

## pett-ian-2017-10-14.mp4

**Ian Pett** [00:00:10] It was literally at my father's knee. My father was a keen angler and a very clever and insightful angler. And it's alleged I caught fish before I could walk properly. Just at the local lake near where we lived at the time and we later moved to a new town he got very involved with the fishing club there the angling society. He'd try to set what up to preserve a River back in the 1950s the river on the outskirts of London. And we moved to a town that's near Gatwick Airport in southern England and joined the Angling society there and we had a lake just a quarter of an hour's walk away from our home. And my father was intrigued by why were the fish in that lake on the whole so small? And he got into correspondence with the Fisheries Agency and the research stations in the UK and the conclusion was that it was far too acid in the water it was lime deficient and found a very simple solution. He got the whole club organized and they lined the fetus ring. And it completely changed the ph level of the lake and both the fish and the the aquatic flora proliferated incredibly and transformed it within a year. But that was very good. So he was very much a sort of amateur scientific angler.

**Ian Pett** [00:01:37] It's what's called coarse fishing in the UK. We were fishing for non game species mostly fishing with bait. Later on a little with spinners and plugs other artificial lures. My father had a trout rod, and liked to, wanted to fly fish more. Our club had one little tiny stream that hardly any of the members ever bothered to go to because you had to walk for a few miles through a forest to get to it. And it's actually the headwaters of a Thames tributary called The River Mole. And there you had trout. We used to catch them up to about 10 inches. Very dense brush, still quite wild and we'd see adders our only poisonous snake there, fish coming upstream. We used to have freshwater crayfish there. Which I think have disappeared now. Deer in the area, incredible proliferation of wildflowers in spring. A little enclave. And a few years ago I decided to go back and take another look and see if the trout still breeding there. Fifty years on, more than 50 years on, found indeed they were. I took a couple of nymphs and explored the area and found that despite the the, the building of a freeway that goes over the top of it, and the pollution that comes from the nearby railway line. Still, the fish are there, still breeding an absolutely ancient wild stock of brown trout. That was fun.

**Ian Pett** [00:03:03] We have a lot of it. We have a lot of stock rainbows. I think a few people have stocked brookies. There's one or two rivers that are reputed to have breeding rainbows that are particularly cold rivers up in the north of England. But I've not personally fished them and I don't know how true that is. But that's that's the received wisdom. But the the fly fishing I got into later was when I returned to Britain from working overseas for many years and became a postgraduate student in London. I was introduced to as a stocked fishery on the outskirts of London and that was stocked rainbows and browns. That seemed pretty good at the time it was actually owned by the then the lady president of the Trout and Salmon Association of Great Britain, Jean Harrison. And yeah that was pretty good, but I kind of got the idea then that catching stocked fish in an empowerment like that was pretty much the equivalent of going to a Piscatorial brothel. And what I was interested in was wild fish and wild places. And later on I got a lot lot of opportunity to do that, including the last week I've just spent here in Montana.

**Ian Pett** [00:04:16] Well the late 18th century just as you guys in the United States were getting free of us in Britain. We introduced something called the Enclosures Act. That basically dispossessed most of the common people in the countryside of their common rights. Not completely. There are still some Commons areas left, but the ability to cut wood. The ability to forage for mushrooms the ability to take a deer, the ability to take a

native partridge or a hare, the ability to fish for trout or eels or whatever in a stream, gone. It all became part of the landowners possessions. And along with the possession of property comes riparian rights the right to exploit a river. And that really made a profound difference to the way I think our societies developed in the last 200 plus years. But it means that almost all water in the UK is private access. A lot of people have got around that by creating an angling associations that lease or in some cases even own water or at least the rights to fish it. And those are popular organisations, I grew up having joined the local angling society at the age of six I think and being a member right through to the point where I left home to start wandering. And across the UK you find a lot of these angling associations. What I'm thinking of joining when I returned to live in the UK is very interesting. Established in southwest Wales by a bunch of coal miners who when their mines were closed down put their redundancy money together to secure long term leases on trout, sea trout and salmon rivers. And that's I think that's that's the story that's the counterbalance to what happened with the Enclosures Act. That you've got these organisations that have got together the members maintain the waters, manage the fisheries, and that's a very important part of angling, it's even more important in France, where all angling on public access water anything which isn't completely surrounded by impoundments and private land is managed by regional angling associations.

**Ian Pett [00:06:35]** Not really, because I've done so little angling in the UK. I spent most of my career working for my government abroad or for the United Nations. And so most of my angling has been done, I kind of started to think more in terms of quality then quantity of fishing time. And where the bunch of friends from the Centers for Communicable Disease Control in Atlanta in the US, I started fishing in Kodiak. And did that eight years in a row and that's become a regular part of my life. In a place like Kodiak, with the abundance of sea run fish and also some great ocean fishing that's become the mainstay of my sort of angling year. And then I fish other places opportunistically as I'm travelling. And I fished a lot around the world just on that basis.

**Ian Pett [00:07:30]** Yeah that's that's the closest to my heart. And I'll just go back a bit back to my father, because my father was intrigued by the reports you read in angling magazines as he was growing up. And in fishing tackle catalogs all the tales that came from around the Empire and North America. So I remember seeing these pictures of huge lake trout from Canada. King salmon from British Columbia, from from the sea. Nile Perch from the Sudan and mahseer from India. And he'd been posted briefly to India and the second world war. And he'd hoped to be able to fish for mahseer. And he took along lines and lures and, I don't think he took a rod, he was hoping to pick one up there. But he never got to use them. His time in India proved short and far too busy the mop up ending days of the Second World War. But of course I would see this stuff in his tackle drawer and these huge lures made of mother of pearl and big big spinning blade lures and special rigs and treble hooks. And so this fish was kind of in in my in my mind very early on. Then, by chance I picked up a copy of The Rod in India, the third edition of 1897 by Henry Sullivan Thomas. Just as a wonderful old fishing book which I enjoyed reading. And then a few years later by chance I was posted to India with my organization at the time my employer the British Council. I went for two years posted for two years ended up staying for seven. And so of course I got this The Rod in India down from the shelf made sure I took it with me and I had a couple of lucky breaks very early on. I met two Indian mahseer anglers, who were regular anglers, who took me under their wing and we formed a small group of guys based in New Delhi mostly Indians. There was another Briton, and an American with us who was sort of the core group and we began fishing the Himalayan, sub-Himalayan rivers across North India. And had the chance to be the first anglers let into Arunachal Pradesh in the very far east northeast of India, where it borders on Tibet, China and

Myanmar. And that had been called the Northeast frontier agency before. It's centrally run by the government from Delhi and only in the year before had they let in any tourists. Even if you're Indian, it's difficult to go there. You still have to have a special permit to go to these border areas. And it has some amazing river systems. Anyway. In their early attempts to promote tourism they had an international angling festival in 1993. So a small group of us, you can't have an international festival without some international anglers. So we were invited to go on very favorable terms. Basically just turn up in the right place and everything else was taken care of. And that, that was also a very formative experience. But I got to fish with these guys and found that my Rod in India was. Even though it was a century or more old it was actually a very practical book. Still. Thomas was such an extraordinary writer with such an eye for detail, such an observer of scientific detail and natural history. And the book is equally valid to use today. Anyone who wants to stop fishing in India. Anyway I fished for mahseer some then, and later got the chance to return to Mahseer angling when I retired from my first job in 2004, 13, 2014 and went first to Pradesh again to raft the Sudensuri river. Seven days of rafting and fishing. And such an extraordinarily remote place that in a week we only encountered 10 people. Now normally in India you'll encounter more than 10 people a second. This is still truly very remote territory. There's a very nice description of it in a book by an American author whose name I'll have to remember later, and come back to that you can edit in this I'm sure anyway. But he did he did a very nice piece on the spectacular Sudansiri. Anyway I got more and more interested in conservation. When I lived in New York, and worked for UNICEF headquarters. I was a member of Trout Unlimited, the local city branch. And then started to be invited to conservation dinners at the Anglers Club of New York. Where different organizations concerned mostly about Pacific salmon and Atlantic salmon were talking about their work and I felt that I'd really like to get more involved in fishing con, as it from a con, conservation perspective. And when I went back to the UK, I was delighted to find that a small group of people had established a start up. Nongovernmental organization dedicated to Mahseer. The Mahseer trust. And so I became a paid subscriber, I took a life membership of that. Asked them if they'd like some written material because I would like to write about some of the things I've been doing. And I became a contributor to their annual tour magazine. And when I retired from the UN system properly the second time, I became the chair. I'd spent a short time in the early retirement as the director of recreational angling. Unfortunately when you work for the UN you can't be an officer in any other organization. So I had to let that go. When I retired again I took over from the founding chairman. And now I'm the chair of the Mahseer Trust and doing my best to connect all people on all things mahseer together. The trust that already got quite a footprint in India, both north and south. But not in the other Mahseer range countries. Which go from Pakistan the mahseer the National Fish, but it hasn't actually done very much to help it there. Being the National Fish. But across in Southeast Asia. The Mahseer Trust is a combination of scientists, conservationists, and anglers. And most of us are at least two of those things at any one time and some of them are all three. And it's a very small organization. We don't even have a shoestring budget. I would say it's a tippit budget, so far. But it's growing and we've been able to extend the footprint. Through my own personal and professional travels I've been able to hook up with people involved in mahseer conservation in Pakistan. And in Nepal. And I'm hoping to move on to Bhutan and Myanmar. And I've started already on the Bhutan agenda meeting up with fisheries scientists from Bhutan in Nepal recently where they were there for a conference. And I've got Myanmar. In my sights after that. But I'll talk a little bit about Pakistan, because I think this is an extraordinary example. Where, the chair of a conservation organization a local NGO, started to get concerned about aquatic fauna. The problem with fish generally is that people don't see them regularly. They don't know what a fish is about. They will see pictures of them maybe but it's not like with land fauna; birds, large animals. Where you

can go and see and observe them. You've got to be working pretty hard to observe fish. Getting under water or placing sub-aquatic cameras et cetera. And so fish has a much more difficult image I think. Anyway he decided to take on fish and he hooked up with the deputy director of the Natural History Museum who's an ichthyologist. And then most importantly a consulting engineer in the hydro powered business, making environmental and social impact surveys. And the first thing they managed to do was to get one of the provincial governments in Pakistan to declare 100 kilometers of river as a national park for mahseer. They identified where the largest concentration, the most viable population in the country was. And decided to focus on that. So this was established. And they've been working with the local populations to take away illegal fishing methods, to try and control pollution, water extraction, mining of sand and gravel, which totally destroys breeding habitat. And... Then interestingly enough going up came a big big project for hydro. Power Project, a big dam. And they persuaded the provincial government that this could not go ahead. Unless it demonstrated a positive impact on biodiversity. Neutral was not good enough. It had to be positive. So this is now moving ahead and this is a model that we're hoping to see adopted particularly in the Nepal, where a huge agenda for creating hydropower projects now all based on the demands of India will take usually 75 percent of the power that comes out of them. Nepal has many many rivers but only one of them is left intact and pristine and our friends in organizations like the Water Keepers Alliance are trying their best to ensure that this one river will remain pristine and undammed. I'm a little pessimistic about the chances of that happening but at least as a compromise we're hoping to ensure that the biodiversity agenda is foremost in the way that the dam is actually designed and constructed. And our influence and reputation is such that we're now getting approached by say the Asian Development Bank, part of the World Bank Group, and we're being asked to provide advice on this because the mahseer is a red listed endangered species by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and the rules say that you cannot invest in any projects which are actually going to impact on critical populations of any species that are thus endangered. So we're finding some some interesting leverage with big financiers, and the industry, and the industry is now coming to us. Our members are working on these assessments in their own professional capacities. It's not work that we can contract. And in fact we don't have any paid staff anyway. So far we're all volunteers but. They at least in their professional capacity can pick up on that and they're now being contracted in to work on these assessments. So. I think we're shooting above our weight already, punching above.

**Ian Pett** [00:18:43] I think that's totally essential. But the way that the debate, the agenda is moving is interesting. It's becoming more holistic. People are starting to see a rivers and river systems as something more than a resource that can be endlessly exploited that have identities and significance to human culture in their own right. So you've had cases, for instance, in the Indian Supreme Court where a river has been recognized as having the status of a living entity. And having rights. But this is the conceptually things are moving in a very interesting direction. And obviously that's an agenda that. Is very much in harmony with our own. So we're very. Very engaged with that but nothing is going to happen. That is not going to bring understanding and some benefits to the populations that live on rivers. And of course many of those feel extremely threatened by dam projects themselves their homes their livelihoods are going to be also destroyed. But at the same time they are one of the issues with mahseer is that it mainly swims where people are poor. And sometimes hungry. And do not have a lot of protein in their diet and mahseer happens to be the most excellent eating fish too. And so it suffers from electro fishing, people going around with truck batteries put on backpack frames and stunning fish, poisoning. And most commonly of all in and certainly in India is dynamiting, bombing. I've seen that I've seen bombs go up just a few hundred yards from me while I've been out on the river fishing. And illegal

netting, the use of gill nets, and fish traps even nooses strung across rivers. There's a whole range of fishing methods which are used and they're not selective, generally. Something like dynamite will destroy everything in that particular part of a river. And one of the things we're doing is developing guidelines for hook and line fishing. For river populations. To be more selective about what they're fishing for, and have the ability to return fish alive. If they're not part of the agenda that's been agreed for. That conservation. Also very few anglers travel from other countries. Something like Tiamen. I've been fishing for tiamen and in Mongolia and there is now a tiamen fund, which works with local communities to maintain the conservation of these extraordinary pristine rivers in northern Mongolia. And to fund community development projects to contribute to schools health centers etc. And that's very much the way we want to go. But they can fund this because a lot of relatively affluent anglers will travel to those rivers for that unique experience of fishing for Tiamen. And by and large all contribute to the fund. Very few people do go and travel for mahseer. Partly because it's a very hit or miss experience. As I found myself last month in Nepal when I hoped that the monsoon will have been over early enough but found the two rivers we looked at were unfishable. Because of monsoon runoff and glacial melt and you know you somebody might put five or seven thousand dollars into a trip to go fish for Mahseer and find exactly that simply being unable to realistically fish in a week. So there's not the kind of angler community that's likely to fund conservation work on Mahseer on an individual basis. And so I'm much more concerned with alliances with the local anglers. And that's what I do everywhere I go in Mahseer range country, I try to find who are the local anglers and it's like anything we're fishing you find one and pretty soon you find 20 you hook up. Somebody is enthusiastic and we've got. So we had these really enthusiastic people in both Pakistan and Nepal and India where very quickly we've built up a constituency. I was in Nepal last month. I'd been there February. Both of these were personal visits and I'd managed to set up, with the National Trust for Conservation of Nature, that they should be much more concerned about mahseer, that they should consider it an apex species, and put it in their aquatic fauna agenda alongside the gharial type of crocodile, fish eating crocodile, and the gangetic dolphin. And try to emulate the success they'd already had with the land megafauna, with the tiger the elephant and the rhino. And they're very agreeable to this. We got together 30 people from the angling, the conservation river, the fisheries management community. And basically I think I've left something there after a short meeting in September. You just less than half a day, but something where there'll be a core group of stakeholders they're going to take this agenda forward themselves. And we'll go back in next year. We are arranging already with the zoo management to celebrate World migratory fish day. We're working on mahseer displays that are going to offer to all museums of natural history in the range countries etc etc. have educational camps for fishing catch and release for kids which we've done successfully in India in several several locations already. And that's on the agenda for Nepal next year as well. So slowly it's moving.

**Ian Pett** [00:24:53] Yes. But in Nepal for instance which actually had animal and fish protection laws that are earlier than many developed countries have got substantive legislation. Well somehow the mahseer is not on the protected list yet. So. Okay. There are laws, there's a solid legal foundation, but it hadn't got around to actually putting identifiers on individual all the individual species that should be on it. Yeah. Generally the ability to enforce law. And the willingness to enforce law may not be as it is in some countries. But it's much more about understanding. So to go to India, Pancheshwar one of the great mahseer fishing locations from Victorian days back in the British Raj, place where I fished twice and three times now, and had incredible fishing experiences. The one major operator that's been working there regularly bringing in groups of international anglers has been working with the local community. And now you'll see a big sign up in the

village with a picture of a mahseer on it, and 'no blast, no bombing.' And a declaration of just what the community is committing to for mahseer conservation in the area. And that operator is putting money back into the community. And it was very interesting that I'd last fished there in 1993 and went back there in 2014, and I was astonished that the environment was better. Things had actually got better in that area. Not only the village has now got a tarmac road over the hills. Small single track road but. Pucker Road as they say, and they'd got electricity which they didn't have when they first used to go there. But I was seeing more wildlife, than in the early 1990s. This was good. Obviously things have got better for everyone. People. Environment. And the fauna.

**James Thull** [00:27:10] That's wonderful.

**Ian Pett** [00:27:11] And fish stocks still very good.

**Ian Pett** [00:27:18] Not just the monsoons. I mean in a way I've been to Kodiak at the same time of year eight years in a row. And one of the reasons I keep going is every year is a totally different experience. Both in the patterns of the, the fish runs in the migratory salmon the size of the fish the numbers of the fish. But also in just what's happening with the weather. The seasonality that you observe through the flowering or the dying of certain plants. The behavior of the bears. Now whether this is just part of a bigger rhythm or whether it's something which has progressively been impacted on by climate change I don't know. But but certainly in the tropics and subtropics the agenda is very keenly felt. I don't think we've really got enough of a handle on what's going to happen yet but melting glaciers is clearly an issue. And this year I went trekking up in to an area where you've actually got the glaciers that begin a river a couple of hundred kilometers length going into the Ganges eventually, a mahseer river in its lower reaches. It just gets too cold and too many falls on it to have fish all the way up. That critically important environment. And a lot of concern know there are people living up there they're living at something like 11000 feet above sea level. And what happens to their environment is critical. They're already living on the margins in terms of agricultural production, foraging. And I don't think anyone knows quite where it's going, but the assumption is the working assumption is we're going to see a lot of glacial melt.

**Ian Pett** [00:29:10] Yes but I don't think I've got a good enough analysis of it from my own experience to translate that into a sort of statement about what I what I see going on or what I think is going on. And I am a bit of a global nomad, I move around a lot. And so I'm not necessarily seen, like Kodiak as a reference point. And I think in Kodiak they still don't really know whether they're seeing El Nino dependent weather, it's a North Pacific island, or whether they are seeing the impact of climate change, or whether they're just getting very unusual weather patterns. But for instance, five years ago you could buy a T-shirt that said Kodiak rain festival 365 days a year. They're not selling the T-shirt anymore. Two years ago the drought, there was a drought which lasted about three months. And we can't work out what's going on. Never been. That shortage of rainfall. Of course there's the salmon rivers were extremely low. The fish couldn't get the fish were all stacked up. Around the estuaries. So saltwater salmon fishing was great but very frustrated salmon that wanted to get up and spawn. And you only need one bad year, and you can have a huge impact on your salmon population. Particularly pinks say well you really get a boom and bust kind of cycle every two years with them. If you had a severe drought during what would normally otherwise be a boom year you could have a huge impact on future populations. So I think it's it's like you know this is something that every angler should be concerned about. And be thinking through just what it means in their environment of course what what we can do as individuals to stop contributing. To the process whether

through the way we use our votes or our own personal behavior with motor vehicles or with how much time we spend flying around the world. I'm a very guilty party when it comes to carbon emissions from airplanes. I do travel to so much. And just what we do in our own households. Microplastics. And we were debating microplastics and nanoplastics at dinner last night wondering whether they're even in the fish in Montana. Now. It's certainly in a most ocean fish already. Just what are we doing through these miracle toothpaste some washing powders and what happens to come out of our recycled fleece jacket when we wash it.

**Ian Pett [00:31:39]** Well when when you were talking about climate change, I was thinking back. Well it's just like in my lifetime. I mean I was born 1951. And the world was a much more pristine place then. With far more opportunities for field sports available. Partly through population density and partly through the fact that we had bigger rural populations. And we had more active engagement with the land. Whether through agriculture forestry. Whatever. At the time than we seem to have now when so many of these processes have been industrialized. And, particularly in many of the less developed countries, say, the huge impact of population growth combined with increased affluence, and a lack of any addressing of conservation issues in educational programs or very little certainly insufficient. So a lack of consciousness and increasing urbanization. And very soon 50 percent of the world's population is going to be living in cities. And the kids are growing up with almost no interaction with the wider natural world. Beyond a city park, they're not going to get that experience, and I think that's tragic. You know for me I grew up on the edge of a town around 60000 people. You'd call it the city in the states probably, and the forests began about 10 minutes walk from my doorstep. And it went for about 30 miles, and the resources in that forest, this is where I was describing catching my first trout, were extraordinary. And you say you could be out into that environment but I don't think that happens to anything like the same extent with modern kids and certainly not happening around countries of Asia and Africa, probably Latin America too, and we're so much about, knowledge about anything, is from a digital source. It's an, it's an Internet thing it's a video game thing. And that disconnect. I think it's tragic. And unless there is more awareness about the extraordinary nature of environments across the world and the satisfaction, the gratification, the pleasure. And experience that can come out of interacting with it through responsibly managed field sports and other outdoor activities. Unless there's more of that then I think we're heading for a very very dangerous situation. Basically in my lifetime I think we've trashed the planet. And I find that extremely sad. And we need to make huge efforts to halt that process and hopefully reverse it. But I'm seeing some signs.

**Ian Pett [00:34:48]** I think it's it's more that's part of it. But I think it's our species centric perspective and behavior. We act as if we're the only species that matters. And our ability to have the Brazilian rainforest trashed so that we can have cheap burgers to eat ourselves into gross obese, obesity in 15 years flat. This is somehow more important than the maintenance of the environment and the ecology in Brazil. It's like, my personal. View is that we should be caught homo stupidus. We're dumb, as a species. We think we're so smart, and we have technology that we can utilize to so many extraordinary purposes. Again, something has changed profoundly in our lifetime. I remember buying my first pocket calculator and thinking what a big deal that was and how much it cost me. But we, we use so much of that technology for mutually destructive purposes in warfare, so-called defense. Or for just entertainment, diverting activities. We don't use them sufficiently to solve profound human problems. In my own area and in global public health for instance there's so much more that I think could be done if the investment and research and development went into addressing some of these profound problems or indeed into how

we interact with the environment and how we could exploit natural resources in a responsible and sustainable way.

**Ian Pett [00:36:40]** Well in every country pretty much that I've been engaged with, I would say that there. There is everywhere there's a small core constituency at least a small core of people are extremely aware. And, it's trying to act as something of a catalyst and support our resource mobilizer, I hope. For people who want to do things about their own environments. The Mahseer Trust can't go crashing into a country and saying you've got to do this, you've got to do that. We've got to talk about shared interest. And how we can work together. Having got to the point where we all agree that, say Mahseer, are indicative species of the health of an entire river system, bit like your white fish here, and that we want together whether we live in the country whether we live on the river whether we live in the city whether we live halfway across the globe. But we have an appreciation for this fish and everything that it signifies in the ecosystem that supports it. And work holistically on that agenda. But it's got to be something that's taken on seriously by people who are directly engaged in the country, and living in the country, and particularly by the river communities. And I think working with river communities, this is small scale intensive stuff. It's going to take a lot of people a lot of time a lot of patience. But working through these issues with people. And I think that's been done pretty successfully in large parts of the states for instance, Alaska you've got an abundance of fish but you've got an extremely well regulated fishery. I guess you've seen that movie *The End of the Line*. About the exploitation of marine resources and Alaska comes out of the shining example. Iceland another. Smart, scientifically informed fisheries management. That is not done purely for short term profit.

**Ian Pett [00:38:52]** Sitting here in this amazing collection, I just like to talk a little bit about Mahseer literature. Because after trout and salmon one of the most significant bodies of literature in angling that I know of is actually mahseer. And we can pick up some Indian texts from around the 14th century and probably there's more out there that we haven't detected yet. But in the English language, the literature of Mahseer begins around 1820. And is a pretty consistent body of work. And it's particularly interesting I think because of the quality. Of the books that came out and generally there, it's been a literature about angling more generally in India, but at the center piece of it is always the mahseer quite quite naturally. And so I'm now working on a project to provide an overview and an anthology of 200 years of mahseer literature. That's great fun. And it's, I own some of the books myself, and others I've been able to source online, particularly the 19th century thanks to the digitalisation of collections in American libraries which is fantastic and that means anyone in the world pretty much can now get copies of those things. And, and working through now the 20th century. This is going to become a monograph published by cocky bondu books great angling bookseller in Wales, Paul Morgan the guy running that. And I hope that down the line some of you guys will be able to see that work, and learn more about the fascinating mahseer literature. Which, of course the one thing that many people have heard of about Mahseer, is the Kipling quote, about, 'There he met the mahseer of the pooch beside which the tarpon is but a herring and he catches them can call himself a fisherman.' Probably misquoted that slightly, but I've actually seen no evidence that Kipling fished for either mahseer or tarpon, but nevermind we'll let that go. I think it's probably a bit unfair to tarpon, but the mahseer is a fish that is certainly in that league, one of the world's great game fish. And yeah. Catching a mahseer is, particularly a big mahseer, is something you will never forget.

**Ian Pett [00:41:25]** What can I say, okay, fishing for mahseer one day or the Kanali River in Nepal. I've got gharial, this fish eating crocodile in the river, and gangetic dolphin

[gangetic dolphin] porpoising in front of me, there are rhino and elephant prints on the sandbank. The guy taps me on the shoulder and says, "Look over there." And there's a bathing tiger, in a pool up a side stream. I've been pushed off a river in Kenya by two lions. Didn't argue with them. And a recent one, I fished for small mouth bass the first time in May this year, I caught a two pounder I'd heard they were good to eat. Plenty of fish around so we decided to keep one. Knocked it on the head. And put it on ice. When I took it out to clean it and it regurgitated a whole mouse.

**Ian Pett [00:42:24]** Well there's one guy that, in terms of formative influence on my generation, a gentleman called Bernard Venables. He was an illustrator for national newspapers and magazines. And a fanatical angler. And he produced a classic. It was basically a cartoon book. What the French would call a ban-designate. It was an introduction to coarse fishing for kids. It's called Mr. Crabtree Goes Fishing. And it is literally a work of art. It just, he had newspaper strips running, I think was the Daily Mirror. But this this thing was put together. And, it was like every boy's fish, first fishing book, pretty much. And he later went on to help establish an beautifully illustrated and produced fishing magazine called Creel. He produced a very good book on the art of angling. And many other things, and Bernard Venables, as the first formative influence. A guy that you'll know of over here, but from a different context probably, also sadly departed, now Clive Gammon. He was a Welshman who became a fleet street journalist and he would fish anywhere for anything, very innovative, very creative angler. And he came from Wales, he wrote about Wales, he produced guides to fishing in Wales. But he was taken up by Sports Illustrated. He went from the UK, probably in his late thirties, to New York to join Sports Illustrated. And they sent him all over the world to do all kinds of stuff. He was a great writer. Always fished wherever he could. And produced great articles in Sports Illustrated magazine and then produced a really nice memoir called I Know A Good Place. Which also has a chapter on mahseer, by the way. And one of the best writers, I think. Because he, the guy could really write. And he had a perspective, which I think was very nice on things too, great guy. So those are a couple of them. I love Negly Farsons Going Fishing. I think that's the best fishing memoir of all time, so far at least. I think that's an incredible book and I bought many many copies to give give to friends.

**Ian Pett [00:45:02]** I would say that it's as for any other topic, any other subject. First of all there's the whole principle about collecting, archiving, bringing things together. Maintaining that knowledge base. It's it's a principle function of academia, and it's valid for any subject. I think perhaps it's particularly important for subjects that are not normally the attention given the attention of academia because they're considered recreational. They're not scientific. They're not humanities. But as we've, we've seen and we've covered in this conversation, fishing is something, angling is something which brings you into a much wider world of science, of the environment, of human behavior. And it has produced, as you said earlier, probably more literature than any other sporting pursuit. And often great literature. And so I think that the fact that this is together, you know you can get a lot in a place like the British Library but it's all over the place. It's it's not put together and concentrated. I think it would be great if this could carry on and it's probably only half the size it needs to be eventually, in terms of what's out there. Certainly on Mahseer. Looking looking at the catalog searches we've done, we can certainly, I know your trout and salmon, salmonid focused organization.

**Ian Pett [00:46:36]** Well I think first of all, get engaged. Just take a look at our website, Mahseer Trust dot org. And think about becoming a supporter. We're not, we're not seeking supporters for the value of their donations, or their contributions. I mean we do, we do ask for a modest annual fee or lifetime membership. It's much, we want much more.

That people are going to be engaged and part of the pursuit of the agenda. And think about how in their own angling, for mahseer, and their own other activities which may impact on the mahseer range countries or their engagement even in how they invest for instance in whether their investments are going towards hydro electric power schemes in South Asia or Southeast Asia just how we can work on this agenda. Because mahseer are not going to readily generate the kind of constituency that Trout Unlimited has. Or the Wild Salmon Center out in Oregon. You know these these are fish that have a much wider participatory constituency, and a far more affluent constituency of all. Like the Atlantic salmon too. And mahseer is out there in remote countries with a lot of population pressure. Countries that are far away with a lot of population pressure. And with conservation still a very fragile agenda, when put against the pressures, the forces of economic development. And so. Just thinking through how you can support that agenda. And spread the influence spread the word.

**Ian Pett** [00:48:35] Just like to say how much I enjoy coming North America. Because the issue of public access, and the amount of the natural environment which is still left in pretty good shape, and how much is being recovered from the damages of the 19th and early 20th centuries, is is very impressive. Just being able to tell people how states like Idaho are taking out dams, and you're thinking about building them in Nepal and India you know kind of like, well let's look through the process and consider. And so the these things are very important to me. I find it always a real regeneration to come to somewhere like Montana or Alaska. And just see the world a little bit more like it was created and has evolved. Best thing for me last week was not not any particular trout that I caught it was seeing an osprey taking a trout right in front of me right in front of the drift boat, coming up over our head with trout still wiggling. To be in places where that can still happen is very special and I hope that you can get a lot more people out of the cities, to experience this one day. For me this is this is the big church. The great outdoors. And nature.