

Wild, Wild West Tactics That Work

# BASS MASTER



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This Mexican bass fishery has rebounded in glorious fashion.

Photos: James Hall

# I Left My Heart At Lake Mateos

By JAMES HALL EDITOR

**IF IT WASN'T** the 7-pound largemouth somersaulting into my popper with only minutes remaining in the fishing day, perhaps it was the scenery that had my heart racing.

I was surrounded by 70-foot cliffs attempting to contain Presa Adolfo Lopez Mateos Reservoir, sprawling through the Sinaloa valleys of the Sierra Madre mountain range in west-central Mexico. Native brush stair-stepped into the depths of this ultraclear fishery — bowed limbs of the saplings flexing, and then relaxing, with each breath of wind. Towering three-pronged cactuses appeared to be the sentinels of each ridge we passed. And if you didn't concentrate on fishing, a peregrine falcon dive bombing an off-guard teal might easily cause you to miss a bite.

If it wasn't the scenery that had me flustered, it was probably the fact that I was one of the few American anglers to taste the potential of this resurrected fishery. From the late 1980s through the early '90s, Mateos was perhaps the hottest Mexican bass lake in existence. However, bass fishing came to a screeching halt in 1994 when the lake was drained of nearly all its water for agricultural use. So when Billy Chapman, owner of Anglers Inn, phoned with an invitation to fish this storied bass lake, I couldn't have been more stoked. According to Chapman, Mateos was back with a vengeance (he had experienced several 100-fish days while researching the lake for his new lodge there).



A popper-gorging 7-pounder.

The reputation of Mateos was built on the blades of a spinnerbait and the adrenaline of watching bass crush surface baits. Although these techniques fooled plenty of fish during our time on the water there, Texas rigged worms and lizards were responsible for most of the bass we boated.

However, the penchant for Mateos bass to eat topwaters was obviously still very much a part of their DNA as my brother, who had cast his topwater plug only moments before the 7-pounder ate my bait, became the victim of a wicked surface strike of his own. Thankfully, I had time for one more cast before all light was lost — be still my beating heart! ■

## Presa Adolfo Lopez Mateos Reservoir



### Location:

Lake Mateos is located in west-central Mexico in the state of Sinaloa. Fly to Culiacán and an Anglers Inn van will drive you to the lodge. If you are a motorcycle enthusiast, you can cruise to the lake on a Harley by contacting Steel Thunder Outfitters, [www.stoadventures.com](http://www.stoadventures.com).



### Lodging:

Anglers Inn has been serving fishermen on Lake El Salto for more than three decades. Now, they are taking their world-famous staff to a new lodge built on the Humaya River. The launch ramp on Mateos is a short 5-minute drive from the lodge.



### Local Info:

For more information on booking a trip to Mateos, visit [www.anglersinn.com/lake-mateos.htm](http://www.anglersinn.com/lake-mateos.htm), or call 800-GOTA-FISH (468-2347). The upcoming bass season is November 1, 2007, to July 30, 2008.



### Web Site:

For best times to go, lures to pack and techniques for fishing Lake Mateos, visit [www.bassmaster.com/magazine](http://www.bassmaster.com/magazine) or [www.anglersinn.com](http://www.anglersinn.com).

### Weighing In

# 55,000

Surface acres of Lake Mateos

# 55

Minutes to drive from Culiacán airport to the lake

# 32

Number of years Anglers Inn has been serving American anglers south of the border

# \$97

The cost of a new passport, now mandatory when traveling to Mexico