

## Fishing at Buffelspoort Dam

Buffelspoort Dam contains a variety of fish: largemouth bass, barbel, common and mirror carp, blue kurper and largescale yellowfish as well as numerous smaller species. It generally does not produce large quantities of fish but many recreational fishermen are drawn to it because the water is so clean and the environment so picturesque. It has also gained a reputation as a specimen carp dam which produces many fish over 10-15kg each year. Some smaller fish do provide a very tasty meal, given the clean water that the fish live in.

There are not sufficient numbers of kurper or yellowfish to target them and barbel are generally fished for while carp fishing from the bank. The two main target species are therefore:

### Largemouth Bass

Largemouth bass established themselves in Buffelspoort Dam in the 1980's and there is now a healthy population. The last few years have seen large numbers of smaller fish with relatively few over 1kg. However, patience and determination are often rewarded with a trophy. The bass are best targeted using a boat, float tube or some other vessel allowing you to cover different sections of the dam. Bass can be caught throughout the year but they are more active in summer. The best chance of catching a lunker is in springtime when the larger fish come into the shallows to spawn. This is when bank fishing can be very productive, concentrating on shallow bays and areas with gravel/stony bottoms.

Most bass fishermen concentrate their efforts in the no-wake zone of the dam. There are two large bays with rivers which feed the dam, the Sterkstroom inlet on the Western side and the Easterkloof inlet to the East. The upper end of each form part of a Conservation Zone and fishing is not allowed. The main structure in these inlets is banks of reeds, large weedbeds and lily pads, all of which hold fish.

The main section of the dam has varied structure including shallow weeded banks, some rocky points and steeper drop-offs, often with dead trees. All of these can also be very productive using a variety of techniques, ranging from topwater lures to quite heavily weighted dropshot/texas rigs. With the water being so clear, it pays to fish as light as possible, especially if you are targeting the bigger fish.



### Carp

Carp have been part of the Buffelspoort Dam ecosystem for generations. The nature of the dam is such that the fish grow very big here. It is not uncommon to catch fish well over 15kg. Bank access is limited to the public area on the Western shore where it is best to set yourself up at the Southern end in the no-wake zone. The high-activity zone is also productive but, during busy periods, the motor boats create a disturbance.



The popular no wake zone can become busy, so, if you are able to, try to go during the week. There is deep water directly in front of this fishing area and most anglers prefer using a boat to take their lines across towards the shallower margins on the opposite side of the dam where there is structure in the form of weedbeds. This requires reels with a large line capacity. Beware - there are also many submerged tree stumps on which the fish become snagged so be prepared to use a boat to rescue your catch! Please be considerate of your neighbours and always discuss where you plan to fish to avoid crossed lines.

The traditional specimen carp techniques all work well at Buffelspoort. Each specimen angler has his own 'secret' magic bait but generally tiger nuts (plain or flavoured) are the most effective. It pays to spend a few days and create a feeding spot in the area you are fishing. The fish bite both during the day and at night, with early morning being the most productive. Be patient – specimen anglers will tell you not to worry about checking your bait too often. Rather leave it untouched for up to 24 hours and you will be surprised how often you get a run!