

harris-clive-2019-03-19.mp4

Clive Harris [00:00:10] Well, I'm getting on to nearly 70 years of age. I started fishing, probably when I was, five years old. My father was a very keen angler. And from the day I could walk, basically, he took me fishing. So I've fished all my life. I, I spent a number of years, in my early 20s, I traveled a little bit, and I spent four or five years in America. I fished extensively there. And I came back to Zimbabwe, in about 1978, '79. And I've been fishing here ever since.

Clive Harris [00:00:57] I loved it. I mean, it's a massive, massive country, obviously, as you know. But most of what I did, was trout fishing in Colorado.

James Thull [00:01:05] Oh, okay.

Clive Harris [00:01:08] Yeah, Eagle County, up in the mountains. Not the trout fishing that I'm used to, which is purely fly fishing. They, we were allowed to use worms and spinners, and all sorts of things. So, yeah, I enjoyed it very much.

James Thull [00:01:23] So, I'm guessing there would have been cutthroat there?

Clive Harris [00:01:25] Rainbows, mostly. Rainbows. Yeah.

James Thull [00:01:27] Yeah. It's lovely country though, with the mountains.

Clive Harris [00:01:31] It is lovely yes. I, I lived in a small town, ski resort called Vail.

James Thull [00:01:36] Oh, yes.

Clive Harris [00:01:37] Vail, Colorado. And spent a couple of summers exploring the mountains, hiking a lot, doing a bit of trout fishing.

Clive Harris [00:01:49] Well, to be honest, 20, 25, 30 years ago, when we were competitive fishing, here in Zimbabwe, we used to pick a National Bass Fishing Team, that participated in an event in, in America every year. It doesn't happen that much anymore, because bass fishing is not what it used to be. I think the country's a little bit overpopulated now. There's been very little control on the waters, regarding Zimbabwe. Dams aren't policed like they used to be, there's uncontrolled netting. One of our biggest problems is spearfishing. You know, people have been getting access to spear guns, and making a living out of shooting fish. So, it's affected us quite badly over the years. We've still got world class bass fishing, don't get me wrong. But it's just, it's not as easy as it was, all those years ago. You know, another contributing factor is traffic. I used to fish, probably 52 weekends a year. Get up on a Sunday morning, or a Saturday, and just hitch the boat up, and drive an hour somewhere, and, and find some, find somewhere to fish. It doesn't happen so much anymore, because we have got such horrific traffic problems in this country. That, you know, to do that same thing every weekend, it becomes a bit tiring, to be honest. Yeah.

Clive Harris [00:03:40] I think it's like everybody, just getting out into the, into the country. Just, the wild life that we have in this country, birdlife. I'm a keen birder. And it's, well as you know, it's not all about catching fish. But it's always nice just to go out and have a nice, peaceful day at the end of it. What I find myself doing is, getting up in the morning, driving out in a rush to get to the venue. By the end of the day, when I drive home, I drive home at

a nice easy pace, about half the speed I would've been going out in the morning. Yeah, I find it very relaxing. Very peaceful. And it's not all about catching fish.

Clive Harris [00:04:30] I don't think weather change has affected us in this country. Maybe it's because I'm getting older, but I've found our winters seem to be a little bit colder, than they were when I was a young man. And the summers.... Probably not as hot. You know, we used to call October, suicide month, in this country, because it got really, really unbearably hot. I don't, I don't, feel that happens anymore. But as, you know, as far as weather change affecting our fishing, I don't, I don't think it's a contributing factor at all. I don't think so.

Clive Harris [00:05:14] Yes. You know, well, I don't have to go into the political aspect of it, but, you know, we used to have hundreds, literally hundreds and hundreds of commercial farms in this country. A lot of them had their own private dams, which they irrigated from. And they all managed fisheries. That's all gone. There isn't a single farm dam that we can comfortably go back to, these days, and, and find ourselves catching fish like we used to.

Clive Harris [00:05:55] Yeah, it's always, it's, it's been a business that's made us a living. Twenty years ago, we used to sell a lot more fishing tackle than we do now. But fortunately, we do have the Zambezi River. We've got Lake Kariba, which has never really been that badly affected by what I've earlier mentioned. So, we still have world class fishing in the Zambezi. And, Kariba, the last few years, has actually come on in leaps and bounds. It's, it's producing really, really good indigenous fish. So, you know, the few customers that need to go there and buy a few hooks and sinkers, they still come and see us. You visited Gaian and Nyanga. And the trout fishing is still, I think, very good in Nyanga. You know, we've got a well-run national park, up there. They've always been people that have been really passionate about their job. And I think it still applies. And also, they're getting a little bit of help from private individuals. So, I think the future of trout fishing in this country is pretty good. And, as I say, the, the two major venues are the Zambezi and Kariba.

Clive Harris [00:07:23] Yes, I do. I've got hundreds. I was lucky enough, in 1996, with two other Zimbabweans. We flew up to the Zaire River, in the Congo. And we went fishing for Goliath Tiger. We spent seven days on the river. I think we hooked into 13 fish. We managed to land one, in seven days. And that was an experience that I don't think many people have had. And it's not the sort of country that people go to. It's not a safe venue for a start. We, we landed a fish of about 75 pounds, which was quite an achievement. Yeah. That was probably the highlight of my, my angling career. I think.

James Thull [00:08:21] Well, that sounds wonderful.

Clive Harris [00:08:22] Not that I was, I was the one holding the rod, at the time, but we all managed to hook and have big fish break, to break our line.

James Thull [00:08:31] That's great.

Clive Harris [00:08:32] I'm talking, really big fish. You know, the one, thirty-four kgs, seventy, seventy-something pounds. I think we had some that were well over 100, hundred, hundred and maybe 20, 30, 40 pounds. Big, big fish.