

RODDY HALL'S ROYAL ZAMBEZI LODGE TRIP REPORT, NOVEMBER 2008

Our week at the truly spoiling Royal Zambezi Lodge (RZL) in November 2008 was a real eye opener for those who had not fished for tigers before, or at least not fished for them in such luxurious circumstances!

RZL is a spectacular top rated viewing safari lodge situated on the banks of the Lower Zambezi River and just happens to offer first class fly fishing for tiger fish during October and November. So prolific is the game that during our week we were invariably fishing with a cocktail of elephant, hippos, buffalo and of course crocodiles within our field of vision (which meant that cameras were as essential as fishing rods.)

Captained by skilled guides, the boats proved a rapid and comfortable platform for navigating this wide fast flowing, island strewn river. Fishing was either from the boats or, when we could land, from the banks of the islands. With hot daytime temperatures we tended to fish an early morning session, from about 5.30am to 10.30am and then an evening session from 4.30pm to 6.30pm. This left plenty of time to enjoy the five star lodge, meals and service whilst marvelling at the wildlife.

Over the whole trip we averaged over fifty fish per rod, but in practice this could mean anything from one or two up to ten or fifteen fish per session. Success depended on reading the water correctly and making sure each cast counted. Being able to double haul and cast accurately were important, more so than being able to cast a great distance. During the day the fish were more interested in darker coloured flies deeper down, but in the evening bright flies on a floating or slow sinking line did well. Either technique saw aggressive takes and numerous jumps during the fights.

Of course with this sort of fishing it is common to lose fish, and probably the two biggest fish were both lost. Three of us and two guides witnessed one and then another fish close to fifteen pounds coming off after a short fight during one morning. The biggest fish landed was twelve pounds with several of ten pounds and then fish all the way down to one pound!

Looking back it is difficult to describe this trip without using too many superlatives. Hence the exclusive week I am hosting in late 2009. I can't wait to return and let's be honest - what's not to like between a world class lodge and tiger fishery and a display of wildlife so rich that most people who come here only do so to go on safari!