

jørgensen-nils-folmer-2019-06-07.mp4

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:00:10] Well, you've probably heard answer before, it was, grandfather and father. Eight years old, got the spinning rod. It's the usual stuff, but then eleven years old, I got a fly rod.

James Thull [00:00:20] And this was in Denmark, correct?

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:00:24] Yeah, I'm originally Danish. And this is where, of course, I grew up till I was 7. I moved to Africa some years, and then back to Denmark and then to Iceland. But the fishing really picked up when I was 11. Then there was no way back from there. It's all my spare time that went with that. Mostly my grandfather, my first fly rod, which is what I do, was given to me when I was eleven years old. And it was, it was a split cane rod, a Hardy Rod, which would have very high value now. But I found it boring, because glass fiber rods was out then. So I painted mine black.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:01:08] What we have most in Denmark is, in the freshwater, was pike. They're everywhere. That was a predator fish and they are rather easy to catch. Both on traditional tackle and fly tackle, on a conventional tackle. But then went through the whole thing. Sea Trout It's now the most famous species in Scandinavia and Denmark, particularly. Also have it here in Iceland. So a lot of Sea Trout. But everything. I've done it all, I've done all the species around, and all the techniques, so.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:01:43] Three years in South Africa, I was in an English school.

James Thull [00:01:48] Did you fish there?

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:01:48] Yeah. Lots of fishing done there also.

James Thull [00:01:50] Nice.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:01:51] Yeah. Yeah, trout and some bass and some saltwater.

James Thull [00:01:54] Where were you?

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:01:55] I was down in Cape Town. And, but I went around, I've been around South Africa. All of it. So. Big country.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:02:09] This Iceland adventure started back in 2002, when I was working a lot. And I work in the industry, designing the fishing tackle and working a strategy also, but I work too much. But then I found this place up here. Of course I came because of all the pictures you see around the world, with beautiful scenery, and lots of space and good fishing. So I came up here in 2002, and I found this was a, like the peaceful area for me? It's just mind blowing. Being with this space we have. Untouched nature, insane good fishing and fantastic people. This became my hideout. Ended up flying out here seven, eight times a year, spending more time here. But in 2007, I just moved here, you know, for good. I love being here. My passion lies within fishing and nature. And this is the best place in the world to fish. Even though I've fish, I've gone, I fished everything there is in the world, I think. I still do. In the wintertime, I'm more or less out of the country all the time, because I travel a lot with work. But then that also means I fish alot all over the world. But I always look forward, I'm so happy when I'm coming home

here, somewhere in Iceland. I can't see myself moving out, at least for the next many years.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:03:29] Yeah, this, I went into the tackle industry in the year 2000. Started working for Scandinavian fly fishing brands designing fly rods, reels, lines, waders, jackets, and all of this. And also doing the marketing around it and this is... Yeah, I've been in the industry since. I'm a global design and marketing manager among it, with the Norwegian company, but I've worked for several companies. I've worked with Sims and Lupen, many, many companies. So this mainly what I do in the winter. And I work a lot, and that's why I have to... There's a global [unintelligible] I fly around the world just like you're doing. But getting things going. But in the summer, I stay here. And then I fish. I fish more than most people do. It's just, it's my passion. I love it. And the time I'm not fishing, I do some guiding. I used to guide more in old days, but I've cut it down. But in August I guide. Some people I have been guiding for many years, and it's fantastic also. But mainly as a fisherman, trout and salmon here, we don't have much more in Iceland other than trout and salmon. But not saying, you know I love going Tarpon and Bonefish, Sailfish. All of this. I've gone four or five times this winter. So I love it all. But this is where number one is.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:04:50] Well, right now, where this... Of course, my most of the time is spent here and. We have the biggest threat, it's not a threat anymore, it's actually happening, is the sea farming coming from Norwegian companies. We're getting 'em into some of our fjords here, and putting these open the cage sea farms with even illegal salmon into our Icelandic waters. And the, for people who know this, everywhere else in a world without exception, where they've put these cans in the water, it's gone wrong. Many aspects. And one thing is a fish escapes and it will happen, it's fact, it does all the time. And, and we get fish in our rivers, they go up in the river, and blend with the Wild Salmon, they change them genetically. The pollution that comes along with it, that's genetically a pollution. And that's very sad in a country like Iceland, because we are the last country in the world with untouched nature, it's clean and it's wild. It used to be until this, I'm going to say shit, because it is shit that happened. Actually, in Iceland, we're not even allowed to blend our sheep's species. So clean here. You want to take a horse out of Iceland, you're not allowed to take it back. Everything is so strict. So it's absolutely amazing that somebody can bring in a foreign species, and put it off Fjords. And they escape and go off and interfere with our wild fish. But this is happening as we speak. It's been going on for some years now. And this is by far the biggest threat. I've been, growing up fishing in Norway and Scotland and lots of that has been completely ruined by this stuff. And, you know, into The States also. I know that Patagonia has gone into fighting this madness. And I didn't know it was as bad as it was in the US. But it is, it's the same. Exactly the same. You even have Atlantic Salmon swimming around in the Pacific now, because of this. And of course, I don't. But we also have this artificial release of Smolt, which also has proven to be a bad thing for the wild stock. Some places we have here. But the biggest threat right now is this by far, the, these unwelcome fish. One thing is it genetically pollution, but we also have several meters of, of salmon shit lying on the bottom of the fjords now, there's not enough current to wash it out. So you have bottoms that completely gets wiped out of life. So you're completely changing the ecosystem. Because of some people want to make quick money, a buck. I know from the US, going back to these stories, that you have a good example of ecosystem getting changed. That you have, you have bears, you have birds, you have the forest, you have the natives depending on the big salmon runs. And the salmon runs have gone down in certain places in the US and Canada. And even the whales have stopped coming, because they also feed on them. All of this follows. So it's a whole system that just disappears. But if nothing is done here, it

will be wiped out. So wild salmon, Iceland, like everywhere else it's been done. And it's really depressing to see. I came up here and I thought I was gonna go to heaven, and it's gonna be, I'm gonna be free of this stuff going on. But it is starting here. But there's still a hope because we are a small country here. We have 300, 350 thousand people, 320 thousand people here. So it's easier communicating this out. And we have two companies working for getting the message out to the people, because most people don't know about it. We have the North Atlantic Salmon Farm, and we have the Icelandic Wildlife Fund. And if you go around Reykjavik now, you will see posters sitting and trying to tell people, the public, what this is about. And we have several dining places which has thrown out the salmon from these farms. That's to say, the only solution to this problem is, putting the, right now, is putting these farms onto the land, where you can control the whole process. You don't have any diseases. I forgot to say, that's another chapter in this: disease. Sea Lice problems and there's many very nasty things going on, but this you can avoid, by having this on land based farms. And we have two of them in Iceland now, and some of the dining places have realized that, and supporting that. So it's a positive thing. But I know from two years ago, 83% of what was produced in these bands, these sea farms was export. And that number has grown a lot since. Even though the people here in Iceland are aware of it, these companies, they've got permission to produce more and more by the Icelandic government. So right now it's not good, but we have to fight this. It's the last place we have this in the world. So that's my biggest concern. I know there's many problems, and globally on fishing. But the stuff I do. And, you know, like I said, I fish a lot of saltwater, also Bonefish and Tarpon. But there we have another good development, because a lot of fish are released now, and it's banned to fish for them in commercial fishing. I was, I've been three times in the Florida this year, and we see in Biscayne Bay, more fish coming back, in the Glades also. So say something positive.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:10:09] For sure. Catch and release is working, and we have some rivers in Iceland, which we have butchered in the old days. We've put catch and release on, and it's definitely a success, definitely. But most rivers in Iceland, we have so many fish, because of. We are so well regulated. So we can actually take fish without affecting anything on the stock. No problem at all. But some of the rivers have been down, really down. We had to do 100% catch and release to get them up and running. But again, all of this catch release doesn't matter as long as we have sea farming, because it is just gonna completely wipe it out.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:10:46] Well, I can tell you, I worked for one of the biggest companies in the industry, tackle companies, and two years ago I came to the management, which I'm a part of myself, and presented an idea of going sustainable. Because of, you know, all of this plastic problems we are facing. And there is an example of that. We acknowledge that, 'I'm, we are a problem. We are part of this problem. But we can also be a part of solving it.' And for the plastic, you know, we are banning, we are cutting off plastic, in our production in our company. It's impossible to cut it down 100% now, but we can go from maybe 20 tons a year, to one ton. So steps like this is my contribution to this. Of course, I do everything I can. But, you know, on a bigger scale, because this will have a global effect, because most people out there maybe are not aware of it. But me as a supplier, I can do things that changes. So the plastic won't be floating around from my company. Yeah, that's probably the biggest thing I've done in my life, with this. Of course, I could do mine as a single person, but this policy was decided on. We're going through with it, and it's happening. I've been looking at samples of new packaging this morning, approved and getting it into print. All of it is 100% plastic free.

James Thull [00:12:01] Wonderful. Wonderful. Well, that's great.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:12:03] It's not only for the fish, it's for the whole... Everything.

James Thull [00:12:08] Well, I mean, plastic is obviously a huge problem. I lived in a place called Pulau, for awhile. It is an Island in between Guam and the Phillipines. I used to go in the morning and count flip flops that washed up. And one morning I counted 112. I mean they, once it gets in the water, it goes everywhere.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:12:31] I was fishing in New Year's in the Yucatan Peninsula, down in the Caribbean. Four hours drive out in the jungle, walking in the beach. And it was piles of stuff laying from all over. It was just, 'okay.'

James Thull [00:12:44] Yeah.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:12:44] But it's also a fact that most of this pollution, plastic pollution, it's not it's not coming from us a major part. It is coming from poor countries that are not as educated as us. But still, as long as we supply them with this, it's we are still a part of it, and it's what I'm saying. If we don't supply them. If Coca-Cola companies don't put all this stuff out there, you know, then it will, it goes the whole way down through the world. That's how it works. But it's difficult, you can't, it's, we are not there yet, to go free. We can't sell a beer in a paperbag yet, you know? But the people are experimenting with this plant plastic and all. But it's the same problem, I find out you know. We hired people to look into this, a plastic bottle made of plant plastic, you know, it still takes 83 degrees to break down. And, you know, no ocean is gonna get that hot anyway, so it will still be floating around.

James Thull [00:13:38] Yeah.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:13:39] Other solutions are coming.

James Thull [00:13:41] Yeah.

[00:13:41] Also see this in the fishing company like, Costar. A company that made some very good friends with them, made some made of plastic from fishing nets, floating around in the sea. It's a recycled part of it, but it's the whole, this show's that there's something is going on. Its people are aware now. And the big companies like them, also. It's also a company made by fishermen. Of course it's, it's the passion, you know, just like me. It's my passion to being out there. And it's a big drive then, it's natural.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:14:21] I'm probably addicted to this like, people are on heroin. There's so many aspects in this, of course it's fun to catch a fish, but, you know, I fished in Iceland. I fished rivers, where you catch 30 fish a day if you're a good angler, somehow grown out of that. And like the challenging rivers, now. That's one thing, I really like the challenge on the river. But there is something when you're here in Iceland, you have, because we only have a few rods compared with the rivers back home, or in Norway. You'd have a queue of people standing in line behind you. But here, we have between one and ten rods in most rivers. So you don't have anything around you. When you're out there, it's probably just like hunting. You'll have some senses awaken that you would never use normally, and when I am alone, or with a friend there, I. If there's a sound behind me, I don't even have to look. I know what this is. I know exactly what's going on most of the times. Even if it's a bird, or if it's a fish rising, if it's a tree. Or just anything. And you, I didn't notice all of this when I was younger. You grow more to understand all of this, you know. I

just love having all these senses awakened. I love the sound of a river. It's just, it's freedom. It's, it's basic, of course. It's passion for everything. Surroundings, also being with, with good friends. You don't always have to bring friends, sometimes it's fun being alone, some other times it's fantastic being with friends. And of course, also sometimes, you, you have some very exciting, you know, some thrills. And putting, seeing a fish and, laying a tactics, and getting him. If you if you get him. This summer, I'm a very tactical angler now, I'm not just casting. I really put... I've thought about it at least, why I catch fish. And it is because I actually don't just go and cast. I always look at the whole thing, and how can I get to this fish without spooking him, and all of this, you know? So that's also the tactical part about it. Many times, but other times, it's, of course has to be relaxed, also. The whole preparation, all and all the seasonal, always thinking about it. It's beautiful. It is. It's, I feel alive.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:16:52] Well, first of all, you have to relax together. And also, it's very nice to fish with people who can share joy. I've met people who can't see joy in other people's success. And that's, it's, that's not very fun. To be around these people. But you can luckily select, when you get wiser, you get older, you become more wise, and you also have more strength like to select who you want to be with. When you are younger, you try to be good with everybody, but at least I've learned, when I get older, you can't. It's not possible to have the same enjoyment with everybody. We are just different. So it's fine. But, you know, when you're with good friend, it's a pleasure to see somebody else catch, also. That's important, but relaxing. And of course, if you can just find somebody to fish with who sees the same things as you. Doesn't see everything of course, because we're all individuals, but still. You meet people who have the passion, you can feel this, the whole thing around it. Yeah. It's beautiful when you see it all. But some people fish for other pleasures. You know, people who fish just for catching numbers. They don't really care about all the surroundings on. "I'll just catch a salmon, get it in as fast as possible. Get the fly out as fast as possible. A new one on the banks." Machine fishing. It's not the kind of person I would fish with. Not that I have anything against it, of course, is just like I say, we have different ways of living. Just like we have, buy different cars, different clothing. Nothing wrong with it.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:18:24] Well, I your camera is standing on a book of mine, there's quite a few of my flys in there. I designed them myself. Of course I have, if, I could easily go around with three flies here, if I should choose flies. And these flies in this book, they are made for the rivers. The years I've been fishing here, so I would choose them, of course. Because I really believe in them, and I catch a lot of fish on them. They are made for these rivers here. They are, in Iceland we fish with small flies, compared with many other rivers around the world where tube flies are very popular. But small flies it's, in my opinion, the secret here. I know we also have tube fishermen here. But we have small, delicate rivers with clear water, here. So the trick is making them slim and not too bulky. But I have some color references depending on situation, you know. But I have five, actually. Forgive me for a name. It's called Ultima Hooker. It is it hooks a lot of fish, we have to find a name for it. It has a little of many flies colors in it. It's not only for the ultimate catch fish on it all the time. it's a good all around fly. Tied with Icelandic horse hair. And really a classic. It's called Aetna. And you find many people fishing with this, around Iceland. It's made for the river called (unintelligible) basically originally, but I caught fish on it all the time. It's a little special in colors. And then there's a new one called Stormy Daniels, from last year. You wonder where the inspiration came from. And it's funny because the Stormy Daniels, the first time I tried it, I caught this, which is a 111 centimeter fish, which was the biggest in Iceland, and last year, an old male. So there was a lot of jokes going around, with Stormy Daniels gets eaten by old men, you know. Then, of

course, riffling hitch flies. There is one by an Icelandic fly tier with a little red head on called the Hitch Flight Show. It's a skating fly and it can get difficult to see in this small size, which I prefer, but then it has little red hat, so it makes it easier for me to see.

James Thull [00:20:39] Wonderful.

Nils Folmer Jorgensen [00:20:40] While these traditional fly fish, you you just feel in the salmon, they bang it.