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Peter Arden [00:00:10] Well I don't know about a story I think particularly if you go trout fishing or any sort of fly fishing you go to the better part of the country. The most beautiful parts and certainly in South Africa we do have wonderful scenery. The mountain scenery of the Western Cape, or Natal and the (unintelligible). When you come to Mpumalanga which is the Highland of the say the North Eastern Highlands the beautiful rolling hills green, green scenery, lovely still waters, this is what one really enjoys more than fly fishing, it's just being in that sort of environment.

Peter Arden [00:00:58] Now my father was a great saltwater fisherman what we call rock and surf. So I grew up with that as a youngster but living in the Cape Town area I found that, while I was fascinated by trout particularly and I'm talking about the early 1950's remember I'm nearly 80 now, and it was a marvelous place to live. A lot of it was unspoiled and there's something about stream fishing and the streams of the Western Cape which are particularly attractive. So I switched from saltwater which was a quite hard game because I was a small boy. And when I had to heavy you know handle heavy rods, particularly big spinning rods, and I just found that stream fishing agreed with me better.

Peter Arden [00:01:59] Well what we do is really...

James Thull [00:02:00] And what is the acronym, and what is the acronym stand for?

Peter Arden [00:02:03] Well it's a Federation of Southern African fly fishers. We try and represent the industry at an official level, in other words, state provincial levels. And we try and promote fly fishing we've got a lot of problems in South Africa particularly with pollution, which is just a major major problem. We're a mining, mining country and mining is now encroaching on many of these pristine areas that have to be protected. We have major coal producers and there's nothing worse than coal mining, particularly when it comes to pollution. So we do a lot of work in that area as well. Keeping these miners out of what are really the water factories of the South of South Africa. Remember we're quite a dry country, so we've got to conserve the areas where the water is produced. Okay and more than that we're dealing with the legislation which is a tricky area. And fortunately in the Department of Environmental Affairs, one's got some fanatics, who think that through legislation that'll cure all the evils. Whereas rather than focusing on trout which they wish to classify as alien invasive, remember we quite a hot, dry country. The area where trout can really proliferate is very very small and getting smaller because of climate change and change the habitat. So they're not a threat certainly not they won't spread like they'd spread say in New Zealand, Patagonia, parts say Tasmania. Where they adapt very well they don't adapt particularly well in South Africa and a lot of it depends on stocking. What we call dams and other words still waters on farms. That's where a lot of our fishing is done.

Peter Arden [00:04:15] Well our winters are just getting warmer and warmer there's no doubt about it. And then Mpumalanga what we call the Dullstroom plateau, we do not get the cold winters we used to get. It's a very dry winter, but we used to have severe frost. In other words, one would have to line one's pipes, insulate them. You still have to insulate them but the water comes through, in the old days sometimes you couldn't turn the water on till about 11-12 o'clock when the sun was well up. This is these are the changes we see particularly in the aquatic weed which is always a problem and still water use the die right back. Now we battle it but we use Drip like grass carp to control the weed and we use mechanical means like cables to remove the weed out. That's not in all dams but

particularly of the dams that I fish in other words North America's still waters, artificial still waters. Some of our dams get very weedy and you got to control the weeds quite frankly.

Peter Arden [00:05:31] Well I've got a special place because way back when we moved I was actually born in Cape Town. We went up to what was then Rhodesia now Zimbabwe, and then we came back to Johannesburg. And it must have been about 40 years ago together with another small group we purchased a farm in Mpumalanga which had a lot of slow waters on it. We thought we weren't going to make it financially but we were lucky enough to set up a club. Which now has the water from us, all the money we get out of that we reinvest in the property. In other words, we started off with it must have been about three hundred and 14 hectares that is now around 800 hectares. And it takes a lot of money to look after, but that provides very good fishing and a lot of my fishing is done there because of course, we've got to stop someone's got to manage that part of it. So that's where most of my fishing gets done. Occasionally I go to other places but I've got a son in New Zealand and of course, I visited him quite a few times and we enjoyed fishing there. It's quite different but it's nothing like home.

Peter Arden [00:06:52] It's a special place I think it's special also because it has a large percentage of the property is a genuine wetland. Of course, wetlands are very important in the old days we used to call them bogs with marshes and try drain them. Now we are trying to rehabilitate them. And that is very important to us and of course, particularly in the summertime we've got a lot of waterfowl, special species of birds come to the property. We've gotten Intra-African migrant, it's called the White-winged flufftail that migrates between Ethiopia and the north, where it breeds. And then it comes and roots in the summertime in our wetlands. Now there's probably only about 600 of these birds left. It's a fairly small bird and that's a very special thing as well. So we're not only looking at fly fishing, we're looking at wildflowers, birding, and everything else that goes with the great outdoors.

Peter Arden [00:08:06] Well when we happened what was then Rhodesia we used to go down to the Zambezi and the crocodiles used to watch us quite often. Yes, of course, one would back off and go and find another place to go and sit. Yes on our farm in a Mpumalanga I'd say there are only hazardous snakes, we've got cobras but they usually give way. We've never had anyone bitten there at all, so it's not that we don't have lions or Cape buffalo or those sort of dangerous creatures on the farm. Besides these small Antelope, Bushpig, what we call a Rook which is the, I can't think of the name in English, the a anyway come back to that.

Peter Arden [00:09:07] The climate, the sunshine it's a very comfortable climate in which to fish. I think it's almost unmatched. I fish in New Zealand, and New Zealand a great place but the winds are something else and it rains a lot, it doesn't rain that much in South Africa. So one can enjoy oneself it's not a hardship, you don't have to most times you don't have to battle weather conditions just like it is today. Blue skies.

Peter Arden [00:09:45] Well probably we've got some very good guides fly fishing guides in this country the best thing is to start with them. Particularly with casting. I mean a lot of enjoyment in Fly Fishing is casting itself. It's you just cannot you cannot match that with any other type of fishing. Casting in itself is a great enjoyment. So we do that sort of thing. And I'd certainly get a guide to take a youngster out a few times. And then of course if you've got friends and family, go with them.

Peter Arden [00:10:34] I think I like both. Browns don't fight particularly well in this sort of climate. I think they, certainly I noticed the difference between fishing here and fishing in New Zealand. They seem to fight better there but they're more selective. I do enjoy fishing for Yellowfish indigenous species. Some of the species we've got around about what we call nine types of Yellowfish. And some of them are very selective very difficult to catch. So we get a lot of fun enjoyment out of those fish.

Peter Arden [00:11:17] There's not much you can do about it once they stopped in a stream, particularly rainbows because they breed so prolifically. But by and large, they confide in the upper reaches in the higher altitude. What we've got to do is most of our indigenous species are lower down river systems. And it's not really, we've got Bass of course which were brought in stocked and they really are a real threat to just about everything. They displace, they displace our indigenous species. They're virtually impossible to get rid of. So the focus should not be on trout it should be on just getting good clean water. Good clean water is an absolute requirement, I think anyone from a dry country Australians will recognize it straight away. We've got to look after our water. And usually, if trout thrive that means the water quality is good.

Peter Arden [00:12:34] Very important particularly in this country. You know we've got a beautiful country we've got a lot of advantages but we have beset with problems. I think one of the things is let's face it a lot of fly fishing is in the hands of whites, and we only make up 9 percent of the population. We try we are trying to get more and more blacks into the sport. And teach them to value the resource that is there. We've got to share it there's no doubt about it. We in FOSAF we've done quite a lot of training of fly fishing guides and they, gosh, some of the black birding guides are fantastic. And we want to reach the same level with black fly fishing guides. They seem to certainly the ones we've got going have performed wonderfully well. I'd say also fly fishing has brought a certain amount of prosperity to certain areas. Particularly on the farms, the farmers are battling in this country. You know it's a tough country to farm in. If you can also offer fly fishing if you've got to still water if you've got a stream, it means you can put up a cottage, a chalet and then employ blacks in the hospitality industry which is better paid than the farming industry. And that's brought a certain amount of benefits to these fly fishing areas.

Peter Arden [00:14:20] No we just need more fly fishers out there. I think we've got to spread the word. There's something, special about fly fishing.

James Thull [00:14:30] There is.

Peter Arden [00:14:30] And we've got to promote it.