

Nymph sticks

By Ian Cox



I have mentioned both the Stealth Infinity and the Xplorer Guide II 3wt Xtenda 10ft nymph sticks in recent editions of the Bobbin. Both are superb rods carefully designed to meet their intended purposes. I got to use them side by side this weekend fishing for yellows at Highover on the Umkomaas.

Though I own a Stealth Infinity and am still happy with the purchase, I think the Xplorer Guide II Xtenda is the better rod. This is why.

Nymph sticks are primarily designed to improve your ability to short or Czech nymph. They can also be used to long or French nymph though lightweight 10ft rods are not the easiest rods to cast any distance with precision and delicacy.

The best way to short nymph is to lose the fly line altogether. The argument goes that standard monofilament fishing line has a smaller profile and is thus less prone to drag. It also gives you a more direct contact with the fly and thus better feel. That means your fly sinks faster and you can better manage drag. You are also more likely to feel that take. Whether you are able to react fast enough to take advantage of this is another matter entirely!

This is all very important when enticing yellowfish off the bottom of fast flowing primo grade white water canoeing rivers like the Umkomaas. It takes a powerful rod to turn a mono line over with any degree of accuracy. It is here that the Xplorer Guide II Xtenda comes into its own. It is a very powerful rod in its 10ft version, much more so than the Stealth Infinity. True it is also a much heavier rod but that little bit of extra weight is a small price to pay for the vastly better performance you get when handling mono. I do not think that the Stealth Infinity is not in its class as a short line nymphing stick.

The Stealth Infinity is a much lighter more delicate rod than the Xplorer Guide II Xtenda set up as a 10ft stick. This in turn makes it a better casting rod. However the difference is not so great that you wouldn't want to cast the Xplorer. There is not a lot in the difference between the two rods in this department.

But here is the kicker. The Stealth Infinity is what it is, a superb 10ft nymphing stick. The Xplorer Guide II Xtenda is that as well, but remove the 1ft extender section which you can do without having to reline the rod, and you have a superb award winning 9ft 3wt. So it is a case of two rods for the price of one and a much more competitive price. (R2 595.00 for the Stealth as opposed to R2 235.00 for the Xplorer (both priced at the Complete Angler).

The Guide II is a superb rod in its own right. If you cannot afford a Loomis Stream Dancer, then this is the rod to get. The Xtenda version enables you to turn what this superb rod into an equally good nymphing stick. The choice between the two is in my view a bit of a no brainer.
