

lablang-peter-2018-10-29.mp4

Peter Lablang [00:00:10] Now, I was lucky enough that my my father and grandfather introduced me into fishing when I was young tucker. They used to take me down to the wharf and that's where I first started fishing. Just catching a little fish off the wharf.

James Thull [00:00:21] Just bait fishing, or lures, or?

Peter Lablang [00:00:25] Yeah, it was by bait fishing mostly. But my family are avid black fishermen or Luderick fishermen, which is, they eat green weeds. So, you know, it's a little bit different than just going using a prawn etc.

Peter Lablang [00:00:43] No, I do the guiding work and we'll get customers out on the board, take them out for charters. We generally find out what type of species they want to try and target if it's within our range of possibilities at that time of the year. We go out and target those kind of fish. That basically runs me for, for, for the twelve months of the year. But we also do talks around the place. We do the fishing articles and do the magazines and the shows and stuff like that to try and drum up extra business. The major difference tends to be the species that we're targeting. So when we're going offshore a lot of the time we're either targeting pelagic species like marlin or dolphin fish or one of those kinda species. If we're going to be doing reef fishing, then we're after snapper. And also Flathead will always have the best new type of species that are offshore in the deep water. Once we start coming back into Pittwater, cause Pittwater doesn't have much current, you know, we kind of get restricted on how we can fish it. So the best way is by doing what we're doing at the moment, which is Downrigging, which general target, you know, kingfish, which tends to be one of the hardest pulling fish that, you know, we tend to see our rivers and harbors.

Peter Lablang [00:02:04] Yeah, up the top end, I normally go up there, do the freshwater angles, you know, mix the salt, but we've got a catching barramundi and at the top end up there and also Saratoga and all these iconic fish go up there for for weeks. Generally do a mother ship type of operation where we live on a ship and get out on the small boats and try and stay away from the crocodiles as much as we can and see what fish we can try and get.

Peter Lablang [00:02:35] Yeah, it was a bit unfortunate, it was that up around Bamaga and we had one of our guides that had a problem basically with his boat. So we had to get a little 10 footer, a little 10 foot tinny and up in that kind of area where we were. Took a little bit of getting used to, but after two or three days, we got used to it. We moved river systems and unfortunately the guide...We didn't know the new river system that he was fishing in and zoomed off away from us. And very quickly we got stuck on the sand on a mud bar. It didn't take us very long to realize that we can't get off with the motor. One of us had to get out. So I got out and I started pushing. And of course, I put my foot into what I figured was a croc. Why I jumped into the boat, and I told my mate, that was it. You'd better jump out. I'm not gonna get eaten. I've only got a 50 50 chance if there's two of us in there and he could see that I'd already done my penance. He wasn't real keen on getting out, but we managed to get off that sandbar. And as we got off the sandbar and hooked up into a little feeder creek just on the corner, a massive barramundi of about 90 centimeters made a long jump out of the water straight up onto the shoreline. And we thought, that's a little bit odd, well straight on its, on its tail was a rather large crocodile. And all this happened about 35, 40 feet away from us.

James Thull [00:04:05] It's got to be scary.

Peter Lablang [00:04:06] Well, we went back to the camp rather white and, and the guide was rather apologetic for leaving us behind. But it took him a couple of hours to work out that we were left behind as well. I think we did the right thing in the end.

Peter Lablang [00:04:24] No, I haven't done a lot of trout fishing at all. I've done a little bit of trout fishing down near (unintelligible) and in a couple of places down further south, but not not up here. It is a great place for people to go out there and do it. A lot of people in Sydney love fishing out there. Like you say for the trout and everything else and also for the other freshwater species that we actually have here that are native as well. Yeah, the salmon, we, a bit different to what you guys get over there. They're called Australian salmon, but they're not very good for eating. But they're a really good fight. They, they do respond very well on the fly. They're one of these kind of fish that'll try and track down or they'll get very small little bait fish. What we call living eyes. They're clear, the only thing you can see basically is white or black eyes. And they're only about five mil long. So when when the guys are out here, when those salmon are out working and what have you, you'll see a lot of guys doing fly fishing and everything else around because we just can't use a conventional tackle. A lot of the time we get it there unless we start introducing plastic float, bubble floats and all sorts of other stuff which they tend to cotton onto and stay away from you anyway. Well, I mean, I'm seeing lots of, lots of changes. We've got a lot more people in and out fishing in Pittwater and along Sydney's stretch of the coast. The weather changed. You know, I think there's been, because like I was saying before, because the way we're increasing our habitat, the human habitat further and further, that's having a little bit of a change, unfortunately, for our weather patterns. But in regards to species of fish and what have you, we are seeing some species of fish that we weren't seeing before. But I think that's more about people targeting them more than just them showing up. So, you know, the biggest thing I've seen in our fishing industry with changes has been the actual tackle itself. So our boats and and everything else, we can now go further, go for longer, cheaper, all that kind of thing. And it's allowing us to be able to expand further on our fishing grounds just because of those kind of things. And I think that's been one of the biggest things, as I say, the invention or the reintroduction of a lot of modified lures and things like braid and, and we're now about fluorocarbon instead of using chicken gut and all these other kind of things that it's all making it so that it's, becomes a lot, making it easy for us to catch the fish.

Peter Lablang [00:07:09] Uh, no, but in some places, yes, still. You know, when I look at what Pittwater used to be. Fifteen years ago, 20 years ago, it's a little bit different. But, you know, the species that I'm actually targeting is species that actually immigrate in and out of the river system. So we have good seasons, bad seasons. But the big thing, big change that I do see is what we've got on the ground, being the weed beds and all these other type of changes. That makes it hard to catch the squid, which makes it hard to go fishing. Those are the kind of things that I'm seeing is big changes. And, you know, unfortunately, around our kind of area, the weed beds can be affected by numerous different things, being human, going over, dragging anchors and all that kind of stuff. But I find the biggest thing is that the runoff from all of the bush land and everything else, we're just getting that sediment into the into the system. And it's now going over on the weed beds and suffocating the weed beds. Unfortunately, it's collapsing.

Peter Lablang [00:08:12] Yeah, it's a big thing that we've got to start considering. The run off and the quality of the water dictates, you know, what species of fish that we're going to end up bringing in here if we don't end up with the right quality water, we're not gonna

have the bait fish and then the kingfish, et cetera, aren't gonna to be in here. All the weed beds if they get all washed over with all the pollutants and everything else and die out. We've lost all our squid to be able to come in. And, you know, it has a flow on effect, of course. So, you know, water quality is a big thing that we, we've really got to look into. They're starting to do it now from the government in a lot of ways that they weren't doing it before, which is a good thing. But, you know, just as as individuals, we have got to start looking at what we're doing and how it affects different things and the cumulative effect. More than anything else.

Peter Lablang [00:09:02] Unfortunately, New South Wales, I don't have a lot of good to say for fisheries news yet, but they try. Don't get me wrong, the people that are actually doing the, they're great people. And, you know, I'm friends with a lot of them, but they've, they've let down the charter industry. They were supposed to make it so our charter industry was a viable and sensible thing to be able to be a part of. But unfortunately that hasn't happened. They haven't met their part of the contract. You know, and I say it on the aspect that, you know, we've got down to a point where we've got jewelfish or mulloway nowadays and they're now being put on to the endangered list or they've, they're becoming very scarce. So, you know, they'd been putting down the numbers of the amounts you can catch and putting up the size of the fish. And what have you to try and make it. But it's such an iconic fish that people want to catch them. They're a lot better off saying they're in trouble, no you can't catch in four years, five years, whatever it takes to repopulate and then get a move on again. So there's some things that I don't agree with them on. But, you know, over, overall, you know, I think for what, with what they've got, they're not doing a bad job. You know, if it's if the state, if the federal government gave more money, if they gave them extra people and all the rest of it's probably the same like where you come from, that could do a lot better job that they're doing. They're doing well for, with what they've got. But as I say, they've just got to change their thinking in a couple of different ways for the better outcome in the end. Well, I don't eat seafood, so my love tends to be the fight to track it down. You know, the hunt type of aspect of it, find them and then, then being able to show enough skills or be able to do enough things to be able to take one on a lure or bait. You know, yellowtail kingfish. One of the hardest fighting fish that we actually get a hold of. They're a beautiful looking fish. And, you know, they release really well as well. So, you know, it's good to go out there for a morning, go and fish for an hour and catch five or six of these things in. Now we get a sore arm from pulling so hard. You know, you can go back home and enjoy with the family. I just I think that fishing is just one of those things that should be done. Everyone should have a bit of a go of it, try to fit it in your life for a period of time so that you can go over and say ok, on Saturday, I'm going to go fishing for two hours and then I'll, you know, make it a part of your life instead of being something that's a special thing.

Peter Lablang [00:11:44] When I was starting out, Rex Hunt had his show, was freestyling and and Bushy and, and they promoted basically what I was already doing, which was catch and release. And that was a huge thing for our industry. There's now a lot more people started getting interested in it that weren't fishing and, you know, that were catching fish, releasing them. Those are the people who were starting to look at the amounts that we're taking back, putting in the freezer. Six months later, they're chucking stuff out, so they can start to see the point of the catch and release. And then when fisheries started introducing the tagging program. So then we could start to see how far these fish are migrating and get information back off them again when they were being caught, made it so that it was a popular thing to do. That's right. We can, we can contact the New South Wales fisheries and we'll tell them what species they're going to catch, if they've got a tagging program that's going on at the time, they'll send you out there. All the tags and the

cards. A lot of information is needed. So I can, as I said, get some information on those type of fish.

James Thull [00:12:53] And do you actually tag the fish? Is there something that goes on the fish? Or is it just recording of information, what you can.

Peter Lablang [00:12:58] No, no, it's an actual tag. It's a numbered tag that will be put in there. It's plastic, we actually put into the shoulder of the fish. And so then what, and what you measure it, if you got software to weigh it, et cetera, et cetera, you'll tell them what area it came from. What bay today, the condition of the fish, how it was released, what condition that was, when it was released in. And then hopefully at some other point, you send that card in and then some other point, someone else will catch that fish. They'll fill out a card, put that down, take the number and if they're going to take the fish home they'll pull out the whole tag and send it off to fisheries with all the information required. Otherwise they just read the number off it, write it all down and let him go and off it goes.

Peter Lablang [00:13:43] I have, my youngest daughter, she's little Anna. She loves it to bits, you know, she'll, she'll go out there. She's, I quite often laugh at when we go down on the wharf and we'll go fishing. She'll have a float and her sister will be fishing on the bottom. And then her sister will turn over, her bigger sister will turn over and have a float. But her sister's that kind of girl would be looking around. Well, that's a nice teapot. Look at that cloud over there. That one looks like a ball. My other little daughter. She's watching that float. Soon as it moves she's on. So I've got yin and yang. Yeah. OK. It sounds funny to say that young one comes out with a big boasting chest and, 'Yeah I caught five fish mom' whereas the little one, 'Did you have a good time?' The other one, 'Yeah, I had a good time. I didn't catch anything.' So yes I like to pass it on. And I'm hoping that, you know, it does become something that they'll look at fondly and in the future and maybe wanted to rethink it.

Peter Lablang [00:14:46] Yeah. Yeah. Nowadays, unfortunately. Like when I was growing up, for us to go down to the local wharf or the local place where we can go fishing. There'd be 20 or 30 kids so that you'd have to try and fight for a spot for, that you'd be saying to them, 'Your mum just called you, mate' off they'd go and you'd jump in their spot, and that was the only way you can get a fish. Nowadays you can get into any wharf and no, you won't see a kid. And it's really sad that you know its along those kind of lines that they've started to go back to the pads, the computers, all that kind of thing. Instead of getting out into the, into the fresh air and and having a look at what we've we've been blessed with in our area.

Peter Lablang [00:15:30] Some I've been lucky that I've done quite a few of them on my on my bucket list. But, you know, I'd really still want to, at some stage go over to somewhere and go and catch some black bass over in New Guinea or something like that. You know, I've heard lots of stories. I've seen lots of smashed gear from them and what have you. And how it's a short fight, it's win or lose situation, it's on and off. But, you know, that'd be one of the ones that I'd love to go and see and try and tangle. Been lucky enough to go and do a lot of the Pacific islands, so I've done a lot of the pelagic species, your marlin and dolphin fish, dog tooth tuna and then a lot of the reef species. And what have you as well, your cold trouts and all those kind of things. Being in New Zealand, we've done it all over there as well, up on the northern part of New Zealand. I've also done down the southern end of New Zealand, I've hit Fiji and we've been over there and tackled great Giant Trevally, all the species that they try and throw at you over there as well, Wahoo. So,

you know, I've been very lucky in where I've actually been. And what I've tried to do is to say that it's ticked all the boxes for me so far.

Peter Lablang [00:16:56] I like trying to get the excitement out into the, into the reader. You know what, I'd like to see him drop the drop the article as soon as he's read it and want to go over and pick up a fishing rod and get out there and try and do it. If I can if I can make it so that I can bring that over to a person, I think I've done my job.

Peter Lablang [00:17:19] Mate, like everyone Zane Grey is right up the top up there. But, you know, with we've got to get a lot of good writers around here, is Dan Silvey. He's a younger fellow that's up and coming and he'll make you know big inroads into this industry if he stays at it. He's a very good writer. Cray McGill's from down in Sydney Harbor and he's very good at getting his point across. But probably my favorite out of all of them would be Stu Stalling. I've been lucky enough to have him on the boat, seen him work with the cameras, spoken to him on many, many occasions. Very intelligent man. He's got he's got that knack of just knowing how to put things to make it appealing for people. And I wish I had half of what he's got.

Peter Lablang [00:18:20] Well, if you're gonna come over to Australia and fish like somebody down in Sydney. You know, just make sure that when you come you try and come in the warmer months, you're gonna have a lot better opportunity to try and go fishing. If you do happen to come in the, in the winter months, go off shore. We do have great species and great, great lot of species off shore that we can go and target. And, you know, they'll get range from Yellowfin Tuna right down to snapper and narwhal. So it depends on what you really want to try and catch. But, you know, if you come over in the warm months of Sydney, you'll enjoy it a lot more.