

wade-jeremy-2017-03-30.mp4

[00:00:09] Yeah I mean I my my beginning.

[00:00:14] My beginnings and it can be to start that again.

[00:00:18] How could I be. I really had several false starts when it came to angling. My parents gave me gave me a fishing rod. I didn't really know what to do with it. I didn't know it. None of my family fish. That was part of the problem. So I went down to the river and I could see some. That's one place I could see these fish that were shooting around and I was bombing them with pieces of bread and I couldn't understand why they weren't taking it. And I did come away with this idea that angling is it's just it's just. This incredible waste of time. You just you just go out and you get cold and uncomfortable and you don't catch anything. There was though a friend of mine at school at primary school so same age as me and he did have a grasp of the basics so I think that's because his grandfather was primarily a. Fly fisherman a trout fisherman. So Mike my friend Simon Faithfull who was just a.

[00:01:18] Couple of months older than me I believe in primary school.

[00:01:23] He and I went fishing with him. He loaned me some some equipment that belonged to his his younger brother.

[00:01:30] So stuff that was actually appropriate to the job in hand and taught me some of the basics like it's about it's about stealth and also don't necessarily if you can see the fish they can see you. The chances are you're not going to catch them unless you're very skilled. I go to somewhere where the water's deep but you can't see the fish sit back don't jump around.

[00:01:49] So he was he was very instrumental just by knowing a little bit more than I did and then some years later in the same village there was a legendary figure. He was the local cobbler. So he really repaired shoes and he was a guy called Frankie Paige and he was interesting. He he was he was a deaf mute. So he couldn't he didn't hear. He couldn't speak. You know he could make some kind of sounds he could make sounds that vaguely sounded like Fish Names like a child you know something you see saying chop and I would go down there I would take the family's shoes down there to be repaired from time to time but I but I would also talk with him or communicate with him and he had a little just a little slate and a chalk and would communicate. With that and he was well known to catch fish from that river. And like nobody else used to catch and occasionally come across him sort of over the field and he'd be there on his own. And I did have this idea that well I don't know I had this idea. More recently that maybe maybe something to do with not being able to communicate so well with people. He did seem to have this special something when it came to understanding fish. And it's wonderful.

[00:03:11] And what was the river. It was the river store in Suffolk in southeast England.

[00:03:22] Well I started off catching a roach fishing a little silvery Roach Gudrun. Which of these little brown fish with the bubbles and then getting more exciting perch was in the same perch you have here. The little yellow perch I was in it.

[00:03:42] And then so the process was very much first of all it's all about catching just catching any fish at all normally going to be small and then gradually it's bigger fish different fish.

[00:03:55] And I used to get very excited by child. I caught a couple of quite decent sized chops sort of three four pounds and you know you get that seven pound line and I with a narrow bit of river with just bounded by by reeds. That's that's very exciting. Though I see like my sort of slowly slowly catching pine cone there is again there's something very I don't know I could feel it even then something very visceral about it's a predator it's got that it's got that look it's got those teeth and there's something else kicks in when you're fishing for predators.

[00:04:37] I mean this is this is a hard one because the thing is I fear so many different places. It's very hard to single out a particular place. There are a lot of places where. I would have liked to have spent more time.

[00:04:49] But the nature of what I do and I'm just in there for a few days that and then I'm out and I'm left thinking or you know I would have.

[00:04:57] What were some of those places that you would like to revisit. Oh I mean so many.

[00:05:01] I mean I went up on top and fishing fly fishing for tarpon in Nicaragua probably years ago.

[00:05:10] And again what was quite frustrating that was obviously obvious just starting to get the hang of it. That's often the case. I was just starting to get the hang of it.

[00:05:17] I got caught a few fish and then it's time to go but there was one particular creek there it's just it was I mean like maybe 30 feet across mangroves down the sides and there were fish 200 pound fish in that creek some of the other places I think this is not any particular spot but one one place I fished a few times as the the Quiver River in Guyana. This has the distinction of being. You've got a lot of the Amazonian species in but because. Guyana generally is more preserved than the actual you know the state of that river is a lot healthier than a lot of the Amazon system. And you know there are some nice surprises there. But having said that I mean the last time I went back I was quite shocked by how things had deteriorated just in the space of two years since my previous visit.

[00:06:30] I might I might leave the brain on scan and if any if any other if any if any spots come up particular spots that there's there are places like.

[00:06:43] I spent a lot of time in South America. I traveled I spent 10 years going to Brazil every year for run about three months and there was one lake that I kept going to. I never really felt called a variety of species that I was trying to catch your eye upon. I never got marijuana from this particular line. There weren't very many there it turned out I saw a few. But that's like very much I just I just learned so much from fishing that was so much about. How the Amazon works how the people. Kind. Of.

[00:07:22] In terms in terms of fish that I haven't caught but I'm pretty much ticked off everything on the list that I that I had when I was starting out.

[00:07:30] This is this. There might be a few. There might be one or two others that there is a type of bubble that lives in the in the Middle East and the Tigris and Euphrates in Iran and Turkey. That's that's very interesting and because it doesn't really it does Greece sort of fit into the right category to make a river monsters episode from I've not gone and done that. But in terms of fish that I do like to fish for again the list is huge. I mean so many places that I go to for filming it it'll be my very often not always but very often it'll be my one. By one attempt for this fish and because the way the way the filming works is that normally it's it's three weeks to make an episode of that three weeks. The amount of time line fishing is typically about three or four days. I mean sometimes if we know it's going to be really hard it might be 10 or 11 days but normally what we're after. Unlike a lot of fishing shows we're just we're just off to one fish which is which is big enough to make the program the number of times where.

[00:08:45] I struggle to understand the water struggle to understand the place I've spoken to the locals. So I've. Been trying things and then finally it works like get a fish and I have that feeling but right I understand this place now I've cracked it. There's a bigger one down there with my name on it. And then what happens at that point is that the director will step in and go Yes but we don't need another one. You know this will do for the program. We've got a lot of other work to do. So you can't fish anymore. And so you know there's lots of places I would like to go back without a film crew and with a relaxed timescale. And. Fish for those bigger ones that I never.

[00:09:30] I think the good thing about about a time constraint though is that is that well I find it you know it does concentrate your mind. Yeah. And and so if if time is unlimited. Yeah maybe I don't want unlimited time but if time is unlimited you know you can.

[00:09:47] Nothing's happening. Well we'll just we'll just see if anything turns up. But if time is limited you I find that I'm much more focused on the thing with angling is always if nothing's happening. The big question is is do I persevere with what I'm doing now or do I switch things you can't do both. Well I mean sometimes somebody just chuck another rod out. No it doesn't work like that. There's no there's no control experiment. You've got to make that decision. Do I. Do I stick at this or do I try something else. And.

[00:10:20] When I when I look back over the years that I've been that I've been doing the TV programs I mean the the success that we have been we've had is quite incredible. And I think part of it is it's it's been fishing in a very focused way. It's maybe not the way that I would do it if I was on my own because I have this audience like the small audience and the bigger audience. I would possibly like to be a little bit more relaxed. But there's something about that pressure which which I think does bring results.

[00:10:55] Yes I think I think it is case by case basis. I think what happens is that is that people. People always say the angling is about about patients it's not about patients at all. If you if you are aware of the time passing you're doing it wrong.

[00:11:08] If if you are fishing effectively you are in this state of expectation where anything good where something could happen literate at any moment. And I think what happens is that I. Often just have a feeling I have a feeling that this is going to work it might take time but this is going to work some sometimes I have a feeling that this this something's wrong and it might just be for instance you know fishing for Grinch in India it might just be that actually the presentation isn't right. You know the line is slightly hung up on a rock if somebody picks up the bait it's going to feel that resistance. I can't you know I can't feel that led bumping on the bottom line what I'm going to do it bring it in bring it in. I'm going to

put it out again. Yeah that feels good. That feels good. Half an hour later figuring this there's there's something there and it takes it. So it's often it's often that feeling and sometimes that feeling is is the result of a logical process. And I think Oh I think other times I think a lot of a lot of what goes on in your head when you're angling it's there is a process going on but it's unconscious. You are observing things unconsciously. You're taking things in and then you're processing them unconsciously. And suddenly a feeling will pop up like I'm in the wrong place I should be under that tree over there. You don't know why you suddenly have this idea but doesn't come from nowhere. You know you have actually seen things and worked things out without really being.

[00:12:45] Yeah I think to be a good angler people are being observant is very important I mean you know there are certain branches of angling where I mean you can be successful you can be a successful angler by doing it mechanically and just putting in the hours you can you can be very successful doing that. But I'm not sure that can bring a certain amount of satisfaction but I think the real satisfaction.

[00:13:07] From angling comes in solving problems. So if you're just doing the same thing over and over again and catching different fish. Here's one that's a little bit bigger is when there's lovely. I think that's that's not as satisfying as.

[00:13:23] Varying your varying the location varying your approach. And again it's what you're doing is you're building up a building up an understanding body of fish behavior. That's what it is. It's.

[00:13:40] It's all about our relationship with this unseen world which sometimes you can see. But sometimes you can't see it and it's it's it's the challenge of being able to sort of visualize what's going on. And.

[00:13:56] In a way angling and sort of predicting the future. You know if I if I if I put a particular date in this place I'm going to bring out a fish and. I'm going and I'm going to.

[00:14:07] Going to have a catch.

[00:14:08] It's it's it's the satisfaction that you get from angling as it is a very hard thing to analyze. And it's a hard thing to explain but I think. It is sort of old Lawrence.

[00:14:27] I think reading the water is comes with experience a certain amount of it as well as wherever I go I will always try and tap into the local expertise. For instance going to the Amazon first time I went to the Amazon I'm out on this lake and there are things surfacing. In different places and vote via the local fisherman is going nuts. That's a turtle that's an arrow primer. That's you know that's something else. And from my point of view they all look the same. And it takes you a while to two to actually tune in. I think it's a bit like you hear about archaeologists. Thinking more paleontologists and Fossil Fossil collectors suddenly they get that they're looking at all these rocks and bits of stone and stuff they can't see anything suddenly something clicks in them in their head and they can suddenly spot stuff but they weren't spotting before and I think with with with fish it's the same thing and I guess what I found in the Amazon is that you're seeing because there's a language you're seeing you're seeing creatures coming up and and leaving their signatures on the surface.

[00:15:37] They all look the same but after a while you can. Something happens and you can you can you can distinguish. Between them. So I think a certain amount of it is it's just time out on the water and.

[00:15:52] But again you know you'll then I think that's in our opinion. If I put a date that your testing that that hypothesis and then the results that you get or don't get sort of reinforce your your understanding or lack of understanding.

[00:16:08] But yes it's all about I think again that she's something that happens on shoots a certain amount.

[00:16:17] Not so much now because we've been doing it for nine years and people know how I work. I know how the crews work. But in the early days were we.

[00:16:30] We've done our scene setting. We've done our interviews we've done other things he writes. It's now time to finish writing it. We need to catch the fish.

[00:16:38] And so this is a fishing day. So we go down to the water and I'll just wandered out. Or on my arm be in a boat but I'm not I'm just you know I just I'll just I'm just I'm just looking at the water and you know when I come out me here why when you're fishing when you're fishing you know we can we need to get fish. I don't well know Lou like I am actually fishing. This is this is this is as important more important it's not just about getting the love the line in the water it's it's about is about looking at the water and I'm doing it effectively and again sometimes I don't know. Sometimes I am looking for specific signs other times like as I said before and I'm just I'm just trying to get a feeling for this particular water and I think I fish still water but also flowing water flowing water is is is probably more interesting you're trying to get a feel. Again a lot of people who don't fish they think the river is just it's just a linear current. It just does this. But actually you you look closely at the river as you know and it is doing all sorts of other things it's editing and it's not just it's not just editing in two dimensions it's doing that in three dimensions and so it's so you need to have an idea you know how to how deep is it what obstacles are down there what's the current doing. And I think what it comes down to is it's actually if I if I was a fish where where would I be. That's what I'm. That's what I'm. That's really what I'm what I'm trying to do I'm trying to imagine myself into the mind of a fish. So we've got the surface of the water that I can't see through the surface of the water somewhere down there. Fish We hope assuming they are down there where where are they. And if I can work out where they are how do I. How do I present the baited again. Well it's what I used to say to directors was you know it's catching a fish. It's all about it's the right place. It's the right bait in the right place at the right time. Now it could take you weeks or months to get that right. But if you but you could even. It could be the first cast and it's not gonna be the first cast if you just do that at random but if you've actually thought about the process then it could be. And there have been times. That there have been times where I where I have caught the big fish on the first cast or the first day and it sort of seems it can't seem incredible but it's it's that is part of the process.

[00:19:06] It's not just turning up and don't we go it's it's it's it's a process of narrowing it down and having having confidence in what you're doing.

[00:19:20] Yeah I mean I.

[00:19:21] I mean I I do try to get as much information as possible about the target species before I go anywhere. That's often quite patchy information though and often the people

who do really know are the other local fishermen. Obviously a lot of them left me their fishing subsistence fishing for food or they might be fishing commercially. And. That's always a very interesting process actually. Again limited time. Often these people are quite distrustful of me or they're quite doubtful about that they will they will see the equipment that I'm using and they'll go it's not possible to catch one of these fish on online like that. You know we're talking you know because they would put out a hand handling maybe a thick handle and you got to pull something in they're not familiar with the concept of a rod and reel and actually you can. There's another way you know if you're there with with your gear you can you can tie that fish out. And sometimes there's a there's a whole process of. Proving myself to the local fishermen maybe not on the target species but something else you know I can I can catch a smaller type of fish using my kind of gear and you can almost see the penny drop is all.

[00:20:38] And they then become interested in what I'm doing. I mean in the ideal situation they are just as interested in what I'm bringing to the situation as far as what they are.

[00:20:47] And again the ideal situation. You know I will catch something but neither of us could have done on our own. It's it's it is a collaboration and I'm just trying to get I've gone off on a huge tangent here and as I often do. But the question was about.

[00:21:05] Really about knowing a species about knowing the species.

[00:21:08] Yeah well Well again I think you see a petite commercial subsistence commercial fisherman. Their livelihood depends on very much on. Understanding that fish. So if it's possible. So you know I just try and.

[00:21:24] Tap into their knowledge as much as possible. Ideally ideally that involves me speaking their language.

[00:21:33] I mean there's this but there is this great thing about your angling is this wonderful. It is a common language you will find people all over the world. There is a there is a real. There is this real bond. Between people who fish from different cultures. But if I can speak their actual language or some of it so that I'm not having to go through a translator or it is not just sign language.

[00:21:55] So I spent a lot of time learning you know I'm not I'm not a natural linguist but trying to learn bits of languages so that I can. So you know the quality of information that I get that I get from local fishermen is better.

[00:22:15] Yeah I mean look in the case of Portuguese what I did I found I got a language course before I went to Brazil the first time and this was it was exercises and and it was and it was tapes and I actually spent I spent three hours a day every day for three months and then when I when I arrived in Brazil I found that my ability to converse was was minimal.

[00:22:41] I could buy bus tickets and I could do this and that and you know getting getting to a sort of a conversational level took a lot of time. A lot of work. And the interesting thing about Brazil as well is it's it's a different language from European Portuguese. But soon as you get into the Amazon there is a huge vocabulary of indigenous words there that if you took so many say from Portugal where you wouldn't know what any of those words meant you got up here.

[00:23:08] It's a channel going through the going through the forest. Let me get it. It's when the water is falling and then then it just you know you get a little bit of a rise in the water before it goes down or there's all this terminology which is largely geographical features names of fish. This kind of thing. So that takes a lot of a lot of time and you know life is too short to do that for every single place every single language but wherever I do go I do try and yeah I'll I'll I'll try and get some kind of language course if I've got time and again they're very variable some good someone not so good.

[00:23:43] You know I sort of I'm sort of able to tell now what's what looks good and what doesn't but it's yeah it is hard work. But it really does pay dividends. Well when I used to travel on my own I would just you know what I did have then was was a certain amount of.

[00:24:07] The luxury of time so I would just I would ask around you know who. For instance in Brazil. You know I was trying to catch our retirement for a long time. So who not everybody fishes for an hour or so who fishes for our opponent. And I would sort of get put in touch with with some of those people. And then but very often that you know they. They have their own agenda. They don't they don't want some hanger on coming along. They don't they don't want me fishing with a rod. And. Part of my whole process of understanding our opponent was actually teaming up with our opponent fisherman you know maybe maybe a group of four or five people who were going off for 10 days into the forest and I am just part of the team. So I'm I'm largely observing them but also I might be sort of I might be sort of mucking in and doing some of it you know doing some of the work as well. Very sort of slow painful.

[00:25:04] Process.

[00:25:09] And and again you know just to hear in that case I was I was I was sort of desperately trying to find a place where it might be possible to catch one on a rotten line and it seemed that nowhere would that be possible because they're just the where I was going as a tribute to the real put us in this sort of southern tributary of the Amazon. And it turns out that it very heavily fished commercially and our opponent just fished for everywhere and they all fished for in such a way that the fish that aren't caught are just so terrorized by the whole process that they're never going to take a they're never going to take. A bait. And. I started off thinking Well a lot of people are saying well you know if you go somewhere that's really remote you're going to find this untouched lake and you forget forget it. Are these these people get absolutely everywhere. But what happened was that afterwards sort of again I sort of proved myself to this bunch of people and they just said to me at one particular stage I said well there's this one lake that we used to fish and we don't really fish that now because it's too deep it's too snarky for our nets. Maybe if you go there.

[00:26:25] You might have something that's where I caught my first error which was very big but but it was a long long process of getting to know people.

[00:26:33] Nowadays when we're filming we. We obviously we can't go through that whole long process.

[00:26:38] So there's a certain amount of remote research that goes on you know a lot of the programs that we do that there are sort of established fisheries and we will we will use a guide if there's if there's a good guide they will pretty much guarantee that you know they've they've worked they've worked it all out. You come along with us for two or three days you will catch the fish you want. The difficulty is in the places where there isn't really

that kind of recreational fishing infrastructure where you have got to work it out for yourself and to be honest that's the kind of that is the situation which is much more interesting. But it is much more challenging. And yet again the key is hopefully there's not will be very many people who fish that locals and it's just talking to talking to local people getting a feel for who knows what they're talking about and then going right.

[00:27:35] OK. Can you come along with us. Well let's team up and let's see what we can do.

[00:27:46] A huge amount to be honest in pockets in pockets. In India for example. That will be there. There are a few places short stretches of river where that river is protected and it's again it's largely for the bay for the benefit of outsiders to come in and fish. It's not so much local people. I mean here you get some sort of well the Indians will be they will they will do that. But yeah.

[00:28:13] If that is playing a bit of a role I have seen it in Brazil it's you know South America. It's starting to happen. I mean what used to happen there would be Brazil is the country I know most about and Brazil has this.

[00:28:29] You know there's this country cultural thing about a bunch of you know a bunch of guys will be out there will all go off together they'll take lots of beer and they'll take their big polystyrene tops full of ice and at the start of the trip you know that's a bus that's full of beer and what they'll do they'll catch fish and basically the fish go in the ice and they take them back and they realize over the course of a few years that you know where all the fish going there's not so many now as there were a few years ago and catch a release is starting to take off more in Latin America.

[00:29:02] I would say that they like their fishing and they're starting to realize that in order to protect this we don't just take everything home with us.

[00:29:12] Other parts of the world know it's still sort of almost incomprehensible. A lot of places I go. I mean first of all people.

[00:29:26] People's attitude to me was just trying to explain to them. I've travelled thousands of miles to try and catch some fish which I'm then just going to put back in the water.

[00:29:35] It's like it's in your yard. This is surely just an elaborate cover story for something else.

[00:29:45] I think I think recreational angling does have a huge part to play in protecting our rivers worldwide.

[00:29:58] I guess now that I think you know and certainly I don't know it's hard in certain in certain places it is hard to see it catching on to any significant extent.

[00:30:07] I mean somewhere like India where there is just such desperate for food amongst so many people.

[00:30:17] It's always going to be a small minority thing.

[00:30:25] Yeah I mean yeah that was that was quite interesting isn't it that this is an episode a lot of people talk about and I get I do get emails. Normally what it is. It's accusing me of being heartless. You know you are. You want to put that fish back into the river rather than feed it to starving native. So I'm thinking right.

[00:30:45] Just because you know just because somebody lives in Africa and that they're black doesn't mean there are starving starving native you know actually the people in that river are they can beat the other cultivate food. Nobody's nobody starving. They don't fish. But if they want fish they would they would trade products with the people on the other side of the river and fish. So but the guy I have at that particular point. He's looking at that and thinking that's going to be a good meal for everybody. And yes I'm trying to explain.

[00:31:16] No where we're putting it back in. And I think from my point of view it's quite a complex one to get across.

[00:31:25] This is a big fish.

[00:31:26] It's spent a long time reaching this weight. It's it's important from the breeding point of view. By all means eat smaller fish. If there's plenty of those. If that's if that's not going to make a significant dent. What's interesting though I mean that episode that was in the Congo Congo Brazzaville. What's interesting there is how depleted the fisheries are. It's a it's a very densely thought.

[00:31:56] It's it's a very thinly populated country.

[00:32:02] But because of the nature of the country everybody lives on the on the riverbanks. So there's lots of jungle. Very few people live in the jungle. Right out in the jungle pygmies but most people are on the riverbanks that a lot of this is just for fishing all the time and there they are doing things like. They're waiting until fish are all breeding and you've got young fish swimming around in sort of sunken vegetation and then they're just pulling those out with very very fine mesh nets and when you're doing that it has an impact very quickly.

[00:32:42] It in the Amazon as well it's very hard to get across the idea that you know I've spoken to Amazon fishermen who will hold sort of two contradictory beliefs at the same time. Think they will they will. They will tell me in one breath back when I was back when I was young. There were fish everywhere you as you know you would always catch more fish than you needed. And then they would say How is it possible.

[00:33:07] To. How is it possible to finish all the fish here. Just look at the immensity of water. But actually. What they were saying was that was that you know there is this very big big impact.

[00:33:23] I think there's also you notice this in South America and particularly I have there is quite an amount of antipathy amongst fishermen towards people who they label as ecologists conservationists because their experience is outside outsiders people they don't know. Telling them you've got to stop hunting you've got to stop fishing without giving them any. Alternative for it. For a lot of people the only the only way they've got to actually make some cash is maybe to catch our opponent which is illegal now catch our plane assaulted sell it to some middle man. You've made a little bit of money. If you're not going to do that you're not going to make any money from anything else. So quite a lot of the people some of the people I know in the Amazon are technically poachers which in the eyes of a lot of

people means that you know they're bad people but they're not bad people they're they are they are purely doing what they have to do in their circumstances to survive. So you know the whole thing about how we how we protect fish stocks is very difficult. What one thing they are doing quite successfully in South America is what they call extractive reserves where instead of saying this is a this is a national park you know you can't you can't harvest anything here. You can't you can't you can't fish. What they're doing is they're saying right. Okay. The people who live here can harvest. And what we're going to do it but it's going to be managed. We're going to we're going to bring in some some scientists they're going to do population studies and they're going to work out how much you can harvest and also for instance you know in the case of our climate which is my. Sort of a specialist subject whereas normally the trade in our apartment is is prohibitive if it comes from one of these sort of managed places then then that's okay. You can actually sell it on the open market it's got a provenance or value that is that is starting to work. You know you'll get you're giving the local people a stake in the. In their environment you're keeping out the sort of the predatory outsiders who can come in and maybe give somebody they get that they get the chief drunk they can sort of give a bit of money to somebody then they just clean out some lakes and off they go. So you know there's there's there's a bit of progress being made. There is a bit of realization that some kind of management is needed.

[00:36:09] Absolutely. Yes. Yes.

[00:36:11] Yes I feel this very much. And what I'm going to be talking about sort of does very much. Touchable mount. To expand on that I think well because it's it's. Yeah fish rivers is something that is given so much to me and I think again in my case it was to be really selfish. It would.

[00:36:43] If everything dies out then I'm the person who's who's documented the you know who's documented all these things before they become extinct.

[00:36:50] I mean what I want I sort of say a picture that would that would be. And also I think because of what I do I do actually have this very privileged position I do. I do have a view and a global view of the way things are. That not many other people have. And under the program that I make isn't really about facts it's not really about that. It's you know that's maybe sort of far below the surface. But I do feel that I do have to find some way of giving a but the bigger picture of what the what the rivers.

[00:37:30] Are like out there. And although I'm not an expert you know what what this what this might mean to us and what.

[00:37:38] What what we can. Maybe.

[00:37:48] Very big subject. I mean the thing is you said you say that my position gives me sort of it gives me access to a soapbox.

[00:37:56] Not so much through the programs that I do or not so much in programs that I've done until now. Because they it's they're somewhat more you know somewhat more limited in what they what they cover.

[00:38:08] I mean what we try and do there they are very much you know popular programs. So it's about. Well if I can sort of summarize very quickly I sort of you know that it's so much like I'm like a detective procedural somebody is out there leg bitten off.

[00:38:26] What what did it. And in the in the course of finding that out and then actually producing the count the culprit in front of the camera. We we learn a certain amount along the way.

[00:38:38] About the place the people of the river. But. The trouble is with these programs is they they actually give us somewhat false view of the world. They give they give this idea that these these huge fish are are everywhere. You know all you gotta do is you just gotta to dip your toe in the water Africa and something's gonna bite it off. Actually it's not like that at all. You really do have to you know most places you go to you know you're not going to find these fish you've really got to be selective about it about that. And that message doesn't really come across in the programs that I'm doing at the moment. I have ideas for the future but but but yes I have. I do have access to a lot more. Information background information which I do feel this responsibility is put out there.

[00:39:28] And there's you know there are so many so many aspects to that as you mentioned. As you know it's the importance of catch and release. It's not just releasing the fish it's actually how you look after the fish before you release it. It's making people just more thoughtful. I think that's what it is. I think it's it's just making. And again I think I think what what the program does although not not sort of explicitly is I think anglers generally through them through the process of angling you think more about your place in the world and your relationship with other creatures.

[00:40:03] And I think a good program about angling which speaks to anglers.

[00:40:08] But it also speaks to non anglers is trying to make them think about the same things.

[00:40:14] And I think there are lots of things I would like to say to people but what doesn't work is wagging your finger at them. If you if you is a bit like again that is the Amazon poachers just telling them that they should stop hunting manatees or whatever. It's not going to do anything at all. You know you've got to.

[00:40:33] You can't. You can't do that. You have any excuse. You've gotta do it another way. And I think making people care about Rivers about fish.

[00:40:43] It's it's it's not about giving them the answers it's about giving them good information. It's about stimulating them to have their own thoughts. I think that's that's the way that's the way to try and do it. That's the way I try and do it at the moment and that's the way I want to.

[00:40:59] Keep trying to do it.

[00:41:08] I think I think part of it is about economic value and I think part of it is that is that thing that's that's the trouble is you know to to march in the modern world you know the only things that you talk about are the things that you can quantify the things you can't quantify. You can't quantify easily. You tend to forget about the whole you know just having a. Having a nice clean environment just from the point of view of of of human well-being both both physical and mental is so important as well.

[00:41:41] You know I've seen people who must die.

[00:41:44] You see people in all parts of the world just living in the middle of just trash and fumes and filth. And it is that is just the that is just the background to existence. And you sort of you know as I'm sure people get used to it you almost tune it out. But I imagine if it wasn't like that. Yeah it's.

[00:42:12] Exactly Australia is trying to it's trying to link. How do you link into people's own self-interest. That is the thing.

[00:42:20] And yeah I mean economic value is one way of doing it but I think again I think a lot of people are going to be quite sort of cynical and you know it's a little bit like the say protecting a stretch of the river in India. Well who's that going to benefit. You know it might. It might take a couple of local people and they get fairly menial jobs in a lodge or something but a lot of that money might be going off somewhere else.

[00:42:41] How do you give people a real stake.

[00:42:43] And I think that's that is the good thing about these these extractive reserves in Brazil you you are demonstrably giving people a real stake in their environment. That's. Well I mean the I think I think it comes down to sort of four things mainly I mean there's you know that there's overfishing where that is driven by the need for food.

[00:43:16] Dams comes into the picture as it was well you know dams or this particular have great potential for helping people. But as there is the flip side of that climate change is something that I it's interesting I wouldn't say I've witnessed directly but I I.

[00:43:34] The number of times I've turned up somewhere and the conditions haven't been what I was expecting and you get talking to people and they go Yeah that's because normally it never rains in September but now. But it rained and therefore the water's high. And you know anglers are always looking for excuses but you know this is happening so consistently and so many different parts of the world. And it seems that.

[00:43:59] In place after place people listen. People are saying the thing about fishermen is that if their livelihood depends on catching fish they are watching that river. They're not doing it in a casual way. They are watching that river more closely than any scientist and they're doing that in places the scientists don't go to and they are telling me when I turn on these places that you know the last 10 or 15 years or so that the predictability of the of the river's cycle is just you know it's it's something's happening. And so there's a lot of information out there but it's all in people's heads and these people are dying off.

[00:44:37] So that information sort of needs recording pollution likewise again in places it's very very obvious.

[00:44:50] And and it could be really bad in some places as well. And you know what what surprises me in a way is why people aren't more angry. I think it's probably lack of understanding. It's like what's that stuff that ends up in the water.

[00:45:08] What is that possibly doing to your health. And I think it's very ironic that in the so-called age of information some of the really important information is is not finding its way to vehicle.

[00:45:26] But I think you know I think there are people who sort of know what's going on.

[00:45:29] I spoke spoke to people in India who were aware of the appalling state of drinking water but they're just powerless to do anything about it. So I think I think pollution in particular is something that it's it's not just about the fish. It's not just about the environment. This is about people's health. If it was possible to get more people mobilized about it. You know obviously we live in an industrial world and we we produce waste products but. But those responsible in this irresponsible way to.

[00:46:12] To deal with those.

[00:46:14] Yeah I know just from my personal experience. Same person clean this place up in Asia but there's a lot to play especially in the urban areas in Delhi or in Kathmandu or last year or Myanmar and what have you. I don't know if it's just kind of a cultural thing or what it is but just the roadside or your cab drivers. I can't just throw you a bottle.

[00:46:43] I tell you what it is. I think this was really brought home to me quite recently. I think you know the only the only way to deal with that is I think I think as a species worldwide there is this there is this disconnect between public space and the private space. So you go to someone's house and it's spotless. You got to take your shoes off and the people the other people there are beautifully they're dressed in clean clothes. They pride themselves on their cleanliness. You take one step outside their door and it is horrendous. And a lot of that waste comes from from there. And I think the big challenge is making people aware this is a false. This is a false boundary water. You know we are we are composed of 55 60 percent of our water comes from it's not snappier that is circulating it circulating is coming from the room it is going to the rivers make people understand that make people understand the implications of that. You know you you are taking in water once that water got in it was that possibly going to do to you. That's that's the real challenge that we face.

[00:48:01] I have not had fishing partners for a long time. I'm one of those anglers I'm quite antisocial I like my life. I like fishing on my own.

[00:48:08] I do what I do sometimes like fishing with people and when I used to I used to fish for Kabul or in England. I know people in America and they're quite funny.

[00:48:16] It's a copy of this trash fish in Europe carp are almost sort of worshiped as this you know this supremely hard you know people don't know devote years that's a good I know he spent like four years trying to catch one particular fish from one particular lake but I used to do a lot of that and occasionally I'd go and fish with somebody.

[00:48:39] What makes a good fishing partner. I don't know because I think fishing is interesting angling is interesting because it's it's we all go on about it's not competitive person it's not really you know it's it's not me against another person it's just me against the fish. Well actually that's sort of not true. It's always and in fact it's almost gets to the point where anglers will have arguments you know I'm more uncompetitive than you are.

[00:49:01] No you're not. I'm all right. But as you know it's me.

[00:49:05] But I think you know you can't you can't get it. You can. You can have a sort of relationship where you are you are sort of a you are a team where you fish together you put your resources to boost the morale of the other person. And okay if they catch a big fish that's part of you that you know might be sort of a bit jealous there. But in the fullness of time it will or it will all even out.

[00:49:36] Yeah. So you gotta know. So you want someone who's sort of. It's not competitive. It's not really the right thing.

[00:49:46] I think I think you can almost approach to the question the other way because I think you know you talk about what makes a good angler.

[00:49:52] But I think there's there's something about angling that affects the type of person you are you are you are what you do. Up to up to a point and even if you spend if you spend time by the water if you spend time fishing I've noticed it. I've met not just Anglos but people who fish. One for one thing that's remarkable I found as you go to other countries people even people who have to fish they have to catch fish every day to feed themselves there is still a certain enjoyment but still something they get out of it beyond just looking up at the protein and the calories that it affects the person they are. And it makes them makes them sort of like even minded. You know they tend to be calmer people more accepting you know they tend to be better people like I'd say you know we all have our moments where we lose that. So I think anybody who is like a who is like a true angler in the true sense of the word was just a dilettante let's just try this.

[00:51:02] Anybody who's been fishing for a while. Ought to be a good a good ending.

[00:51:14] I think it is universal. Naturally you know I'm just trying to think that I'm trying to think if I if I would. Would it be possible to dislike somebody who is who is an Anglo. And I know that for instance there are there are there are there are people I know of who.

[00:51:33] Without mentioning any names maybe people in public life who I sort of read about them in newspapers might take a very dim view that I hear that they're an Anglo.

[00:51:45] If I was to meet that person I dislike them would I. What would be my reaction. I don't know.

[00:51:53] I think possibly I probably would still dislike some people but I think but I think if you took a sample of anglers and a sample of general population the percentage of anglers that I would dislike would be a lot smaller than the percentage of randomly selected people. I mean I do I do sometimes get asked this and it's very hard I find I sort of start with one thing and then you can sort of go on and on.

[00:52:19] But actually one one thing that I think is very important is it's it's it's it's thick. You know don't disengage your brain don't just do it mechanically think and and also be prepared to experiment you know try something different. I think that's very important.

[00:52:39] And I think the thing to stress with that is if you try something different and it doesn't work you still learn something.

[00:52:48] There's nothing worse than particularly in what I do.

[00:52:52] I'll go away several thousand miles over a short period of time in a particular place and I might have an idea about or you know an idea about trying something and I hate to come away from that water without having tried that because you never know. I mean it might it might not have worked but it might they might have been it might have been the thing. So. The. The. The I was going to say the great anglers I mean what's the point of you know again how are we competitive. What do you. What is angling about.

What's the point of angling. I know that was a subject of your previous talk here. What is the point of angling and I think it's something you can only measure yourself. You can only know yourself whether. It's doing it for you. What it's doing for you. But I think that that's the whole thing about trying something trying something that other people aren't trying and getting a result for instance is very satisfying and on those occasions where you don't get the result doesn't matter. You know that they're all going to be those times where it doesn't it doesn't work.

[00:54:00] And then there's the obvious things obviously about remember Fish are wild animals. You got to be stealthy. You know don't just jump up and down and you know just stealth so stealth. Think oh yeah. Thinking yeah.

[00:54:15] I mentioned this earlier on. It's put yourself in the mind of the fish. Put yourself in the mind of the fish experiment be stealthy. That covers. I think having.

[00:54:37] I think having a sort of an academic understanding of Zoology helps. I mean. I mean what's interesting though is is that a lot of a lot of anglers are well a lot of amateurs in all fields. You know if they were enthusiastic they they they have an understanding. They have a knowledge that actually can surpass that of academics. So there are lots of anglers out there who don't have formal qualifications but they're really good naturalists that really understand the way fish were.

[00:55:09] The way of the natural world works. But I think I think coming from Michael if you coming with a sort of zoological knowledge does does help me having worked as a teacher I mean that certainly helps with the broadcasting side of it. I find but in terms of the actual fishing.

[00:55:34] It gives it gives an extra dimension. Having having a bit of a sort of scientific knowledge about about fish but it's not it's not a central.

[00:55:51] I find writing incredibly hard or to be more specific that the process of writing it changes along the course of doing a piece of work and b that the whole thing about getting the getting your thoughts straight in the first place kept getting the blank sheet of paper. Is it's terrifying you know getting moving on from there. However once I get to the point where it's starting to work.

[00:56:21] I used to be an advertising copywriter as well.

[00:56:24] Sometimes you might spend an entire week thinking about one sentence you know. That's what. A lot of people just don't realize all the slogans that come out of you know such a lot of thought goes into some of that stuff. But when I'm writing something when it gets to the point where it's starting to work and I'm publishing I get quite obsessive about that.

[00:56:47] About that that becomes really satisfying what you maybe you write a paragraph you mean you move a few things around you you knock it around and suddenly you sit back and you look at it and you have just have no idea where it came from. Where did that come from. Don't write that it is just so fantastic. I can't possibly written that you know there's not that often but you know that you get that feeling and that is tremendous sort of positive reinforcement. So whereas in the early stages of writing something you've really got to drag me kicking and screaming to my desk. The final stages of it you can't get me away sir. But I came to writing through being a reader.

[00:57:23] I think like a lot of writers. And what does what does good writing do. It engages with your imagination it creates pictures and you know I read an awful lot about it when I when I started fishing when I was fishing for small fish on the river but I had dreams of going and catching big fish. And what really fueled a lot of art was it is reading about them I can just imagine myself in those situations and I suppose back at that time it popped into my mind that if I could have this this ability this skill what an amazing thing that would be two to.

[00:58:06] To affect people so profoundly that you can you can influence the course of their life. So.

[00:58:14] But you know but I sort of I don't write as much as I should because it is such a painful process. These dangers. Yes. Through through through reading and sort of. And then when you start to write you obviously you look at different writers and it's like well why do I like this writer and not this one. What is it about this that's deconstructing. Let's reverse engineer. How does this how is this bit of writing and life. This is. Well I mean there's there's there's there's a really good English author called Chris Yates. And he he's he held the book. The cop record for a long time. He's an interesting guy. He in the age of sort of very very high tech gear and very elaborate approaches and rigs and things and he's very much he's a bit of a throwback. You know he should use his cane roads and Senator Beans and. He communicates very well.

[00:59:16] I think the essence of angling and then open the atmosphere of it and he does this legendary like in England called Red my pool which is sort of a pseudonym.

[00:59:27] And it was this actually very sort of exclusive place that a few people were fortunate enough to fish that held these monstrous carp.

[00:59:35] And I never fished there. I never went there. But I just. Felt that I knew it so well through the writing about it not just from Chris Yates but other people writing about him in particular. So you're almost vicariously sort of on that water. There were other other other people writing in England more sort of factually.

[01:00:03] There was somebody who influenced the course of freshwater fish and of course fishing a lot. Basically what we what we used to call specimen hunting you know there was this idea that you know people always think it's all about luck catching fish. But when I was starting fishing it sort of coincided with this this era of specimen hunting the idea that you could actually target bigger fish and you can catch big fish not through like the study and what you do.

[01:00:29] Uncle Richard Walker wrote lots of books still wrangling. It was a classic. Another one called no need to lie which was his part of the Angela's prayer but that came from. Stories of a fish that he called.

[01:00:45] And more recently I'm just trying to think.

[01:00:47] I mean the great thing you know of course there are some some renowned American writers who are who I have rant I don't know I'm not such a I'm not such a sort of a fly and or myself but I. But I love reading you know sort of so I'm going over and John.

[01:01:07] One that was a real surprise to me the brother of a friend of mine some years ago was sitting with his nose in a book and he just got it back for like the entire day. And on the cover of the book is a picture of a fish with a 50 dollar bill in its mouth. And when he finished it he gave it to me and said You should read this. And. I thought you know it's about it's about fishing and it's like. You know sort of why I have this duty to read this book. He thinks I'm going to enjoy it just because it's about fishing. It was actually a book by Carl Hiaasen called double whammy about the pro the competitive bass second.

[01:01:52] Absolutely. So even though I know I knew nothing I know not much I know more about about that whole scene. But what that says about anglers and also the underbelly of angling the competitiveness the backstabbing sometimes gets in there and it's the first Carl Hiaasen that I'd ever read and I'm not a big Carl Hiaasen fan. Somebody once said you know if Charles Dickens was alive now you know he would be.

[01:02:18] Doing stuff you know he'd be like that's that's cool. Mean it's those stories larger than life characters and the backdrop is it's Florida double whammy was a great book.

[01:02:29] So that influenced me a great entertainer for sure. But you know any any any good writing about any subject. I just I like very much what I like is the. That's obviously the content. Of the writing but what I like very much is is the rhythm.

[01:02:52] Of Writing.

[01:02:53] And what's interesting is like I don't read an awful lot of poetry I don't know a lot about poetry. But I think in prose you can have such amazing rhythm and that's that's one of the main things that determines for me whether my writing works or not. So some of the authors I've mentioned I'm sure a lot of that is a lot of writers it is about the rhythm which is just it's just in.

[01:03:24] It's a it's a really difficult one. I think if you want results then then go go with the well trodden or the places that the people have been to before. If you want a real adventure just pick somewhere.

[01:03:39] Where you where you can't find information. Let's just go there and I think what you have to do is is a certain amount of research before you go. But sometimes sometimes you just reach the point where you just go. You just got to go there and be prepared to fail. Let me see. I mean I did. This this the first trip I did was to India. I did actually catch a fish on that trip. The second trip I did was to Thailand and Southeast Asia. Two months didn't catch anything. The second trip I went on two months to what was then Zaire which is now. Democratic Republic of Congo.

[01:04:23] Didn't catch anything. No.

[01:04:28] Other other trips where I've next to nothing or very little. But over the long haul all of that has been has been worthwhile. I'm what he does he put that that does put success into perspective as well. Do some work on the language before you go.

[01:04:47] It pays huge dividends. I mean getting fluent in any language is a huge commitment but you know that's that's almost unrealistic but if you can if you can learn a certain amount before you go that's that really helps. Travel Yeah. What to take. That's it. That's a difficult one I think you know don't take too much care. Travel light.

[01:05:05] Fish. I mean it's a good discipline cause it makes you fish simply and for a long time I was travelling with just two rods I'd have one rod you know one failure poky thing with a fairly cheap multiplier rail with my 80 pound mono line. That's my heavy fish Rod. Then I'd have a spinning rod and maybe I'll have six super light as well. We'll just take some light some very light line try and. Try and condense it down into into the basics. It's not so much about the gear.

[01:05:34] It's about being mobile and be prepared to have an adventure and be open to other things as well. You know you're going to you know you can. I started off very sort of tunnel vision normal fish but you're going to start hearing legends about giant snakes and goodness knows what. You know sort of mythical creature. You know okay if you're talking about that you know let's hear some more of that. Yeah. Just go. And.

[01:06:08] Keeps on going. You're right about it. You will think that you will remember all these amazing things you can never do. I'm not so good. I keep my journal but jot these things down. I mean the book the boring truth there is that prop probably the most the most worried the most sort of the most sort of danger I've ever felt as is normal is normally driving on a road is normally is mainly some sort of.

[01:06:44] Some overly macho driver who insists on driving three feet behind the car in front in pouring rain on a terrible potholed rail talking to yourself.

[01:06:53] Oh no no no I mean I mean generally speaking you know touch wood I've life for my kid but I'll do that. You know I don't have any dramatic.

[01:07:07] Injuries from fish because you know generally speaking I know what I'm dealing with on careful IP. I've been stabbed a couple of times. Actually there's one exception to that.

[01:07:16] The one exception was I was rammed by in our apartment in 2002 while filming this TV series called Jungle hooks for discovery in the UK. It wasn't a particularly huge aeroplane but.

[01:07:33] Yeah dangerous fish you tend to think about teeth. Our Palmer has nothing much in the way of teeth.

[01:07:38] They do have a very very solid head and they were the males will fight each other during the breeding season that they will and our opponent can kill another our opponent with using his head. I was I was hit by an arrow point. And without any word of exaggeration I was still feeling that after six weeks it was. A very very serious blow. But generally speaking no fish no other things.

[01:08:12] And even even people like you can you see one thing that little people like about the program is they say we like the way that you interact with the people. We like the way you use respect to the locals and all this kind of stuff. And that is a very being very important part of it for me and I'm what. I am again people's imagination. I think it's an interesting again what you're doing is you're possibly giving people information which. Conflicts with their imagination.

[01:08:38] So here are people day. They look very different. They're there. They may be dark skinned. They're saying things that you can't understand. Then they look possibly

quite villainous because their eyes are like theirs. Maybe that's because the sun is there you know.

[01:08:52] And certainly when I started off travelling you'd see people and you'd be very suspicious of them and then when you get to know them you know they're they're fine. I don't I don't really. I hardly ever feel a sense of threat. The only time that I do I mean a city. So it's you know the thing is get out of the city as fast as possible get into get into the countryside. Generally speaking you're going to find the people are lovely wherever you go. I mean there are exceptions to that rule but that tends to be ladies anywhere in the world.

[01:09:27] I think I think it's almost unique. I'm struggling too. I'm struggling to think of something else that would give you the same sort of like passport. If you're just a traveler you're just there. You know I'm just travelling and I may be taking notes. You don't really get that engagement if you're a bird watcher. You know I think I think that's that's going to seem really strange to a lot of people. The only thing I could think of maybe is if you're a musician you know you've got you've got a physical instrument and that's you know that suddenly everyone everybody speaks music everybody knows about music and music and fishing.

[01:10:01] Is there anything else. I don't know how complicated anything. Yeah well I think.

[01:10:13] You hear all the time we are living in the age of information and yet sometimes the information that you want you can't find you can't find it. And so I think having a place like this where you know that you're going to find what you want you know just preserving and not just having a look round the collection quickly a big part of that is because history isn't it. And it's.

[01:10:47] And where else does that record exist of what the world used to be like. And I think I think particularly particularly the underwater world of of rivers. Is that the same now as it's always been. No it's been changed. How has it changed. How do we how are we gonna know that we're only going to know that if somebody makes the effort to actually.

[01:11:11] Keep keep some kind of record. So I think it is very important. I wasn't aware of it until I came here. I'm very pleased to know that this. Do I do. And I'm like I'm probably contractually.

[01:11:36] Yes I certainly do. Sex is limited in providing details as our you're sad. Yeah OK.

[01:11:41] Yes I was taught by the age of information and I'm now withholding information. OK. But no I haven't. No. I think as we were saying earlier. Yeah.

[01:11:53] Rhythm also says it has given me this amazing platform. It has got a tremendous following not just in the States but worldwide. I mean one thing I've noticed how efficient filled in the most out of the way places and people come up to me and go.

[01:12:09] I've watched you on TV you know. And what are you What are you doing here.

[01:12:13] You and so there is this audience that is actually hungry for four more something even if it's not more of the same thing they're hungry for something. And around the world that there is there is a certain recognition.

[01:12:33] And it wouldn't make sense just to sort of walk away.

[01:12:36] I did. I did say a few years ago I was in the meeting and know.

[01:12:39] What are we going to do next year whatever. And I sort of like. I said what's what's wrong with just quitting while you're ahead. And this deathly silence because the TV people it's you you basically keep going. It's only as long as you can. So yeah. River Monsters remorse is coming to an end but I think there is still.

[01:13:01] Work waiting. I think I'm still I'm going to be busy for a bit longer.

[01:13:05] That's great. It does seem like one of those points where eventually you run out of River Monsters and eventually you've explored what you can explore and have to go. But I but I definitely see your point. I think there is an argument to be made that's not often made in television about the idea of. Leaving on top or leave in a head and not kind of. Yes playing it out to the bitter end.

[01:13:28] Exactly. Yes. I mean yeah. River Monsters it was always gonna be something that was that was right. And I think the the best thing to do is to get it right. That's it. But maybe here's something else. Sure. Which may be comes out of it. Maybe it refers back and it links to it flows out of it.

[01:13:47] But let's wait and see.

[01:13:54] Let me see I'm not. It's not a specific story or it might be. Let me see. Because they sort of merged into one. But I think it's the thing I was saying earlier on where where. Yeah let me see this. This happened. Now this is this is a sort of a generic story. I'll see if I can think of a specific example. But it's where it is where you where. You wander down to to a river anywhere in the world. And there's someone there who is fishing. And. If you then just pull out a bit of line however and and you are also you're also fishing. It's that thing w where suddenly you know that there is there is there is the understanding that there might not be any understanding in terms of language or cultural order or whatever or the rest of culture but the fact that you're both fishing. It is this amazing equalizer and it sort of opens things things up and. I've had the experience many times where I know.

[01:15:05] If there wasn't that bad common interest then that wouldn't have been anything. Anything that you just make that you make that link crosses cultural divides is the thing.