

Three Generations go Bass Fishing

WITH DEREK NEL



It's not often that one gets the opportunity to spend a week on the water bass fishing with your son and your father, and to catch some really large fish was just the icing on top of the cake...

The common denominator between three generations is a goal most often sought after by any family. A trip to Lake Mteri in the month of July was going to be a must. We carefully considered the moon phases and predicted the weather conditions for the month. The weather conditions in that month, three hours across the Beit Bridge border into the Chiredzi district, are generally stable with no rains, clear skies and quite frankly, brilliant fishing.

We tried to get to Mteri a few days before the full moon. After reading a few articles about fishing in this specific stage of the moon phase, it was possible that some good bass fishing was going to be available.

We arrived at Mteri Lodge on a Friday morning where the local Mteri breakfast was welcoming enough to make us feel right at home.

DAMON NEL with a good bass taken on a shallow running crankbait at Lake Mteri.





HENNIE NAUDE with a beautiful looking fish caught in our lucky bay.

In order to increase the opportunity of having a more relaxing fishing experience we opted to tow my X70 bass boat to the dam and not long after breakfast, our chance to get on the water had arrived.

Hoping to get some good shallow water fishing done, we were geared up with a few top water lures as well as the old Senko and Fluke. The water level at Mteri has been quite low for more than a year now. I'd visited the lake for the past four years in a row and now that the water level has risen, we were presented with a totally different scenario. A thick bull brush vegetation had now grown up from the bottom of the dam and in the three to seven ft zone the usual top water variety of baits were unfortunately going to have to change. So it did, from a treble hook bound Salmo top water bait to something a little more weedless to start off with.

Launching from the slipway we headed for an area named Boma Bay. This priceless little spot was going to be where most of our fishing took place. Far across the dam, into a quiet bay with some very interesting structure, Boma Bay was going to be our first stop. An old dam wall, a table top of gravel and vegetation surrounded by a sharp channel drop was all we could ask for that Friday afternoon.

Arriving on the spot we decided to pull out a selection new Salmo lures we were offered to try. These are certainly the right baits to throw on any occasion at not only Mteri, but most shallow water areas that we fish

back home too. However, anything with treble hooks, or even a single prone hook was going to snag in all the bull brush which surrounded the shallows before us.

Senko's in the five to six inch size and Super Flukes on a very light mojo rig was going to be the order of the day. However, the most effective bait for this very unexpected change in structure, was a Scum Frog or Horny Toad rigged weightless and gently 'plopped' over the thick vegetation. Scouting the area for frogs or anything similar was futile, yet the profile of this dark surface creature was undeniably irresistible.

Our first cast was with a weightless rigged Senko. After many big bites, screaming reels and snapping line, we made the important change to stronger line. Line choice was of utmost importance here. Big Game was a popular choice in the past and it had to be with a breaking strain of around 25 pounds for these Mteri lunkers. Yet a lower breaking strain of Fluorocarbon started to produce the bass much more frequently when Hennie began picking the fish from the holes in the vegetation.

Hennie was in fact filming some very important footage for us which we could use as a family video for future generations. As we fumbled on the boat trying to correct crows nests and overwinds, Hennie pitched accurately into the fishy looking holes next to the trees in the shallows.

For their first time on Lake Mteri we were able to achieve an excellent record which we doubt can be broken between the generations again. My son Damon managed to hook the largest fish of the week weighing in at 4.2 kilograms. I was still fortunate enough to successfully boat a largemouth of 3.7 kilograms and my father Willem was able to boast a fantastic 3.5 kilo bass.

It's very difficult to explain the difference it makes to get the family out on the water, and bass fishing can be the way to break the barriers that parents may be experiencing today. It worked for me and I've seen it work for my friends and colleagues.

Go bass fishing today. 