

giles-grant-2019-03-19.mp4

Grant Giles [00:00:10] I think, just generally, growing up in Zimbabwe, fishing obviously has been a very big part of our culture and our upbringing. So I mainly got involved through, my father used to take us fishing, often big dams in Kariba, down in the Zambezi River. And quite, quite a lot to in Nyanga, where it was predominantly fly fishing. So that's where we basically started. And then just, like I said, growing up, the culture here, all of our friends, families, we had relatives on farms. We used to go out there for weekends, long weekends and just basically fish, most of us.

James Thull [00:00:47] Wonderful.

Grant Giles [00:00:47] That's the main, main.

Grant Giles [00:00:54] Huge changes. We've seen, in my short career of fishing. When we were growing up, youngsters, obviously there was massive amounts of fish. I think just with the economic situation, and the downfall of the economy, you know, everything everything's been impacted heavily. A lot of poaching, a lot of, obviously the land issues there, the farms. You know, there's lots of netting, lots of that sort of stuff. So fishing has been, has been hit massively. I think there's a lot of fish coming out that are not really released back into the system, which is a bit of an issue. So guys are taking out breeding stock, which is obviously diminishing the populations. But things just generally, the, just generally, things are getting run down. So we're certainly seeing a big change in the amount of fishing that's being done, for one, and the availability of good fishing waters.

Grant Giles [00:01:59] So the program is to, to develop sustainable fishing. Working hand-in-hand with national parks to try and resuscitate the facilities up in Nyanga, for trout, the trout fisheries. So implementing system from, from stocking, from getting decent over, in from overseas, getting better stocks of fish, and better fighting... Fighting fish, as well. Bring in diploids and triploids. So we're trying to develop that, you know. Get the hatchery working more efficiently and more effectively, and then getting fish released into waters a lot more readily, and just getting the number of fish stocks up in Dabbs. And then just basically trying to get more people involved in fishing, to try and, try to increase, increase the amount of fish and fishing people that are interested, or the amount of anglers interested in fishing. And get youngsters involved as well. But there's definitely a big drive to try and work hand-in-hand with the national parks to to develop sustainable fishing.

Grant Giles [00:03:08] It's quite challenging at the moment, to be honest. I think there's a lack of funds, from their side. So yeah, it's been, it's been very challenging, but we seem to be making inroads slowly. It's also changing mindsets, changing culture. So it's not a process overnight. It takes quite a while to obviously get the understanding, you know. Where before guys were fishing for food, necessarily, now we're trying to fish for recreational purposes. And trying to develop that sustainability and make guys understand that, you know, if you release the fish, they get bigger, they produce, etc, etc. So does, it's, it's, it's a big challenge changing the culture, changing the mindset, and then also just trying to basically fix the facilities and developments, so.

Grant Giles [00:03:54] Yes, I do. I do think it will. However, I do feel very strongly that I think, as a nation, and as our own country individuals, we need to we need to establish better fishing waters, better stocks, better quantities of fish, better size of fish, etc, etc. in order to develop the eco-tourism sector. I don't think it's going to happen overnight. I think bringing guys in now, on an eco-tourism system now, there's not too much to offer with

regards to that. I'm talking trout side in Nyanga ways. There's still quite a bit in Zambezi, which is good, but that's more natural. But I think we need to work quite hard, individually, or as a nation, or as a club, or whatever, to try and develop that, to get eco-tourism. But we need to be able to offer people fish to catch more than, you guys don't want to come here and catch two fish in a week, you know, so. Or they have really difficult fishing, so.

Grant Giles [00:04:55] I do see. I do see changes. Obviously, it's quite a, quite a lengthy process so I haven't, maybe, had enough years in the...

James Thull [00:05:06] On the earth.

Grant Giles [00:05:12] Yeah, on the earth I suppose, to see too much drastic changes. But I certainly believe that they are, you know, the water's warming up in Nyanga. There's less fish breeding. You know, it's, it's becoming harder for them to breed and develop. But, you know, we've also noticed there's quite a lot of adaptability, you know, with the fish. Take Kariba, for example. There's a lot of adaptation which is going on due to climate change, or due to whatever it may be, you know, where they sort of adapt, and there's interbreeding now. So they, they're finding ways around it. But, yes, I do think climate change has impacted. Certainly, it certainly affects your cold water fishing sector more than the warm water I would say.

Grant Giles [00:06:00] It's just like, I said, the fly fishing is my sort of passion and love, and I think just the general peacefulness of it. Being out in nature. Peace, tranquility. That sort of, just being able to switch off from the hustle and bustle of daily life, you know, in town and stuff. And then obviously the challenge. I enjoy the challenge of catching a fish. You know, you're always going back to catch a bigger one. And so, you nev, it's never a dull moment. You're always trying to, you're forever trying to improve your records, if you know what I mean. So that's pretty good. And then the competitive angle is, well, I suppose, it is quite nice to be competitive, and have something to be competitive about, especially with friends, peers or just in general competitions. It's quite, it's quite fun. And there's something about, I suppose, catch and release as well, you know, catching a fish, giving it a good fight and then being able to let it go and hope to catch it another day or get someone else to catch it.

Grant Giles [00:07:03] Catching on slowly, very slowly, but there's a lot of work going into it, particularly there is an organization, [unintelligible] Dangling. So they. They specialize basically in catch and release. And it's all done on apps and videos and you can catch you, you have a video catching, video of yourself releasing, it gets uploaded, it gets weighed, it gets measured. So it is catching on slowly and obviously quicker, much quicker globally, but certainly is catching on here in Zimbabwe.

Grant Giles [00:07:43] Was, uh, so last year we went to, I've been fly-fishing for a few years now, doing a few competitions. And last year was probably my most memorable. Us Zimbabweans, we put a team together. We went down to South Africa, to our fierce rivals, South Africans and we entered the competition there, fly fishing. We came second in our leg, and we ended up going into the final, so we went back to the final, and probably the best fly fishing I've ever had in my life, to be honest. I caught, I think it was 17 fish. All over, an average size of forty five centimeters, trout fishing. So that was really exciting. Just being able to catch the, catch that amount of fish and that quality of fish that was there. That will forever stand out, particularly one day. And I ended up catching about four or five. My mate didn't have a bite, you know and I gave him my rod. I gave him the same exact sandflies, the exact same rig he didn't catch anything, I gave him my rod. He had not had a

bite the whole day. I threw his line out with the first cast and he's, snapped, got snapped off of that. So it was just one of those amazing experiences where, you know, it was just your day, I think. So, so that was that was probably one of my best fishing experiences.