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MEMORIES OF
RHODESIA

Above: This aerial view of Lake Kyle shows part of the 90 sq. km body of water formed by the damming of the Mtilikwe River. Although only part of the lake is shown, the very broken nature of its shoreline may be clearly seen, providing anglers with a variety of fishing terrain. In the distance may be seen the Nyuni Mountains.



This is the fish that draws the anglers to Lake Kyle: the large-mouthed black bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), regarded as a superior game fish all over the world.



Competitors in the international competition were started at timed intervals and here they gather before an early morning start. Each boat was identified by a number which was painted on a large square of heavy yellow plastic.

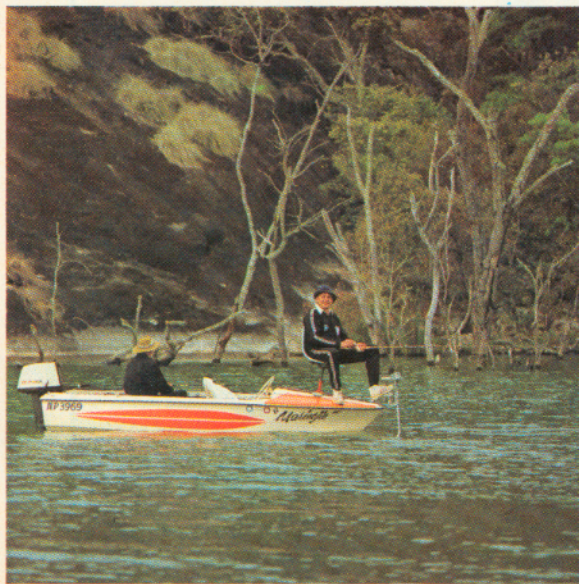
300 anglers hunt black bass at Kyle International

photographs by BRIAN FREEMAN

ALMOST 300 anglers recently competed for top honours in the ninth annual Kyle International Bass Fishing Tournament, staged at Lake Kyle, near the famous Zimbabwe Ruins. This competition, which each year attracts anglers from all over Southern Africa, has become one of the sub-continent's major angling events.

The large-mouthed black bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) is regarded as a superior game fish all over the world, and was first introduced into Lake

One of the favoured fishing locations for bass anglers is just off dead trees which are often found on submerged termite mounds.



Most of the anglers at the Kyle International were obviously well experienced in bass fishing. Here an angler takes his ease while fishing near one of the sharply shelving granite rock shores.



Kyle in 1961, shortly after the lake was created by the damming of the Mtilikwe River at the head of a narrow gorge between granite hills.

Between 1961 and 1968, 156 000 fingerlings were introduced, and there is clear evidence that breeding is taking place. In 1973, when the bass population dropped due to severe fluctuations in the lake level, an additional 50 000 fingerlings were introduced. The lake has proved to be an hospitable environment for the species and good year-round sport is available for the angler.

The largest bass caught in the lake is a 4,040 kg specimen caught by a schoolboy in 1977.

In addition to the bass, such species as pink-bellied bream (*Tilapia rendalli*), and other tilapia (*mossambica*, *machrochir* and *serranochromis robustus*) flourish in the lake. Large barbel (*Clarias gariepinus*) may also be caught.

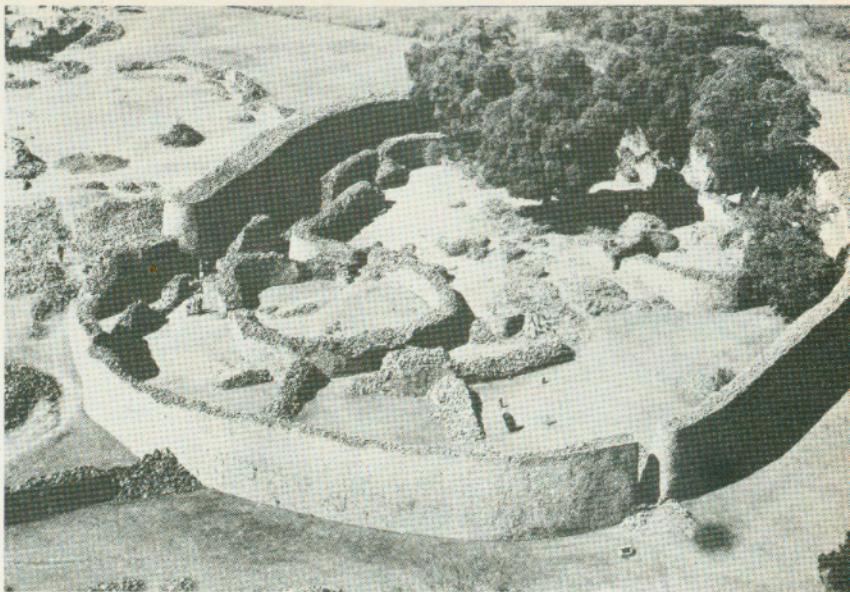
Kyle is Rhodesia's second-largest lake, covering 90 square kilometres. Its shoreline is heavily indented with small bays and it is overlooked by the Beza Hills to the west and the more lofty Nyuni Mountains to the east. With the historic town of Fort Victoria only 41 kilometres away, the Zimbabwe Ruins near the southern shore and a 9 000-hectare game park on its northern shore, the lake is one of the country's principal holiday centres, and the visitor is well catered for by hotels and lakeside caravan and camping parks and chalet complexes.

Bass fishing depends, to a large degree, on knowing where to fish and most catches are made in water one to three metres deep. Local knowledge is therefore important, and it is not surprising that a Victoria and District team won this year's competition, with a total catch over the three days of the competition of 30 fish weighing 31,35 kg.

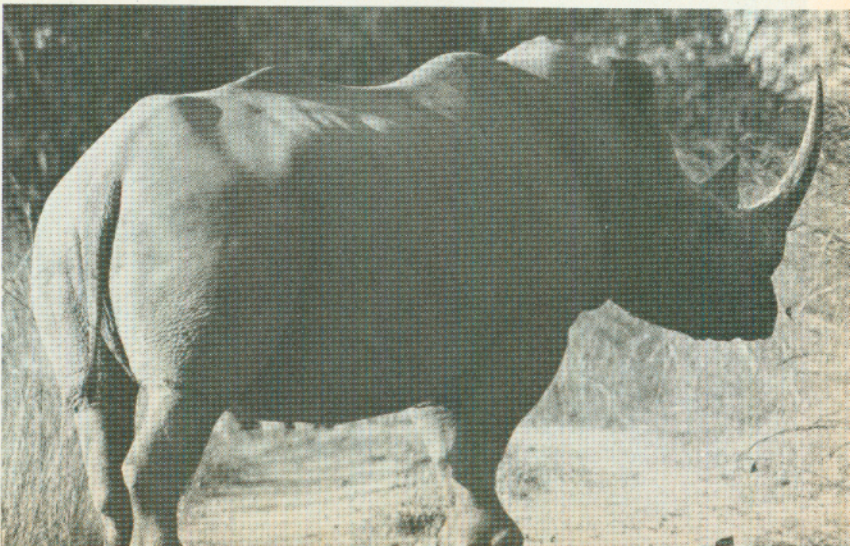
The total catch by all teams was 576 fish, weighing 495,49 kg. The largest fish — a 3,75 kg specimen which was the largest caught in any of the nine Kyle international competitions — was near the lake record. It was caught by Mr. B. Conn of Salisbury.

Most competitors chose to camp on the lake shore, which enabled them to be in time for the early start each day. As each team in turn was flagged off, their boats roared off to their pre-selected fishing areas.

Bass are found near broken rock outcrops and, in particular, near submerged termite mounds (commonly called anthills), from which small dead



Before and after the Kyle International Bass Fishing Tournament, competitors were able to enjoy the area's tourist attractions such as the ancient Zimbabwe Ruins (above); the pioneer town of Fort Victoria, one of the attractions of which is the brilliantly frescoed Catholic Church (left) painted by Italian prisoners of war during World War II; and the 9 000 hectare game park on the northern shore of Lake Kyle itself where among the animals to be seen are white, or square-lipped, rhino (below).





A wide variety of very colourful plugs and lures was used by anglers at the competition. Some of the more successful were those which are made in Rhodesia for local angling conditions.



Boats parked on the shore at the end of a day's fishing. Many competitors camped at the site, which provided full camping and caravanning facilities.

trees are just protruding above water level. Large fish come on the bite most frequently between midday and 2.30 p.m., while the most profitable time to fish for medium-sized bass is at sunset.

Bass, and bream, can be caught by casting as close as possible to rocky outcrops, submerged to semi-submerged termite mounds and trees

protruding from the water. For bass, a plug is used, and for bream, a small minnow or spinner.

Many anglers use a drift bait on windy days, when the wind is in such a direction that a boat will drift parallel with the shore. If the lake is rising, and shoreline vegetation is submerged, a surface plug in quiet water, cast as

close inshore as one can, is a useful method. It is advisable to move to another spot if fish do not come to the bite within the first 15 minutes.

On calm days, the gradually sloping granite areas which are plentiful around the lakeshore often yield good catches.

The success of the competition this

The B.A.T. Floating Trophy, donated by the sponsors of the tournament, was won by the Fort Victoria and District No. 3 team with a catch of 30 fish weighing 31,35 kg.



Experience is worth more than enthusiasm in bass fishing. Here an elderly competitor plays his fish while a younger competitor looks on enviously.





Above: This picture shows graphically why the black bass is described as large-mouthed. The development of its hunting characteristics and particularly well-muscled body make it one of the world's most sought after fresh water sporting fish.

year, when 68 teams from all over Rhodesia were joined by six teams from South Africa has confirmed the Kyle International as a major angling event.

It has also provided the National Parks fisheries research station at Lake Kyle with invaluable scientific data, for each fish caught was weighed, measured and examined. The monitoring of fish populations is an essential part of the research team's year-round work, but the large numbers of fish caught within a short time during the competition provides an ideal opportunity for a concentrated assessment of the bass population, its growth and reproduction rates.

Such information will be used to improve the angling for future competitions — the 1979 Kyle International is already in the planning stage! ■

Right: Every fish caught was weighed and examined by staff of the National Parks Fisheries Research Station at Lake Kyle. The data collected will be used to improve further the splendid fishing at the lake for future tournaments and for the individual angler.

