

mason-derek-2019-03-19.mp4

Derek Mason [00:00:11] I think I was just fortunate to be part of a family who was already fishing. And we actually did quite a lot of fishing, and we were also farmers. So yeah, basically just exposed to fishing from an early age, and just progressed from there.

Derek Mason [00:00:35] Definitely changes. Unfortunately, for the worst, it's certainly not...fishing is more challenging than it used to be. It's, it's, it's hard to get those really good catches we used to, back in the day, so to speak. So definitely a change.

Derek Mason [00:01:03] I'm a member of a fly fishing club. That's, uh, Campfire Project, and I'm also a member of Fly-Fishing Zimbabwe, which is a recent...we've set this up recently, and it is to try and resuscitate the trout fishing in the Nyanga, the Eastern Islands, specifically the Rhodes Nyanga National Park.

Derek Mason [00:01:32] No, that's not correct. It's all introduced.

James Thull [00:01:37] But they're, they're. They survive wild now or they all stocked?

Derek Mason [00:01:41] They're... To a degree. There is a wild population, but very small. But it is stocked. It is a stocked water. It's obviously also an invasive species.

Derek Mason [00:01:59] That's correct. Over the years. You know, with with the economic situation in the country, it's been challenging for the park to, to support the fishing. So we tried to, through a membership, raise funds. So that we can try and assist the park, to get those fisheries back and get them stocked and, to a degree, help with habitat. So clearing up some of the rivers which have grown over with, what we call an invasive species as well, so pine, gum trees. And try and get it back to the indigenous state, as much as we can.

Derek Mason [00:02:46] Yes. The Nyanga Dance is a Campfire project. It's, uh, it's, uh, it involves the local community, and that's one of the best rivers in our country for trout. And yeah, that's, they need to protect that river and they generate an income from that, obviously, by bringing in the sport fishermen. It's all a catch and release project. And, you know, it works great.

Derek Mason [00:03:22] Hmm, that's a, that's an interesting question. I just love the, I suppose, the 'nothing box' that's associated with fishing. Where you just, you sort of, at one with nature kind of thing, all your thoughts, worries or whatever it may be, seem to just dissipate into the distance. And you just get on with what you're doing at the time. And that's fishing. And that's a...I don't know. I just find it, just good for the soul.

James Thull [00:04:00] It's as much about being in the place, as anything else?

Derek Mason [00:04:02] Absolutely. It's just being there. Being out on the water, or being along the river. Even if you don't catch a fish, or you don't even sight a fish, it doesn't really matter. Because there's so much else to enjoy whilst you're doing that, especially in places like where we fish a lot on Kariba, the Zambezi. There's always wildlife, there's fantastic birdlife. So you kind of get absorbed by the whole, by the whole picture. And it's, it's not just the fishing, only.

Derek Mason [00:04:44] Um, absolutely. It is very concerning. In fact, I'd say our sport fishing is, is not in a healthy state. I think the biggest problem, more so than perhaps climate change--but this is if I'm talking all species--there's, it's just loss of habitat. And due to pressure of, you know, harvest pressure. But, on the trout side. Yes, there is a concern in the Eastern Islands, where the water temperatures are, there's a risk of the water temperatures getting too high. Because already we are on, it's marginal. So yeah, climate change, a little bit of a concern, but moreso is the, is the, basically habitat loss and pressures from human populations.

Derek Mason [00:05:45] There are many. Because I haven't actually, I've fished a lot locally, but not internationally. So if I put my mind to it, I'd probably have a massive bucket list of places to fish.

James Thull [00:05:56] Does anything come to mind?

Derek Mason [00:05:56] Not anything in particular, but what I would like to do, is try a bit of fly fishing in the ocean. Which I've never done before, and, you know, I've watched a few TV shows and it looks absolutely amazing. There's some species of fish there that look similar to, or catching them looks similar to, the Tiger Fish on the Zambezi. So, yeah, I'd like to just try ocean fishing, basically.

Derek Mason [00:06:33] If I had the opportunity, absolutely. I've read all sorts of stories about Patagonia and New Zealand and even Ethiopia there's, apparently, there's plenty of places to fish that, yeah, one day I'd love to get to those, at least one of those.

Derek Mason [00:06:58] So we've got so many fishing stories, some very humorous, some, some probably quite scary. Umm, probably one of my oldest fishing stories, was what probably got me hooked on to fishing. Or got me more keen on fishing is, when I was younger, we had a, we had an amazing fishing trip, Tiger Fishing. And I was fishing with a lot of older farmers. And on that particular trip, I learned so much from them. Oh, I think I was the only youngster amongst the whole group. And I had the most unbelievable fishing. I actually ended up putting my rod down because I just, my arms got too sore from catching fish. Which I never actually experienced again, in Kariba. But that's probably something that I'll never forget, all my life was, was that particular trip.

Derek Mason [00:08:07] Absolutely. I think we need to encourage as many young people to get involved in fishing, sport fishing. And probably moreso on the catch and release side. Something as, when we were young, we didn't practice so well. And that's, you know, over the years and with the pressure of habitat, we've kind of learned to understand that we need to protect this. So, absolutely. We need to educate and, and pass on knowledge to the next generation.