

“New” Lake Mateos is topwater heaven for bass angling

(Editor's Note: This exclusive story is the first-ever fishing report on the new Anglers Inn at Lake Mateos in Mexico, which just opened on Nov. 1)

BY BILL RICE
WON Staff Writer

CULIACAN, MEXICO — If there's a bass fishing heaven for surface plug bass fishing, we've found it at the “new” Lake Mateos. You may think the following is too good to be true, but it's not!

Located about 25 miles east of Culiacan, Lake Mateos is actually not a “new” lake, but it is a reborn fishery that was all but dead in the 1980s and early 1990s when drought conditions and heavy agricultural water use decimated the lake and the bass fishing.

The past three years, this coastal Mexico area has seen the best rains in over 50 years and the lake is again nearly at capacity. And the fishing is booming!

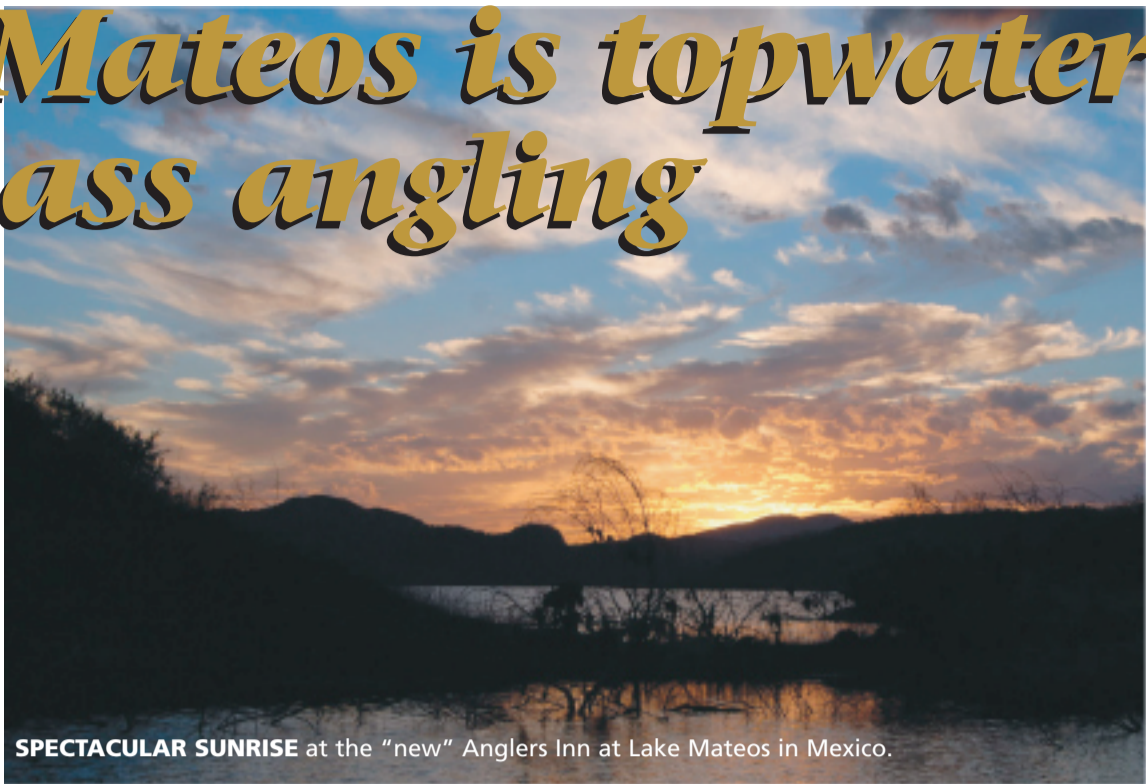
Just last month outfitter Billy Chapman Jr. treated anglers with a grand opening of a sparkling new Anglers Inn Resort located just below the Humaya Dam, which backs up the lake. Built on the hillside above the banks of the river, the

lodge is only a few minutes away from his lake fishing fleet. It's the only resort facility at the lake and Billy's workers put together this fabulous facility in just four months of intensive labor! And there's more to come.

Anglers Inn Mateos is still a work in progress with additional cabins to be added for angler comfort. Presently the lodge has six deluxe rooms, with Chapman planning to expand with four more in the future. But all the other amenities are in place now.

“We've been pre-fishing the lake for the past year with a select group of our longtime customers,” said Chapman. “We found spectacular surface plug fishing all year long. I think Mateos will break every record we've known for this action. It's common for anglers to fish the surface all day long and catch upwards of 100 bass per day. And we only allow catch-and-release bass fishing.

“Our operation at El Salto is world renown for lunker bass over 10 pounds, but Mateos is no slouch either and it's going to get better and better. A 14 pounder was caught here in 2006, and I doubt that angler caught the only big bass in Mateos,” noted Chapman.



SPECTACULAR SUNRISE at the “new” Anglers Inn at Lake Mateos in Mexico.

During the 10 years of drought and low water, vegetation slowly increased all along the shoreline of this 55,000-surface-acre lake. You will find hyacinth-lined coves all over the lake and many long brushy points, rock bluffs and just about any type of bass cover imaginable. The lake is approximately 50 miles in length and is fed by the Humaya and Tamazula Rivers.

Upon our arrival, we met with a husband and wife who told us they had caught 507 bass in 3 days of fishing ... and all they fished were surface lures. We thought it might be an exaggeration, but they probably lost count and caught even more!

After the first day of fishing, I have to agree with Chapman and the couple about the fish-



BRUSHY POINTS PRODUCED fish on every cast — all types of bait were effective: plastic worms, swim baits, spinnerbaits and crankbaits.



BILL RICE with a 6 pounder while at Anglers Inn on Lake Mateos in early December.



GUIDE DELIPE NETS another fish for an angler lucky to be at this sneak peek of what fishing at Lake Mateos can be.

ing. It may sound unbelievable to WON readers, but Mateos undoubtedly has the finest surface fishing action I've ever seen.

We had the opportunity to be among the first guests at Anglers Inn with a half-dozen *Western Outdoor News* readers in early December. What Chapman said is true, and it may be even better than that.

I fished for 3 days with Marc Mills, marketing director at Okuma Fishing Tackle Corp., and we had the most spectacular surface fishing action I've seen in 43 years of bass fishing. We fished plastic worms, swim baits spinnerbaits and crank plugs, too, but the surface plugging was awesome all day long.

One evening “bite” was the most spectacular of all. In a half-hour period just before sunset, the two of us made cast after cast with Zara Spook surface plugs off one long, shallow, brushy point and scored bass on every cast — all from 4 to 8 pounds! We kept guide Felipe busy with the net. It just doesn't get any better than that!

“Like the other popular lakes in Mexico, Mateos was stocked with Florida-strain bass from the United States. Lake Baccarac was first planted in 1975, then El Salto in 1985 and Mateos in 1985,” said Chapman. “Mateos today really has two strains of largemouth bass, the northern and the Floridas. You can see the differences when you catch them. The Floridas are more green with black markings, while the northern are more golden colored.”

During the day we found fish in all types of cover, along steep walls, underwater ledges 10 to 20 feet deep, brushy points and hyacinth- and boulder-lined coves. Every type of structure imaginable is available, and there are dozens of islands of

“NEW” LAKE MATEOS/next page

Billy Chapman, Jr.'s
Anglers Inn
MEXICO

New Lodge at Lake Mateos

* Best topwater and numbers lake in Mexico. Bruce Morain & Jerry Brand:
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MARK MILLS WITH ANOTHER beautiful bass at Lake Mateos in early December.



UPPER ROOMS OF LODGE at Anglers Inn at Lake Mateos. And the facility was built in just 4 months with intensive labor.



BACK VERANDA OF EACH CABIN is very inviting after a day of fishing — or for those who don't go fishing — it's very relaxing.

"New" Lake Mateos ...

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varying sizes with long points, coves and steep rock walls.

Anglers will find most fish ranging from 3 to 5 pound class with an occasional 6 to 8 pounder. I'm sure at the right time of year there will be numerous fish ranging above 8 pounds and as evidenced by the lake record, a 10 pounder is not out of reach.

The new Anglers Inn is about as good as you'll ever see, too. A massive dining room will easily handle all of the lodge guests. The large outside patio area can handle a dozen or more plus there are sofas and chairs for relaxation.

Each of the six cabins features a private bathroom and a single and two double beds. They're really built for 2 anglers, but 3 can be accommodated. Each room features an air conditioner but there's an additional A/C unit installed as a back-up. There is a TV set and DVD player in each room, with DVD movie selection available at the Anglers Inn tackle shop. Free wireless Internet service is offered with laptops avail-



ROCK BLUFFS PRODUCED PLENTY of fish for the Grand Opening guests. This was some of the best surface fishing this writer has seen in 43 years of bass fishing!

able upon request. Daily laundry service is included for all guests.

For fishing, Anglers Inn has a fleet of 20-foot panga-type boats with swivel bucket seats for two anglers per boat, 75 hp Yamaha outboards, 55-pound Thrust Minn Kota trolling motors and Humminbird depth finders. The guides are all local residents, who formerly were commercial tilapia fishermen on the lake. Chapman's staff put them through 8 weeks of intensive training to become bass fishing guides. They know the best spots on the lake for red-hot action.

The lake is absolutely huge,

with vast expanses of open water, but hundreds of secluded coves where you can get out of any possible wind. Most days you will see calm, flat waters all over the lake. There are dozens of islands throughout the lake, ranging from small rockpiles to more than a quarter-mile long. Each possesses a wide variety of structure. Bass fishermen will be put to the test in deciding which lure to throw. They all will work!

Anyone who has been to Chapman's Anglers Inn at El Salto knows he specializes in superb staff service and great meals. It's no different here at the new resort. Expect to be served big breakfasts, lunches and dinners, and a fully stocked bar. At all meals you have a choice of main dishes, plus soup and desserts for dinner. The margaritas are superb! You will gain weight during your days of dining at Anglers Inn.

After a grueling day of hauling in dozens of bass, you might need a muscle-relaxing massage and that's available at the lodge, too.

In addition to stays at the lodge and fishing on Lake Mateos, Chapman also offers fishing, swimming and river cruises on the Humaya River just below the lodge.

All services, meals, lodging, boats, guides, etc. are included in the trip packages offered by Anglers Inn. For information and/or reservations, contact us at 1-800-GOTA-FISH.

Internet info is also available at www.anglersinn.com.

The lodge fishing season will be Sept. 15 to July 31. The rainy season here is Aug. 1 to Sept. 15. Daytime temperatures are generally 75 to 85 in November/December, and cooling to around 62 to 72 at night. January to April temperatures will range 76 to 86 during days and 50 to 60 at nights. May to July weather will generally be 85 to 95 during the days and 72 to 82 at night.

Lake Mateos is located about 55 minutes drive from the Culiacan Airport and Anglers Inn will pick you up there for transportation to the lodge. The airport is serviced from several U.S. cities by Delta, Mexicana and Aeromexico airlines. The only non-stop route is Delta out of Los Angeles.



OUTDOOR FIREPIT WAS a great place to rehash the day's great fishing experience!

Kickin' ass
on top!

Billy Chapman, Jr.'s

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