish jumped behind the angler, who had no chance of keeping up with it. Other fish fought beneath and around the boat, never running far but with lots of heavy head-shaking.

Many big fish are lost close to the boat during the prolonged head-shaking fight just before landing. This can be avoided by doing one's best to keep the

your fly's only purchase on the fish is the sharp point holding somewhere in the hard mouth. A slight change in angle here will release the hook's bite.

No matter how the fish strikes and ultimately fights, one rule remains constant: fight as hard as your tackle allows from the start. The most important thing to keep in mind and implement from the initial strike and throughout the fight is consistent, smooth pressure. Using side pressure away from any structure goes without saying. These fish are not forgiving. The smallest jerk and the 30lb leader snaps like cotton. The slightest bit of slack and they throw the fly. Often fly fishermen couldn't understand just what they were doing wrong. The fact of the matter is simply that this is the nature of

by reacting to the fish's movement when trying to reel loose line back onto the reel. We find it far more successful to take the fight as it comes, keeping 100% focussed on the fish.

IN SUMMARY

Although these reflections and insights were made out on a wild river thousands of kilometres from where most fly fishermen regularly target tigerfish, many of the underlying principles hold true regardless. It is through such endeavours - when one's paradigms are shifted - that we find ourselves adapting and developing new techniques and methods. This was definitely the case when targeting tigers in Tanzania. I can't wait to test some of these tactics when targeting tigerfish closer to home. We hope you do, too.