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Simon George [00:00:10] Yeah I started when, when I was a kid, with my dad, I started fly fishing with my dad up in the eastern islands of Zimbabwe. Fly fishing for trout. I used to follow him, initially, from spot to spots among all the rivers. We would primarily river fishermen. And that was when I was about six or seven. And then over the years I sort of progressed to actually fishing on my own and then carried on and now fish, fish pretty extensively. Mainly fly fishing, whenever I can.

Simon George [00:00:51] Good question. I'm not a, I'm not a purist I like.... I like fly fishing because it's, it's. It's... Potentially more active. I think the, the idea of conning a fish, that it's, what it thinks is bait is actually made from a bunch of feathers and... Kind of pleases me. I don't know why. But I'll fish, you know, I fish for, you know, using spinners and live baits and all that sort of stuff. But fly fishing would be my preference. I think it's just more challenging. For me, it's not necessarily about the number of fish we catch, or how big they are. It's about, just being out there, enjoying it and catching, you know, trying to catch it whatever you can. Some days you have good days some days you have bad.

James Thull [00:01:46] That's what I hear from a lot of fly fishers is, and I fly fish myself and I'm not a purist either, it that it's more challenging and more active. Right? You're not just sitting there waiting for your bobber to go under.

Simon George [00:01:58] Yeah, I mean, I will, fish with my son sometimes and he is much happier fly fishing. He will flug the water to a froth. And not catch anything. But he will do it for hours. But I've taken him to places where you can catch a fish every... 20 seconds, 30 seconds, and after a few minutes he's bored already. So it's, I think it's a, must be a mental deficiency somewhere.

Simon George [00:02:27] I mean, I think there's, there's more pressure. Particular in a place like Zimbabwe, where you have a very poor population so there's more pressures on fish stocks. I think the fish populations have declined massively. Over the last, well since I was, since I grew up, it's much harder to catch decent fish now. I mean, whether it's, you're fishing for Tiger Fish on Zambezi River, or your fishing for trout [unintelligible]. I think, again, particularly to, or specific to Zimbabwe, mismanagement of waters. Or, mismanagement's really not the right word. More about non management of the waters, not really appreciating what it is. That's how. But but fundamentally there's also a lot of poaching, so, on some of the bigger waters, you know, the control of netting has... Is not as good as it should be. You know, there's thousands of netting licences out there, whereas in the past they weren't there. So I think there's this huge pressure on fish stocks and, and huge hungry populations who are desperate for protein.

Simon George [00:03:37] I can't say I have, and I can't say I haven't. I don't... I've lived in lots of different places around the world, so I haven't lived in one place constantly. So I don't have, you know, a 30 year frame of reference to kind of be able to benchmark what it was like, and what it is like. I mean I can certainly say that, sort of being back in Zimbabwe now for the last ten years, you know, the weather is less... It seems less stable. You know, we're we're sitting in Zimbabwe today, there's the, the after effects of the cyclone in Eastern Zim, the eastern border of Zimbabwe, where about a thousand millimetres of water in three days and, I mean, in Harare we haven't had much rain, but it feels like the the impact of things like the El Nina and El Ninos is much greater than I remember. But that's based on sort of short periods of time in each place.

Simon George [00:04:44] Well I work with, Derek Mason I started this fantastic club. It's, I think it's fundamentally to resuscitate national parks. I mean, that's the goal. So the goal is to try and rehabilitate some of the water, whether that's dam or rivers, to introduce a more sustainable stocking policy, and to get, to get more people fishing. So, you know, the fly fishing community in Zimbabwe has been decimated. And... Over the years through, fundamentally, people leaving the country. And so there aren't that many people that fish. The club, I think it's very much about trying to get more people fishing. And we were just talking about it a minute ago, about, you know, whether you, you know, how to make that sustainable. You know, you can't keep putting fish into water and then taking them out. So, you know, looking at catch and release policies and stuff like that. To try and, try and make it more enjoyable maybe, increase the fish populations in each piece of water, increase the size of the fish, and make it a much more pleasurable fishing experience.

Simon George [00:06:00] Yeah I think within the fly fishing, I mean, I'm a member of another club, which fishes on the Guyrazia and that's, that's all catch and release. So people are trying. I mean, the whole idea of killing fish is fairly ingrained. But I think it will change over time, it just takes, it takes a long time for people to understand the impact.

Simon George [00:06:33] Time out of cities and urban areas. Time in the bush. Time away with family and friends and fishing buddies. The opportunity to spend time in some of the most spectacularly beautiful places. With some chance of catching a fish, or not. But it's not, for me I can sit on a rock in the middle of a river and lose an hour or two, without even thinking about fishing. Even though I might be in a prime spot. For me it's just, it's downtime. It's, it's. And particularly with fly fishing it's sort of... I don't know, the casting action's sort of like a metronome. It's just a great way to de-stress.

Simon George [00:07:23] Well I'd have to say, Montana. I've to be honest, I've been looking at Alaska. I think to fish in Alaska would be fantastic. I've always wanted to do some saltwater fly fishing in the Maldives, the Seychelles. Some of those locations. But all in good time.

Simon George [00:07:49] Well I told you one just now, when we weren't doing this interview, which is about a friend of mine who was standing on a pier. Well not on a pier, on a fishing [unintelligible] and he could not, not, he could not, not catch a fish. And his fishing buddy was standing down the bank from him and he could not catch a fish. So eventually they swapped entirely, they swapped rods, rigs.... Everything. And when they swapped fishing spots, the chap who could not not catch a fish, then proceeded to catch fish on the other guy's spot. That's just, that's fishing for you. When it's your day its your day.

Simon George [00:08:24] So do you feel it's as much an art as a science.

Simon George [00:08:27] No, I actually think there's some people who are really good fishermen and they'll always catch fish. And then there's the rest of us.