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Martin Joergensen [00:00:10] I I could the story by saying my dad was a fly fisherman which he was, but that wouldn't be the truth about my fly fishing. That would actually, because he didn't start me in fly fishing. He was a keen fly fisherman. When I was a kid, I remember when we went on vacation, we would typically go somewhere in Denmark where there was an nice stream nearby and he would be gone in the morning and he would return with his gear and sometimes with the fish that we would cook for lunch or something. And. And then you would think that that would inspire me to go fishing. And he would bring me you know, we would two brothers and he would bring us fishing. No, he didn't. We didn't fish. We weren't interested. It's as such. And he didn't bring us. So. So he wasn't the inspiration, the inspiration to start fishing. And that was spin fishing in the beginning was actually when I started studying. I studied biology on the universities in Copenhagen. And in that connection, I went to Greenland. And in Greenland we had to do fish sampling and that could be done with nets or with rods. And we used rods and that was actually quite a lot of fun. We were sampling Char to look at each distribution and your stones and stuff like that and weigh them and eat them. And I actually found that was done with with spinning Rods and spinners. And I thought that wasn't a lot of fun. So when I got home, I thought I might want to take up fishing and I was probably more like 25 or something. At that point. So I bought a spinning rod and started fishing. But it soon dawned on me that spinning was not the right kind of fishing. I met people who were fly fishing and definitely that's what I wanted to do. I could see that's what I wanted to do. That was way more elegant. That was kind of, you know, elite. So to say, and something worth striving for. And I went out and bought fly fishing gear and I started fly fishing, which was basically me bringing a fly rod when I went fishing, doing a few kind of whip slashes like in the air and then putting down the fly rod and taking the spinning. But because I'm doing it on your own, I had no idea was what I was doing. And I was really, really poor. at it. So it wasn't before I met other fly fisherman that I started actually knowing what I was going to do and started getting some gear. And of course, the first thing I did, the first thing I realized, like everybody realizes when they start fly fishing is that your gear is not good enough. Of course, the rod that I bought cheaply, probably 100 dollars is something everything included was not good enough. I needed an Orvis rod definitely or something, a brand name rod. And I went and bought--I think it was not quite 10 times as expensive, but it was really like a five six hundred dollar rod or something. And of course, for some odd reason, the result was exactly the same. It was not a good rod. But while eventually I learned, of course, to cast and I learned to tie a fly and I learnt to put on a leader and I learned to fish. And oddly enough, many years later, I went fishing on a local island and I had to go home early for a business meeting, took the airplane home, left all my gear on the island. And when I came home, a friend asked Called the day after and asked me if I wanted to go fishing. I said, I have no gear, you know. Oh, yeah. That's not true. I actually do have that old rod that I bought, the first rod that I bought. And you know what? Oddly enough, it was really a nice rod. It cast like Charm. But when I started, it was really the reason. The reason that I needed to buy an expensive rod. But that got me started. And that's as I said, I'm I'm turning 60 next time. And I was probably in my early 20s or something when that started. And that's the way I started fly fishing. And it it soon became a very important part of my life and was really something that I enjoyed doing. As I said, I studied biology. So I like getting out, like being in nature. And fly fishing was a really great way of getting out and. And just being. Being outside, being in nature. So, yeah, that's true.

James Thull [00:04:51] I've mentioned Bud Lilly to you earlier, but once told me, Jim, the fish don't know whether you spent sixty or six hundred dollars.

Martin Joergensen [00:05:00] Exactly. I say the same thing about the fly tying vise. I say the same thing about your computer, your printer. You know you know, the printer might not be quite true, but the. You can't see if the novel was written on it on an expensive computer or cheap and slow one. And the flies. Well, you know, you can use a cheap vise and tie the most beautiful fly and you can use it a thousand dollar vise and tie a really shitty fly. So, yeah. Same thing with gear. Absolutely, I always whenever I meet beginning, you know, fly fisherman, anglers, you know, people doing it. Basically anything if you want to cook, if you do anything, you want to learn a skill. It's really important even these days where you can go online and see YouTube videos and you can learn everything. You know, it with all kinds of instructions are within reach with just a click of a mouse you won't learn to cook from watching videos and you won't learn to cast from watching videos. You won't learn to tie flies. You need somebody to be there. You need somebody to critique you. You need somebody to tell you you're going in the wrong direction. You need somebody to tell you you're using this tool or this thing in the wrong way. So it's really important, I think, to tell people that don't try to learn this from books, which I say having all these books behind me. But I mean, books are nice videos. Are nice and. But but people are so much better at helping you. Even the worst instructors. Better than any any online video. So I think that's really and for myself, it was just kind of a, you know, a coincidence almost. I had a cousin who was a keen fly fisherman and he said, you know, you want to go fishing on the coast. And I said, yeah, maybe, you know, I. I knew he'd been fishing for decades, almost. When I when I started fishing and he came with some friends that I knew were really good fly fisherman. And I was kind of, you know, staying in the background, minding my own business, rigging my rod and trying to do things in. One of these guys came over and said, you know, what do you have there? You know, like fly fishermen do. Like what? What you're fishing what? What are you flies like and everything. And he said, you know what, I would probably, you know, shorten down that leader. And if you want to, you know, a good fly for this place is this one. He gave me a fly. And just that little, you know, piece of advice made a huge difference. I was very insecure and very bad at casting. And one of the reasons was that I set up my gear all wrong. And this guy with just a few hints helped me, you know, get a successful evening. I don't think I caught anything, but I had a nice evening. I didn't mess around like I used to, and it didn't feel like I missed my spinning rod in any way. So.

Martin Joergensen [00:07:50] Absolutely. I mean, knowing knowing anybody who fishes the stream or even the ocean or a lake or something and fishes with with the flies that need to look like natural. So we need to imitate naturals. We'll have a great benefit of knowing something about the animals that the trout or whatever fish you're fishing for eating, and also have a great benefit from knowing, you know, how the fish behave and what they do when why they do it. I mean, we we we we've all been there, you know, standing somewhere where all conditions are perfect. But for some reason, there's no action at all. And there is a reason, of course. And, you know, natural history or biology can tell you why it might be, you know, the water is too cold. It might be because there's too it's too deep. It's, you know, whatever. And I've had great I've I would say I've enjoyed everything I learned as a biologist. When I when I went fishing, knowing the knowing the the query that the fish eat and knowing how the fish behave and knowing a bit about what to do when what not to do. Knowing a bit about ecology. Knowing a bit about, you know, the how the ocean works. In my case, I fish on the beach. So I fish the salt. So that that's benefit me a lot. I think. So I've really enjoyed studying, but working within biology was almost impossible when I was done. Computers were the way to go and that's what I've been doing all my life. Because getting a job within biology, it was almost impossible. But the education has given me a lot of things that I can. I used in many walks of life, even

even in my computer work. But but basis is suddenly in my in my fishing. Well,? I don't know. I've seen I've seen the fishing becoming very popular. And then maybe not not that popular again today. I think when I was when I started fishing, a lot of young people wanted to fish. I don't know how it is today, honestly, because most of the people that I fish with people my age and of course, there are young people fishing. But it's not like my kids are not interested in my kids. I see kids. They are like 30, but they are not interested in fishing. It's not like I would push fishing down their throats in any way. And they don't have the interest. I don't know if that that has changed there. There's much more on the tablet now for kids. You know, computers and things they can do and whatever. And I have no I have no idea whether that is changing. I meet youngsters who are fishing. I meet people who are fishing. But I think in general, the fishing community is getting, if not older than at least needs some fresh blood. Maybe I don't know where it's supposed to come from. But, yeah. Yeah. What? What I see is if everybody sees climate change, I don't know whether that will, you know, have a direct influence on on the fishing, on the quality of fishing and will, of course, in a certain a certain sense. But one of the things that worries me quite a bit. Two things worry me here and locally in Denmark is one thing is actually pollution with nutrients from farming, which is a really big issue. I mean, that is much a much bigger issue than most people think in Denmark, at least now, especially if you talk to farmers and agricultural, you know, organizations, they say, well, it's no problem, we are taking care of things. But the thing is that probably they are not taking as good care of things as they ought to and haven't been for many, many years. And that's a problem because the the the close environment and the streams, the coastal waters is really sensitive to to nutrients. You'll get algae bloom, you'll get all kinds of things going on. The second thing that we are seeing and you're seeing that many places in the world is invasive species of all kinds. You know, fish and snails. And we had we had I don't remember the English term, but never mind. We had lots of animals that came in with like, you know, water from ballast tanks and stuff like that. And which are just spreading. And they are really, you know, wreaking havoc on on local species and local fish all on and local animals. And even that could be fresh bugs. So that could be shrimp. So whatever which kind of formed the form, the the base off of the fishing that we are doing, and that's that's quite you know, that's a I think that's a reason to be nervous. And of course, climate change on the global scale is something that that is definitely going to influence whatever we see fishing. We also have quite an impact of overfishing, commercial fishing, especially on some species. The on cod, which we used to be a very common fish to catch here. It was like an almost if you wanted to catch a trout cod would be a disturbance annoying. Nowadays, everybody would love to see a cod now and then. And we don't see them because they've been harvested commercially for many, many years. And even with the with the regulations and the quotas that the fishermen have now, it's still not enough to to, you know, make the cod, regain their usual they what they used to be. So. I have. I mean, when I went, I have been to the Arctic regions. While while I. I studied to to northwest territories and to Greenland and the northern part of the Atlantic Ocean. And back then, nobody talked about that. That's 30 years ago or something. Nobody talked about, you know, climate change in that way. And everything seemed to be as it was supposed to be. And I recently saw a picture of a guy running a sled a dog sled on on the on the the ice on the ocean. And you had this layer of water on the on the ocean, which was kind of a sign of things melting while we were back. Thirty years ago, we went on, you know, in a lay of water on the on the top of the ice, on the ocean. That was what you did, you know, in in the spring, the top layer, which would melt. And that would be water. That would be ice like feet of ice below it, but still. But the thing is, what they say is that these things are happening much sooner. Early in the spring and on a much wider scale than they used to. But personally, I haven't seen it. I haven't been to Greenland for many, many years and I haven't been these places. So why I would just have to trust scientists who say that it's happening, which I do. I'm not a

skeptic in any way. I do believe that, you know, a lot of scientists around the world are right when they say this is a problem. This is a really major problem. And I think it's one of the things that we really have to address to to, you know, make sure that things are not really going down somewhere bad for kids or.

Martin Joergensen [00:15:26] My my one of my favorite, the fishing books is actually a Prosek. 30, 41st lots of folks have gone. Yeah, following that. It's a really nice book. I need to. What's this? What's his name James Prosek? Of course. Yeah, that's his name. A really nice story about him traveling around the world, catching fish and experiencing people and culture. And that's a really, really nice and entertaining book. And it's got some fishing in it, but it's got a lot of things that are, you know, just experiencing life and not fishing related at all. But that's a book I really enjoyed. Apart from that, one of my absolute favorite books on fishing and instructions of fishing is Coffman's Fishing on Bonefish, a book on Bonefish, which is just like an amazing book. It's just one of the first really beautiful fishing books that I acquired. And it's just like, wow, I got to go there. I got to go fish for bonefish. And luckily, I did go fish for bonefish. So. So but that's just really the the perfect combination of, like a coffee table book with beautiful pictures and then great instruction, you know, useful information about locations and gear and flies and stuff like that. And also good stories telling stories from his fishing. And that was a really good book, I think. And I mean, it's like telling it, you know, what's your favorite fishing trip? I can't I can't really say which is my favorite book. I have one book that I really treasure and really like. That's that's a Danish book on sea trout fishing. It's because that was the first real book that I'd bought myself. And it was really forming my mind, you know, early fishing career. So to say it was really useful, had lots of practical information. We had lots of good stories. Same thing. Fly patterns. It was both dealing with spin fishing and fly fishing, which was what I did back then. And it was an extremely useful book. So I've enjoyed that Danish (unintelligible). This is name a Danish author and he's written quite a few books and that's probably one of my favorite books on on. If I had to choose some.

Martin Joergensen [00:18:03] Well, as I also told you earlier, one of the things that I like about fishing is actually I like the fishing. I like catching fish. I like casting a fly rod. I like doing that. But most of all, I like being together with people. Fishing is like a social experience, like like, you know, being with people and being out chatting, you know, just relaxing together, getting a chance to talk about stuff that you don't talk about maybe on a day to day basis. If you have like problems or something, you might want to, you know, kind of, you know, discuss them with your friends or you have practical things. You want advice on something. A fishing trip is a good way. You have typically you have a car. Ride, which you have to fill with some talk and you talk. And maybe when you get there, some people like to just go off and fish. That's OK with me. But some people like to just in all case, stay on the beach and sit down with a cup of coffee and a sandwich and just chat. And I've been on many trips with with my good friends. That has basically had no fishing and a lot of talking, which is really nice. And nobody would feel bad about it or feel like they missed out something. They just felt like that was what we needed. We just needed to sit down, relax, and that was it. So definitely I I used to have a group of people that I went fishing with. We were like six, seven people that did. On any given day, a day like today, we have a nice day outside. We have a good went for coastal fishing here in Denmark. And definitely the phone would start chiming about like, you know, 2:00 in the afternoon or something for people looking for somebody to go fishing with in the evening and maybe into the night, which is perfect this time of year. And and that would be, if not on a daily basis, then almost, you know, maybe three or four times a week, somebody would call you and say, you want to go fishing. I can pick you up or you want to pick me up. We can go fishing or you want to go fishing Saturday or you want to go on Wednesday night or

something. And I had on my on my when I was in my in my prime. So to say I probably had more than 100 local fishing trips a year, which is quite a lot for a guy like me with work and family and everything. But I would I would, you know, cook, eat, do the dishes. Call a friend, say you want to go fishing. You know, we would go fishing in the evening and maybe fish until 2:00, 3:00 and then in the morning and then and then go home. So. So but as it is, you know, I unfortunately was disabled by disease. And one of my friends died, unfortunately, at cancer. Other friends got work and family. And somebody moved to one good friend moved to Iceland. And this group kind of fell apart. And and nowadays it's it. I don't need that kind of, you know, fishing frequency nowadays. But but I kind of miss the kind of miss the way that, you know, you always knew you could find somebody who and there was no doubt and it was no problem two phone calls. You had a party. You know, you you were on so. So. And and also these friends, of course, in fishing became very good personal friends in all kinds of ways, people you could share things with. And that's why we could sit on the beach and and chat for a whole whole day and do nothing, because that was just really a nice way of spending a day. Yeah, well, I as I said, I do love just being outside. I could probably have become a birder or hunter or something. If that was what I mean, if if something else had started me that day in Greenland, maybe, you know, shooting a muskox or something instead of catching a Char in a in a local river, I could have become a hunter. And I would probably have enjoyed that as much I could have become. And my brother is a bird watcher. He loves birds. You know, he goes out and watches birds. I can hear him tell about the trips he takes and the way he goes. Exactly the same thing as what I do. They buy binoculars. I buy fishing rods. They buy spotting scopes. I buy, you know, tying vises. So it's basically just having something to hang your your you know, you know, you decide to get outdoors on, you know, instead of just walking or just going out. And you do something practical, which is I like doing something. I like fishing. I like eating fish, I like catching fish, keeping fish for eating. But it's not the main reason. The main reason is basically to have an excuse to get outdoors and and in this case, going to the ocean, which I love. I always love the ocean. Denmark, we have the ocean close by. All most all over the country. And it's easily accessible. It's it's it's cheap to go fishing. And if you don't want to buy a lot of gear, you can actually do with quite, quite little. And you don't have to buy expensive licenses or anything. It's quite accessible. So, yeah. And and fishing has just been a good way for me to live out my desire to get outdoors. We we. I thought, as I said, I studied biology but soon got into computers and started working with computers. And in in in that line of work, I got connected to networking and the Internet quite early. Back in the early 90s, when it just was starting up, I was I was kind of introduced by by a colleague, a friend through the Internet. He brought a modem. we plugged it into my phone plug on the wall. And it went [modem sounds] all kinds of noises. And then we were connected to to some kind of thing, which I didn't know what was. And I was like, yeah, that's nice, you know? But why? What what? What can I do that I couldn't do before? And he started up a program called Netscape and he went into a Web site called I think I don't remember something, you know, whatever. And some text came up on the screen and I said, yeah. That's nice. I've seen that before. And, you know, we had like bulletin boards and different things. And he. And he clicked around a bit and said, well, this one is in Italy. Now I click here. This one is in Switzerland. You clicked on a new link. This one is in the US. This once it. And I was like, hmm. Hmm. I think that's that's pretty smart. I can see some perspective in that. So I was on the Internet really early on and enjoyed it quite a lot. And of course, being a techie and a fisherman, I combined the two and started you joining different online communities that were back then called newsgroups and bulletin boards where you could kind of get help and discuss fishing and and you couldn't really do much what you do today. You couldn't upload videos so you could share pictures, but it was not easy. Basically, what you did was you wrote an email and sent it to a list of people who could only reply to the

list and then everybody would get the replies. It would get kind of emails which were kind of, you know, dialogs between people interested in fishing. And since I was the guy in Denmark fishing for sea trout on the coast, a lot of the Germans and Dutch guys and people from Sweden and Norway who wanted to come here and fish for the coastal sea trout. They asked me, you know, what do we need to bring? What flies do we need to bring? What line weight do we need to bring? Do we do you need waders or you have to have a boat or whatever? And I compile kind of a small write up on fishing the coast in Denmark, which I entitled Fishing Denmark, and that grew and grew and grew until it became like maybe a 10 pages or something on it. You know, you can go here and there and if you go there, you need you need to bring waders and six weight round is nice and you need these flies, blah, blah, blah. And more and more people asked and I sent out this email, you know, quite often. And at one point I was employed by by a company that had a web server, which was a very new thing back then. Nobody had web servers like in their house or in anywhere. You couldn't kind of buy your way in. And I asked the I.T. guy in the company, can I have kind of a small corner and play around? I have this fishing thing that I can. And he said, yeah, no problem. You can you can get like you get an address and you can get access to the server. And I what I did basically was just take that document and put it online. So when people ask me, I sent them a link. So that was a Web site. And the Web site was called Fishing Denmark. And that was on on on the company's Web server. And it lived there for quite a long time. I expanded it and I started not having just one document, but many documents that were linked together with links. And I started putting on a logo and, you know, different things. And it's existed for quite a while. But it was kind of a menace to maintain because everything was done manually. And every time I had to put in a new fly pattern or and, you know, I did what I called the block. I didn't call it block. I don't remember the name, but I just said I called it fishing right now. And then I did a small report. Right now it's spring is coming. The GAr fish coming. The weather is nice. The wind is good. So now it's time to go fishing. I did that maybe once every week or if we second week or something. But keeping all that time together and having the links going the right ways was really a lot of trouble. So in the end, I developed kind of a system to maintain it. And I got in contact with other people who also did Web sites like mine. One was Steve Schweitzer, who lived the lives still lives in Colorado. Back then, he was in Chicago, in Illinois. And other one was Robert Skeen, who had a stream streamer page based out of the northeast US. And these guys were also looking for a way to kind of, you know. Get away from the maintenance of their Web sites and getting into something more streamlined and we actually joined forces. So we've kind of, you know, within a few years we put all our stuff together and I built a system that made it much easier to maintain and much easier to build. Like what we know today is a real Web site with all these things that you have like menus and pages and images that you can click on and and and see figure. But all that took place like twenty, twenty five years ago. So that's why I with some confidence at least, can say that I think it's one of the oldest fishing Web sites, that all the basis was laid down as a site in nineteen ninety four ninety five or something and it's still running and it's still quite big and quite popular.

James Thull [00:29:12] So do you do most of the writing yourself. Do you solicit from authors do people. Just submit they random.

Martin Joergensen [00:29:19] Both. I, I have stuff from. From what we called the partners who were Steve Schweitzer and Robert Skeen and and Bob Pety was another one who came and did quite a bit from upstate New York. Casper Mubako Dane, who lived in Sweden, also contributed a bit and then a lot of people outside. Every time I saw something interesting or or, you know, people wrote me and said, you know, we I have this fly pattern and I have this story. You have these pictures. I went to fish in Costa Rica. I

went this. And there I said, you want to write something on it, send me some text and pictures and I'll put it on the site. And that's what the main, main contribution was, was probably my own. But but a lot of stuff came from other people. And nowadays I use social media, Facebook, emails, whatever. If I bump into something interesting, I ask people you want to, you know, want it published or maybe they've written something in their native language. And I can see that's interesting. I get articles from people in the Czech Republic or Romania or, you know, recently a Danish, you know, article that that was translated. People can translate it themselves or I can translate it if it's a language I speak. So I don't speak that many languages. But still, I can do quite a bit. So so. So the site has probably in the in the probably a couple of hundred different contributors and and some maybe only did one or two things and others did quite a bit. So the.

Martin Joergensen [00:31:07] Yeah, yeah. The South African guy who sent me a story about fishing sharks wading from the beach in South Africa was quite. That looked exciting, so to say. And some of the some of the stories sometimes you'll be like some of them are really, really fascinating. But this one was like brutal and just amazing. And hearing from people in South Africa. You know, their experiences with sharks. I don't think I would want to wade around in the shallows, in muddy water, fishing for sharks with a fly rod. But still, that was a that was a fun story. But in most cases, I mean, it's it's it's more like me trying to like like you document people talking about fly fishing. I try to kind of get people to if they know something, if they have tied to nice fly, if they know something special about making leaders from silk or, you know, doing something, building their own reel or something. I like to kind of document that and make you make make up, make it accessible for other people. And most of my contributors are amateurs. They are not writers. They are not used to write. So I help them kind of getting that stuff out. And that means that I can get some quite interesting things and something that you wouldn't see other places probably so. Yeah. I knew you were going to ask. I've seen your interviews. No, I don't. As I also said to you, I don't have one specific fishing story, but I do have it. I do have a story which may be there's a what I usually what I usually tell people what I haven't told you or told in this interview is the fact that I have M.S. I was diagnosed with M.S. like in 2007, so more than 10 years ago. And I lost the ability to walk, almost lost the ability I can walk, but I walk really badly. And I remember vividly the last good fish that I caught on the Danish coast, which was a really nice day. I was out with my very good friend Henning, one of the best fishing friends I ever had on on the south coast of this island that I live on. On a really nice day, probably this time of year. June, July, something fishing in the afternoon. You can actually fish for these fish in bright sunshine and on a nice day. And I was wobbly to say it, put it mildly. I needed the wading staff, which I usually never used. I could walk, but only on on on sand. And I needed a hand or shoulder to get across. Across the gravel. That is typically on the on the in the shallow. But once I got out on the sand, I could basically walk. And I remember this fish, particularly because I saw the fish, which is not common here, you know. You know, people fish in streams and see fish going up and taking insects and know where the fish are in the ocean. It's quite different. You don't see fish in that way, but sometimes you do. Sometimes you see fish moving in the surface. Sometimes you see splash. And this one was one that actually splashed a bit and made some commotion. And I cast off my fly and I caught it and was a nice fish, a beautiful fish, good size and everything was nice. And I have a picture of it. My good friend took a picture. That's that's a thing I remember quite vividly because it was actually the last nice fish I caught on the on the on the Danish coast. And that's probably five years ago or something now. Since then, I haven't been able to fish properly. I can fish from a pontoon boat or kayak, but I don't really fish efficiently because I can't go the places that I want to go. If I'm in a in a kayak, I'll get blown around by the wind or I'll tang;e my line in something or whatever. And what I use this story to illustrate is the fact that, I mean, I'm

60 years old, almost 60 years old. And I I would love to go fishing, but I can't for a very good reason. And when I tell people is that when ever they, you know, moan about the lack of time for fishing or they want to go to New Zealand, but they haven't got the money or they want to, you know, it would be so nice. But the kids are just, you know, starting school and they have to be home or my wife doesn't want me to go anything. I say, well, you know, those are just bad excuses when you lose the ability to walk. You can talk about not being able to go fishing. But don't tell me you can't go fishing because you don't have the money or you don't have the time or you can't get off work or anything like that. Those are really poor excuses to not go fishing. So for everybody listening to this and I'm talking to you, go fishing now. Right now, not tomorrow. Not next year. If you want to want to go to New Zealand, go to New Zealand now, because in a year you might be in a wheelchair like I am. And then going to New Zealand might be nice, but it won't be a fishing trip. It won't be a fishing trip like you think. So that's kind of. And I tell that to everybody, all of them, those who want to listen. So those who don't want to listen, because it's a really important message. I know people who have grown old planning to go fishing when they retired. But once they retired, they were just sitting in a corner. I can't. You know, I I can't do anything. I'm too tired. So go fishing now.