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Michael Dunn [00:00:10] I started fishing at the age of three, I would say. It was actually my mother that got me started fishing. We started fishing farm dams and small streams around Grari and also fishing for bream with floating a worm. At about the age of three, yeah.

Michael Dunn [00:00:34] In Zimbabwe, fishing, has, was, was pretty good up until the early 2000s, and then we started to see poaching in our various systems. And I think it was due probably to the economic downturn. You know, people were hungry. So we there was increased netting throughout our systems in the country, Zambezi, Kariba, all of that. We've got resilient fish though and I feel that the stocks will replenish as long as the poaching is kept kept under control. We fish nice to them fish or we see their own DSR here, if we're gonna reserve National Park, the national park we catch in Mozambique, a very, very dark kind of green is some of the maybe our species which other slime feeders. We've also caught tiger fish in those rivers between Matusadona National Park, Kariba and Kariba grew up fishing there, great tiger fishing and a still water. As you know. I actually prefer to fish the rivers if I can. But it's it's it's it's one of the most beautiful places because we've we've got a unique sort of wet fishing the dam because you go out on the houseboats and you fish a different spots every day. As a family, we did that. My father was lucky enough to own a houseboat. So during the course of my childhood, I was, we'd go there three or four times a year, a multitude of breeding species and catching those bream with different methods at different times of the year. And then fishing rivers, the tributaries of banks during the rainy seasons for the tigerfish. Really beautiful place. Then the Lower Zambezi National Park. That's, I fished predominantly below Zambezi. Below, below (unintelligible) Falls it's probably one of my favorite places on earth. That's one of the wild, wildest places you can go to. Excellent tigerfish and excellent bream fishing. Also very diverse species. Lots of those bottlenose Cornish Jack, chasa and koopi. And that's something that I do regularly, probably two or three times a year. That's southeastern. Southeastern that's in Yanga National Park which I'm quite involved in now, on the chamber of the Yanga Downs Fly Fishing Club. And to another one of my passions, I'm passionate about all fishing and that's probably my primary passion is fly fishing. We operate a stretch of the Guyrezi River that's part of a campfire project. The campfire project I think was started in the 1990s. The club has been on that river since sometime in the 50s. It started with a membership of 18 anglers. And it's been opened up. We've kind of got a hundred and four hundred and five paying members and we've got about 18, 19 kilometers of river, beautiful pristine river with sources on the mountain Nyangani, the highest mountain. And and that keeps our work cool enough. And we're a marginal river with regard to temperature. We have 70 successful spawning. Sporting is good for one year and bad to another. Our entomology is excellent. But we do have a prolific yield problem. So we do stuff through, year and year. But a beautiful stretch of river, and a well supported club. I think our biggest trout on the river is in excess of 7pd rainbow trout. And we do catch wild fish. Yeah. Yeah. Just in order to keep the fishing good enough for 100 members, we do need to subsidize with stock.

Michael Dunn [00:04:33] Well, camp fire was set up, I think. I don't know when the actual camp group was set up. But what camp fire does is we work with the community. So the community live on the banks of the river and the valley of the Guyrezi River. And we work with community in order for us to fish there, we assist the community with, basically we bought seed, fertilizer, blankets and so on. So it's a symbiotic relationship with the community, the 370 families, which is supported by our project. And yeah at the moment, you know, I would say that we wouldn't be able to support any more families but the

families that are supported, I think are very grateful for the support. Our major cost the community and the fish that we put into the river, the subscriptions brought in by the club contribute, are the main contribution to that project. We've got two basic cottages and what we call a shack, all with hot running water. So we've got accommodation for up to 10 people on the river with various campsites and people would camp out as well. It's used by the public and the public pay a fee into the tourism project. And a lot of people are maybe, lovely fishermen that's families swimming, picnicking, hiking, that sort of thing. The interesting thing about the Guyu is it's actually the same altitude as Grari, which is about sixteen hundred feet, which is quite low for trout because our water comes off our highest mountain. We tend low enough temperatures for the trout to survive. A number of the factories which help us with stocking parts of our small facility that we are resuscitating at the river to breed our own trout. The issue we've had in Zimbabwe recently is we've needed to bring in new genetics. A lot of the genetics were brought in in the 70s, 80s and obviously through inbreeding we don't have the best trout in our waters. Recently between ourselves and the kind of market we brought in a new warmwater fighting fish genetic, which we purchased out of South Africa and another organization, if it said fly-fishing Zimbabwe are investing in new genetics. So that's positive going forward. The type of genetics that the Guyrezi would need is probably a European bred genetic so that our fish haven't grown out too far by the time we stop stocking and we'd like to. Depending on the rainfall. If our rainfall is heavy, we will have to stock as late as June because we can't have low dregs. I think I enjoyed being in nature was probably primarily the thing and also obviously the challenge of catching a fish. You know the the places fishing is taking me, you know, I fished the Seychelles, I fished the whole of the South African coast, most of the Mozambican coast. I've fished Canada, I've fished America. Fishing has taken me all over the world. You know, being a student in Australia, I fished the rivers that were around me. I fished the Great Barrier Reef. You know, I think it's a great way of seeing the world and take it to some of the most beautiful places you can see. Absolutely, I would love to fish for the browns in New Zealand. I would also like to probably capture the fish in Central America. The list is endless, actually but those are two that come to mind immediately.

Michael Dunn [00:08:34] We've see it specifically in the Eastern Highlands, traditionally prior to, you know, before I was born and the trout were being, you know, during probably 1980. The club was going since the 1950s. We used to get prolific winter rain, which obviously meant that we had cool water in the river for longer. What are we seeing with what we're seeing from a climate change perspective on that river specifically is we don't get the winter rain and we get a lot more flooding in the, at the end of our rainy season being February, March. And obviously that makes our river very marginal, temperature wise with, with regard to sort of the latter months of the year being October and November. And that obviously means that our wild sport fish have less, less chance of survival. So climate change is an issue there. With regard our other sort of fresh water in Zimbabwe, you can feel the climate change, but it doesn't affect the fishes there because they aren't just temperature sensitive and so on. You make it lake trout. And if the lake trout and tiger fish will still go up the tributaries, there's sport and so on. But for our Eastern Highlands, this would be climate change in effect.

Michael Dunn [00:09:52] Well, look, I mean, we've got a lot of um sort of. Well, the first thing would be our tigerfish. We've got I mean, our homegrown tigerfish, as everyone probably interested in this sort of thing knows, it's one of the hardest fighting freshwater fish you get. And the love of the map is an immediate symbol of this message. Tiger, trophy tigerfish, you know, trophy being anything over 10 pounds, but a 20 pounds is definitely on the cards. I don't personally have one yet. But it's that's that's the, that's, that's

a possibility. And you know, I'd say that we've got some of the best bass fishing in the world. Honestly, it's an exotic species in Zimbabwe.

James Thull [00:10:31] Are those large mouth bass?

Michael Dunn [00:10:33] Large mouth bass. So we've got the northern black bass as well as the Florida bass. And most our sort of freshwater farm, farms, dams, ponds and that sort of thing, are full of bass. I think our national record, I'll get this right when you speak to Clive Harris he'll tell you exactly. But I'd say it's about 18, 19 pounds. It's a very big bass. When I was fishing competitively for Bass a couple of years ago. We have a local dam which is on the Manyame system called Darwendale, Lake Manyame, 50-pound bass. 5, 10 pounders weren't unheard of. So that's also like I know a lot of guys fish certain areas of the states and the 10 pound bass in the back of certain waters. So we've really got trophy guys fishing and then the diversity there you know, you can count on the fishermen angler here to catch six or seven different species tigerfish, bass, and trout. I mean, it's got so much to offer for a small little landlocked country. I think that we've got a strong, strong group of young fishermen. I think fishing is in a lot of Zimbabweans' blood, especially with a large farming community. There's usually a dam on that farm and a lot of the kids fished. I look at our vast fraternity and we've got a number of young junior anglers. I think specifically in our fly fishing fraternity, it's something that we must work on. This seems to be a stigma that around fly fishing. That it's difficult and expensive. And that, which I think is a stigma that we need to put to bed. But I would say for a small, small country, we've got quite a few young fishermen and we're in a fairly good place.