

# Todd Scharf Pod

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

fish, steelhead, fly, big, run, bit, river, pretty, water, swing, line, coffee, rod, tributaries, spots, rivers, super, head, anglers, fly fishing

## SPEAKERS

Dave S, unknown speaker..., Todd



Todd 00:01

And throw throw your dump or your poke out in front of you. Sweet back to your D loop is even with you not even behind you. And this give a haul each way. Right? So you can raise your arm a bit. Little backhaul, right? So like let's say think of a double haul single hand cast. You do a backhaul on the water. So you got a really tight little v loop and a little forward haul, and you fling that line 6070 feet and a lot of those spots you only need a 3040 foot cast because you're fishing a high bank side right?



Dave S 00:27

That was Todd Scharf telling us why the single hand spray cast can be an effective tool for steelhead. This is the wet fly swing fly fishing show.



unknown speaker... 00:37

Well, welcome to the wet fly swing fly fishing show where you discover tips, tricks and tools from the leading names in fly fishing. Today, we'll help you on your fly fishing journey with classic stories covering steelhead fishing, fly tying and much more. Hey, how's



Dave S 00:53

it going today? Thanks for stopping by the fly fishing show. We got some big fishing trip giveaways coming up this year and beyond. If you want to check these out, you can head over to wet fly swing comm slash giveaway and sign up for the next giveaway. Todd Scharf is here to break down the things you need to know about catching steelhead on the skeena River. Todd shares some tips on getting away from the crowds what gear you need to fish shallow or deep for fish and why you might want to target salmon and steelhead on your next trip. Before we get started, let's take a quick break for a word from our sponsors. Anglers coffee roast a full range of coffees with one goal in mind delivering excellent coffee to every single angler and I'm one of those anglers who's been loving anglers coffee great tasting robust and good to go. They just released a new subscription program and you can get 20% off of this box and all products at anglers coffee.com just use the coupon code wet fly swing at checkout to get 20% off of great coffee today. That's English coffee.com in today's world of mass produced products don't fly nets has reclaimed the tradition of handcrafted care with their custom wood landing nets still fly His goal is to create a unique Custom Classic wouldn't net that are second to none in quality and can be customized for that little extra touch please head over to wet fly swing comm slash don't fly to get your custom net today. That's wet fly swing comm slash stone fly to get started right now. So without further ado, here is Todd Scharf, from upstream adventures.com. How's it going?



Todd 02:31

It's going pretty good. Dave.



Dave S 02:33

Thanks for coming on the show. We you know all all the guests I have on there's a different road to get to the guests and through you. It's interesting because I love the skeena and I have some connections a few and things like that, but I hadn't really heard your whole story and Opie st the folks at Opie, St. James and Wade, and those guys kind of connected us and I'm, I'm super happy at it because I watched the movie you have going and they did a little short. I guess it's a movie. I don't know what else we call. It's a short little snippet. But yeah, it's really good. I think it was really well produced. And we'll talk a little bit about that today. Before we get there. Can you just talk about how you first got into fly fishing and the skeena and how that brought you to the skin and everything?



Todd 03:14

Yeah, so as as a youth like five or seven year old young little tire biter. I was introduced to

fly fishing from my grandfather. He was a pretty much interior Lake Kamloops rainbow guy. Leighton lake was one of the rivers of lakes. He fished all the time. And he was a steelhead and stuff. But I just I really got into fly fishing basically from him. My dad was a more of a saltwater guy, and didn't know a lot about fly fishing. And so my grandfather took me out, we did a couple weeks camping every year up there and I kind of learned the trout thing before I learned to fish, rivers and stuff, because just, you know, rivers were just that much more of a thing a little more technical, and you could be kind of encapsulated fly fishing Rainbows, you know, in the lake in the lake systems and stuff, which is, you know, a pretty cool way to grow up hooking, you know, seven to, you know, five to seven pound rainbows back in the day and not knowing you know what you're really doing just having the rod ripped out of your hand. Right. So it's definitely interesting, interesting way to start your fly fishing career.



Dave S 04:19

Yeah, so that's awesome. So yeah, you're definitely you're in the the BC has been your sounds like your life and so what about so you look at the canvas and, you know, I actually haven't even finished the Kamloops yet. I mean, I know all about it, but it's amazing. You hear a lot about it. But you've gone more into the steelhead thing. What is the big difference? Why why why not just stick in and be like the Phil Rolly vaster of things as opposed to now you're kind of doing well in the steelhead game.



Todd 04:47

I would just say Dave, just once you kind of you know born and raised on the coast and having the pole you know, I can never be under like, like farther than 100 kilometers away from the ocean just because All natural Miss fish come from that right and it just kind of pulls you to that things and then once you have water pulling around your feet and you feel the river and you start talking flies and you have no idea what is coming in the system that day you could fish the river five days in a row have nothing that six day you you become, you know, you find a little nugget of gold, right. So I think just the knowing factor that these fish are like hard, they're rock hard, they swim from the ocean, everything you know, they're everyone's on the menu to try to eat them. And that so I always joke with my buddies now about like bow means that our trout fishery here is super underrated. So it's a very good fishery and stuff. But I always call those fish a little bit dopey because they're kind of swimming around just eating fish eating food, right, we're the we're the steelhead and address fish that are that come out of the ocean and then swim into a river. They're always in moving water, right? So I feel like myself, I always want to see the next corner of the river. I don't like seeing everything in one shot like in a lake, you kind of can see, you know, bays and stuff. But you see the whole lake when you get there on the rivers, you just

can't you can't see around that next corner or go up around the bank and you just keeps driving you to go farther and farther and explore, you know, around the next corner because you never know.



Dave S 06:11

Exactly, no, that's great. And I've, I've done I think I've done well. I've talked a lot about the skeena. And I think I've only had one other real skeena episode Rob Bryce way back at the beginning. I mean, this is probably this is now three years ago or so. So we're gonna dig into the skin. I want to talk about it, you know, for somebody, maybe that's thinking about heading up there, it doesn't know. I mean, I that's the first thing. You know, when you think about it, there's a bunch of steelhead all around the Pacific Rim, and you've got the skeena bass. I mean, what can you describe what makes the skeena stick out from it seems like it sticks out from the rest of the Pacific Rim or why is that?



Todd 06:43

I would say firstly would just be intact watersheds, no dams, that's a huge thing, right and then just a uniquely genetic species of fish that that call home here Right, so waters cold, a lot of the smolts take you know, two to four years to get to grow before they even get out to the salt. So the fish the small juicy goal bigger because they have to spend a little longer time pretty much no hatcheries up here. And I think this the this the river sheds a lot of big lakes that feed the rivers and so there is some nutrients that get funneled into the rivers the the skin is very long system. So you have a lot of good quality water coming into the skeena system. And I think that just bodes well for growing big steelhead. Right. And as they slide out into the Pacific North Pacific here, they have grub in food right away, maybe a little less, less, I would say, you know, things to cause, you know, less issues for them. So, you know, they can kind of sneak away and be in a place that you know, it's not inhabited by man, right? We're pretty we're pretty tough on everything. Right? Exactly.



Dave S 07:59

Yeah, that that's what it is. When I think of it I just think of it's this adventure. I mean, it's this remote when we were up there. We just had a crazy adventure, you know, the wildlife, you know, the wolves, the you know, just you name and then you then you add these gigantic, you know, world chances a world wreck or whatever chance of steelhead of a lifetime, pretty much. And yeah, those those are the things that you guys have any I mean, Alaska or not Alaska, but you know, you've got Russia and stuff like that and some other places, but it seems like those are just a little bit further, right. It's a little bit harder of a trip

to do in the skeena. You know, I mean, it seems like everybody can kind of do it, although there's some restrictions now and things like that. Could you take us like, I want to just dig into a little bit we're going to talk about I mean, first let me just say northbound this short little movie clip, I think was it produced by Oh, PST.



Todd 08:47

So I have a I'll just go into the back when the gentleman who the the young, the young lad who produced it Booba media, Michael Menton, I've known the young guy, he's about 27 now, but I've known him taking them fishing since he's around 1112 years old. So he was just a hardcore fly Fisher back in the day, and I've taken this young lad on many adventures. beyond his years, he has fish in many spots. And so he's always been into the filming side of things. So he came to approach me about doing doing a movie. And just kind of like, you know, because he fished with me back, you know, in, you know, 10 1510 1012 years ago, basically, when I was in the lower mainland and, and kind of got us his career going. And then he's just following me up here and he fishes with me and and so he's got into the pretty good into the filming side of things. And he's very particular on that. And he kind of asked me if I wanted to do something, I said, Yeah, that'd be cool. And he kind of asked me if I if I would know anyone who'd sponsor it. And I said, Well, let me talk to these guys because they're into, you know, this kind of stuff and I use their product and not in you know, we have, you know, I thought it'd be a good thing for opsu to get on board with it because I know the quality. And I can as a almost like a father figure to this young lad, I can kind of you know, I said, Hey, man, this isn't up to snuff. Right? And, and it was kind of funny, fun filming with him because he's a fishy little booger. And he really likes to fish. And for me, it was it was switching the shoes for me actually fishing and him doing a lot of the filming and producing and stuff like that. He was really chomping at the bit to get in there. And I wouldn't let them finish so it was pretty fun. Haha.



Dave S 10:29

Nice. That's awesome. Yeah. Yeah, no, it's cool. I love it. I think the the the video is, you know, obviously, there's a learning curve for everything. And and the video is not easy. It's probably one of the hardest thing you know, the we're doing audio here. So this is there's challenges here with this. But yeah, I mean, to put together a good video a good movie. You know, it's it's not easy. So. So yeah, I'll put it I'll put a link out to that northbound, which is I think we're very good. When it gives you a perspective on on what you know what you're doing. And in it. It's short, and it's great. But um, you know, it's awesome, because I'm not sure how the fishing, I know the fishing the last couple years has not been the best. But you have this spot where you get a take. And it's obvious from the video that

seems obvious that maybe the fishing wasn't the best, and you got this one chance and you missed it. And I'm just sitting there watching and I'm just like, Ah, is that going to be the only fish? Right? And then and then you know, right after that he clips away into a couple of fish land or whatever. And I think you know, so that right there in the movie is powerful, because it sets that if you've been ever been to steelhead in that range, you know what it feels like to have one only one shot and to miss it? Is that kind of Am I on the right track there? Or do you guys just catch a fish? Yeah, no, no,



Todd 11:43

I think we caught like three or four fish in the in the in the three or four days of filming. And which is you know, when you bring a camera out and stuff like that, then like everything is against you. And one of the days the last day the water blew out and wait this year, we've had just a ton of water this year, we've just had system after system. So just finding water and shape was super challenging and stuff like that. Even the you know, that couple days that we got the fish that we did decently there, the water was going in and out on us all day and stuff, right. So he definitely did a very nice job of of showing, showing the mess and you know, not just being eager to write like you don't, that's I think that's to me, the greatest thing about steelheading is the fact that it's not, you know, you don't go out there to expect to catch something, once you've been around the gig, you just go in there and you start knocking on doors, right and you start just doing your stuff and taking a step and swinging the fly. And then there's a spot and every run that's the fishable run that it feels like okay, this you know, if it's gonna happen, it's gonna happen right here, right, this is where it's going to happen between here and here. Once you've kind of, you know, you've been around enough you can kind of, you know, you can kind of you can dial runs down to here, I'm going to fish here, here here, if you want to fish it quickly, you know, I've been guiding since 99 and you can kind of you don't want to waste your anglers, you know your guests time by fishing from the very top to the very bottom and less pressure, you know, the pressure is really high in a certain day and you have a piece of water and you know, like if I fish a certain piece of the water up 10 times and I might get one fish there are maybe not a fish there or one grab or if I fish that other piece of water in the same run. And that's the high priority that's the spot where I'm going to get 90% of my graph so I'm going to kind of gravitate with clients to fish those a spots right unless it's really really busy or something like that and and you kind of stuck with water and stuff like that or sometimes it's busy fish will sit and be spots you're not gonna fish you know, I'll notice when there's guys around, I'm not gonna fish I'm gonna get fish out of the water and stuff a lot more than I'm gonna get them out of like the prime like the classic perfect looking run.



Dave S 13:48

Yeah, yeah, I know you put that well I think that is the you know, I mean that's a struggle and a lot of places you know, take it to I just had Gosh, who to have on on the Midwest, Greg Sanyo was on and he was talking about the you know, steelhead alley you know and yeah you know, a different game over there but you know, lots of people and pressure but wherever you go I mean you could find pressure because the you know, and I in the in the the movie there you guys, you kind of showed that to how you get out there you get your wraps and you try to get to spots that are hard to get to which is another good good tip for people that you don't have to stick low. You know, but I want to dig into a little bit on the rivers you fish because I'm not quite sure what you fish and you have the steelhead, like what is that? Is it skeena steelhead lodge?



Todd 14:32

Yeah, it's legendary skeena steelhead Lodge and we're located just north of terrace British Columbia.



Dave S 14:38

Okay, so just north so and now is that can you talk about a little bit about what rivers because there's a bunch You know, there's the, the the you know, the moreet from the Maurice down to all these rivers Do you have and I don't want to give away any secrets or anything like that. But could you talk a little about is the legendary is that kind of a play a tongue in cheek thing or what's the steal the deal there?



Todd 14:58

Yeah. 100% it is right. There's just just more with my clients and stuff like that. Right? We always, there's a lot of, you know, joking and gagging when you have to deal with clients. Because, you know, I always say, I love getting new. I'll kind of go back to your original question, but I kind of like getting new clients. And the first thing we want to do is like, hey, I want to catch a steelhead on the fly. And I'm like, Okay, cool. Great. That's let's get this done, right? And then I kind of go about, like, interviewing them like you do. And to me and find out what kind of experience they have. Can they cast like, what what what, what is their expectation expectations. And then I kind of find out sometimes some guys have greater expectations, because it's like a bucket list thing, right? And get steel on the fly. I kind of say to them, Hey, you know what I would say it's a 10 year commitment. Right? If you're gonna come up and fish, it's probably a 10 year commitment, if you want to be well rounded and stuff like that some guys that really take it and they can get, they can get to

the end result a lot quicker, I'm not gonna say it's gonna take you 10 years to catch a fish, I'm saying that you're gonna have out of those 10 years, you're gonna have three years that are really good three years that are, you know, probably really poor, right? Just water conditions, everything and then a couple mediocre years, and you kind of make the best of what you bet, you know, make the best of what you can make. And there's also the guys that goes, Hey, let me know the best week, you know, I want to know and I go Well, that doesn't usually work right? Because, you know, things things are late things are early water conditions and stuff. And that's one of the reasons why I think kind of that 10 year commitment in that and so, so me being located in terrace BC, I'm surrounded by if you look at a map, I'm surrounded by you know, probably 30 different steelhead rivers, and I'm in the lower part of the skeena. So I'm only about 130 kilometers, you know, like 70 miles from the ocean. And that so we get the full migration of all those upper river fish, they go up to the sustech, right and go up to the babbie and those legendary upper river trips, the kispiox, the bulkley the mores, all those fish go by our door, right so that's kind of a neat thing and then as as the as the steelhead runs start to move in say maybe late late June the after fresh it so both the second week of July we start getting fresh fish like summer on fish coming through here it just basically doesn't stop till pretty much november december right and then we go right into the springtime because the upper tribs have to get kind of I'd say I'd say fertilized and in the fish make that long run way up to those upper trails before winter get here and as as the the winter starts to get in and fall winter starts to happen. The lower trips start to get fish right because they don't have as long of run to go so they can come in later on in the year. So you know all the way from November right through to the springtime we still get fish hitting the lower tributaries. So it's a pretty unique system for for what we have to see an intact system to see all the different runs of fish, all steelhead all spawning, kind of in that, you know, second third week of May right through to the second week of June, all spawning that time winter and summer runs but having a full mix of stock in the whole system, which is pretty cool.



Dave S 18:01

Gotcha. Gotcha. Okay. And going back to that skeena steelhead Lodge, is that a lodge? Is that on the actual skeena river or is it on a river?



Todd 18:10

Um, just off the kalem River. Oh, the Caleb here?



Dave S 18:13



Yeah. casca Yeah. What is it like the Kiska? custom? casca kalem or something like that? Or what? What's that? It's



Todd 18:17  
a kid some



Dave S 18:19

kid some calem? Yeah, so that's lower. That's right. Because you have the town you've got terrorists. And then if you go way down what's the next town way down river toward past up yet?



Todd 18:28  
Yep. Prince Rupert. Yeah.



Dave S 18:31

Yeah, Prince Rupert. So yeah, I'm just trying to recollect on my last time I was there. Yeah. So Prince Rupert.



Todd 18:35  
Yeah. So you have like you have Smithers, which is like 200 kilometers east of terrorists, then you have terrorists, then you have Prince Rupert, which is 150 kilometers west of terrorists. So terrorists is kind of in the middle Prince Rupert's at the end. And then then Smithers basically is on the bulkley.



Dave S 18:52

That's right. That's right. So basically, you're, you're kind of in the middle, and you're kind of covering fish and everything, depending on the conditions of the world for sure.



Todd 18:59  
Yeah. It's nice to get super like sliced chrome fish, right. It's just one of those things, you hook something in skeena. And, you know, late July, or August, that could be, you know,

that could be an opera sauce that fish and, or a bobbing fish, and it could be a kispiox fish, and that fish could be you know, seven, nine years old, who knows? Right? And, you know, could be well over 40 inches, and you really don't know what you're going to hook right. So it's definitely, you know, it's it's it definitely can be life changing when you when you're out there swinging for something and, and something big, grabs your fly.



Dave S 19:33

That's right. That's right. And if you think you mentioned loaded up the timing throughout the year, so you know, I mean, you said obviously, you don't know exactly when the river could be blown out any time of the year. But if somebody was planning a trip is there like somebody comes in and says, Hey, when should I come up? What do you tell them? Do you just say, hey, come up anytime between now and then or the spring or what? What do you say?



Todd 19:53

Yeah, so I kind of I kind of mentioned it to them. I say, you know, try to get their experience, you know, level and stuff like that. So,



Dave S 20:00

let's say they're kind of a, you know, they're not the greatest spake cast or they can cast it out there but it doesn't look great, but you know what I mean? They've done some they've got some steel heads. Let's say they're in the Great Lakes and they've got quite a few steelhead in the Great Lakes doing different techniques and they feel good, but they're not like an expert.



Todd 20:16

Yeah, so So the other thing I'm just gonna ask him like, what what do you what do you kind of do you want to catch like, like Pacific salmon also mixed with a steelhead or you just want to be a steelhead game. So the spring pretty much the steelhead game, anytime after July is going to be salmon and steelhead. You know, you could put Chinook or or you know, coho or you know, the odd sock on the fly. You know, pinks can be fish interference on your flies, you're trying to swing for steelhead. So you have the anti pink fly we fish and stuff and nothing wrong with thanks. But I'm just like when you're targeting steelhead, and it's your 15th pink and I was like, Come on guys, like stop eating that. So you just keep you just try to fish stuff that you know, that you know, to target, it's really tough to target have

fish interference sometimes, right? So it just depends on what they if they haven't hooked a lot of big fish swing in on a fly, then I try to get them to come in August and that time, so the weather's nice. It's not like winter steelheading, which is our spring steelheading. It's not as harsh. If they hook one and they blow it up on it or they don't land. It's not like go sit on the log and think about it for a bit because you might not get another grab this day. Right? It's just you know, sometimes it's like that, right? So whereas there's lots of grabs and bites and polls, and a lot of guys are kind of hesitant at that until they come in like Wow, this is amazing. I caught two steelhead, and had lots of experience not blown up on fish. And so I got my you want my feet, I'm comfortable now of you know, hooking that fish getting to the real, you know, not not trout setting on that thing. And that's kind of a good experience. Also, right. And plus the weather's usually pretty nice. So it's kind of nice steelheading like that summertime, fish, right. And you just get a variety of different species of fish, you might get a Maurice fish, that's like a little five pounder. And that next fish you get as a kispiox fish or sustech fish that could be like a 20 pounder. Oh, wow. Right. So yeah, exactly. So it's pretty, you know, it's pretty amazing fishery at that time. Right. So, yeah, so it really depends on the client and their schedule. And that and what I'm, you know, I have a lot of clients that, that pretty much, you know, they have their slot and stuff. And, you know, there's there's only so many spots, you know, that you can do in the day and in a year, right, the time you can't change, right? And yeah, and I have a pretty small operation, you know, usually for four guests a week, and not with me and assisting guide and stuff. And that's kind of how we roll.



Dave S 22:28

That's it. That's it. Whoa, no, that sounds that sounds definitely good that the earlier as well. You know, I guess later you go the later you go towards the fall, the more fish you're gonna potentially get is that kind of the deal. That is more fish come in. And I say have a say you're out there in September versus fishing July. Well, and you're not going to have as many salmon is that? Is that the deal?



Todd 22:47

Yeah, I would say that's true, David just you got to think more fish. But you also got to think a bit less fish because you're not going to get the number of those upper tributary fish coming through the skin. And this is the skeena. So as the fall rolls around, I start to fish the tributaries a little bit more, because a lot of those fish come out of the skin and go into the tributaries to populate tributaries. Right. So the thing of the ski way, the skeena is like the I five the highway, right? And it's the way it's got. Yeah, yeah, the ski way. There you go. It's the ski way. Yeah, it just goes, you know, up and down. And these fish are just traveling off the skeena. And then they're taking little, you know, the go into a little towns

Left and Right, right. And those are the river systems that that are feeding the skin out of that. So, you know, there's a prime migration like kind of that, you know, last week of July, a couple weeks in August when everything's rolling through the skin. It's pretty cool because it's super magical out there.



Dave S 23:35

Yeah, yes. And can you kind of break it down? Well, I wasn't gonna touch first on on the salmon versus steelhead. You know for you when you think of it. You know, somebody saying well, I want to catch some fish. I mean, what would you say steelhead versus salmon? Any salmon Chinook coho? Whatever is there is there any comparison on on what you're getting as far as the fish the take? Or are they similar in some ways?



Todd 23:56

Yeah, I would say shinnok like for here we like Chinook fishery here is pretty unique. They come in early and they kind of and around August and stuff like that and and those those fish can be pretty amazing. I mean, you know, I always say they're hard You know, like here a little different than Alaska or rivers are a little bit bigger a little bit faster. You know, a little more big boulders definitely some big rocky rivers in Alaska. Don't get me wrong. I'm not trying to say that but but the the fish we get here. They're pretty damn big fish. Right and and you got to be able to chuck a line way deep. And it's it's it takes a lot out of you because you're fishing you're fishing pretty big tip now efficient type six, by all means you can get them on a type six. And that but you're fishing a lot of times efficient like a fist line or, or commando groove like a floating intermediate and then you're efficient, like pretty good lengths of of T material, be it you know, t 17 t 20. Right? That's kind of like you're in that zone because what you want to do is get hold your fly in the zone as long as possible. By all means the fish aren't always on the bottom, but we're not fishing. We're not fishing title stuff, there's some spots down some reverently fish that come out of the ocean and stuff that you can fish a lot lighter tips and stuff, but the smaller the smaller rivers. So, the bigger the bigger the fish the smaller river, the deeper That guy is going to be right just the way it is they want some protection, so they're not gonna be in a smaller river, like they're not going to be sitting like on the edges where a steelhead would sit a lot of time. So you got to fish a little heavier tip just to get your fly presentation down to that fish. And so, you know, to me, you know, Chinook fishing and steelhead fishing by all means Chinook fishing, I got I got you know, I got something about it. It's kind of like a bug in me that something that you don't know that you might not land up here, you know, he hooked a 60 pound plus joke on the fly. It's pretty amazing. And it hooks you basically right and these are chrome fish and, and you know, all your stuffs got to be good from

like, you know, like 50 pound running line to like, you know, 30 pound Bimini loop leader material to one off hooks, you know, and and having, you know, 50 to 70 pound backing and stuff and all your you know, everything's gonna work right and then that might not stay in the run. You might have to chase that fish, right? Because we're fishing from from shore, not out of a boat, right. So yeah, that's super cool. But I mean, steelhead, though, you know, we always the guys at Fisher a lot have kind of dread like you hope not dread. I would say it's spoiled Miss. Basically you're looking steelhead. And then it's like, well, that was fun, but then you kind of crave for that first early enough to come in. Because once you hook a steelhead, it's like okay, you know, once the initial grab, which is everything, the jump the little bit of panic. And then you know, the tug, tug here, boom, Lanham quick, getting back in the water, have a nice day. And then you hope that thing that you just don't know what it is, and it just kind of blows up on you takes off and then you're like, wow, that thing was not a 20 minute by the time the Chinook kind of fishery gets over, you're just craving for a steelhead to hook because you don't want to spend 20 minutes fighting fish. Right. There you go. Yeah. So it's a terrible thing to have. You know that that that envy of hooking fish, but those two are my favorite two game species, coho salmon, that that are Silver's you want to call them that come up the skeena are amazing, because they'll eat a swung fly beautifully, you know, a lot of stripping involved. And so you're swinging the same kind of water. And next thing you know, like, we've had a couple really good runs and especially the fall Northerners are coming you're fishing kind of in that September time. And as you're swinging through this thing, hammers your fly in tight, and then it just peels off and the guy's like, Oh my god, it's a beautiful steel. I don't like that's a call and it's almost a disappointed sometimes to have like a 12 or 14 pound coal that just basically did cartwheels all over the place. I'm like, God, I go shut. Shut your eyes because that's amazing fish and Ada swung fly. Right. And, and you can't really complain about it. Right. So you know, it's it is very, it's very cool to fish a big river system. And I think that's what happens. You start fishing big river systems, you just, you know, you can get a fish, you know, from a 20 foot Cast To 140 foot cast, right. And that's, that's the kind of cool thing about it. So it's a real caster's river to fish the screen and stuff like that. Right. So I've had newbies catch beautiful steelhead, first time spay casters, just flipping it out 20 feet because like fish are coming through on the inside, we have a lot of seal predation. So pinnipeds, hunt the steelhead out in the center by the rivers and stuff. So fish get pushed in right into ankle knee deep water. So a lot of guys they see fishing way too deep and way too far out. Sometimes a fishing water that's not traveling lanes, right and you want to fish the traveling lanes for steelhead, like you want to see they use, you know, when the summer fish are coming up. And you'll see sockeye coming through and you'll they use the sock as I call it, seal fodder, like cannons, cannon fodder, and you'll see like 10 sock I swimming in one steel at one big square tail glowing. Like I'm standing on my jet boat. I can see this blower coming up. And I looked at my two guys below. Oh my gosh, you missed a beauty they just found by how did you miss that fish. But some of these fish don't

bite because they're moving fish, right? So you got to try to find where they get to slow down and just hold up for a little bit. And that's where you that those are the spots you want to fish. Right. So, you know, it's just yeah, it's sometimes it's sometimes it's it's a you know, they're fit. They're anonymous fish that they're on a mission to get to their destination sometimes. Right? And sometimes they're not gonna bite.



Dave S 29:14

Yeah, yeah, no. And you mentioned the gear, I want to dig into the gear a little bit because that is interesting on the T 17. t 20. All that stuff. I just want to highlight a couple of things there in ankle deep and 20 feet in that Scott McGarvey way long time ago when we first had started up he mentioned that that was a good quote. I remember him saying that, you know, again, starting out shallow because you can hit him shallow you also mentioned I'm gonna have to rewind it, but something about deeper, smaller, bigger fish. What can you do you remember that little section you're talking about? So So basically, the were you saying in the smaller rivers, you're not going to get as big a fish or they're moving where they hold?



Todd 29:49

Yeah, I'm just thinking think this big anonymous fish coming into this smaller tributary right, so not the skeena coming into a tributary that goes into the salt. Well, that tributaries a lot smaller. So that big Fish coming in from the ocean, right with no bottom you know nothing really there it's going to come and find the deepest runs possible. Yeah right so you'll have to fish a bit deeper in the smaller tributaries sometimes whereas on the skeena you can fish I fished a lot of times type two type three, you know, the OPST riffle I fish even for winter fish and stuff because the fish are sitting inside edge not hanging out in the middle. They don't want to be you know, they don't get hammered by a seal death from below we call it right. So they want to sit in that spot there. Nothing's going to get up from above. They're big enough fish. You know, birds aren't going to get them Death from above. Not gonna happen. They're not trout, or Ospreys. And so they're gonna sit in that skinny water. So I always say guys, like I've many times watch guys walk in. I'm like, dude, you walked over to steelhead, because I've seen them scoot up behind you. And guys are like no, or people can like make a short cast just you're just your tip and just your OPST head basically out there and they're fishing in like skinny skinny water and the fly stops and I'm like, oh, bottom. I know that this fish jumps out of the water. I'm like not to fish, man. There's no rocks. I say there's no rocks, no trout in the rivers. Any anything that stops your flies. Potential steelhead. Right. And yeah, so that's that's what I kind of meant by that.



Dave S 31:07

Yeah. Okay. No, then that totally makes sense. Well, let's let's dig into the gear a little bit because you've mentioned touched on this a little bit. So and maybe we could break it out to like, you've been doing skeena mainstem versus some of the trips. So if we take it to skeena what is the you know, somebody wants to grab the gear? I mean, what is the gear? I mean, you're talking about I guess we're talking about Oh, PST some of the lions and stuff like that. What What would you tell them to throw on there?



Todd 31:30

Yeah, so if I'm fishing that mainstem skeena for for steelhead, I'm gonna be fishing a floating head. You know, I fished the LPS t shorter heads, great learning heads and stuff commando heads for clients and stuff, it's a great product I'm running their laser line for running line behind so that's kind of my first thing and then just a variation of different tips to kind of the pretty much the heaviest tip depending on like where I'm fishing on the screen is going to be probably their version of like a type six, which is going to be the run tip. Right? So they have like a riffle run bow right. Yeah, that's Yeah, that's kind of the tips of like a the the runs like a type six tip in there, let's you know 12 feet long. And that's all I'm gonna fish either that ripple which is like a two three or the run and their density compensated tips, those are kind of be my, my go to stuff for steelhead on the screen or the odd spot you might need a bucket if, if there's a there's a lot of inside salmon and stuff like that maybe a bit later in the year. There's some older critters hanging on the inside and you want to fish you know out a little bit and fish so you might fish a bucket or something like that get a little bit deeper and that and swing it through but then I'm not going to have it swing all the way on the inside because you're just going to be fishing those moving fish down and across. As soon as you let it swing on the inside. If there's some old old guys hanging around old pants or something like that, they'll grab your fly on that on the backside dangle right and a lot of times the scheme is not very deep. You see it's a big river but you know it's three to five feet deep there's some deep holes obviously but the water you're fishing you know I even say last two to four feet you're fishing right and at a nice walking pace. So a lot of that you know type six or 10 feet of T 11 if you guys are going into a mo tip or something like that 10 feet of T 11 you know if I had one tip to fish it probably 10 feet of T 11 on that system or the or the other Opie st run tip and stuff like that that's that's pretty much good to go. You know in the springtime we do some cool stuff sometimes the water if it's really clear and things haven't bumped up and there hasn't been a bite on the water yet. You'll fish official long I'll go to fish some longer lines some pretty light long lines and fish floating floating floating like long leader like 17 foot leader slightly awaited intruder style fly and dismiss just under surface because officials sit in really in tight and if you know a run that has fish in there and no one's fished

it and you're kind of first guys though you can kind of go through that way and have that you can see a bat come out of the water you know in 38 degree water and a fish eat your fly which is pretty unique I think in a lot of areas right so you can't really fish him those inside fish with pretty much anything else except for that kind of system. Right? Is fishing either intermediate tip or floating line long leader.



Dave S 34:07

Yeah, foot flowing. So you're saying so you're actually yeah, you using a floating line long lead like you would for just summer steelhead fishing essentially 100% Yeah. And then, and that's the interesting thing about the skeena system is that I mean technically they're not summer steelhead, they're not winter steelhead, right, they're kind of fall Do you call them fall steelhead, or what do you guys call those steelhead that come in and like Yeah,



Todd 34:31

yeah. So again, that goes into this smaller tributary thing. So I think you'd call you know, some of the tributaries if you have steelhead in them in August. Those are going to be summer steelhead, right. We don't get a lot of June like early July fish they are but because the water is because they have such a long migration to go. So those early early fish are usually upper river fish, Maurice sustech Excuse me. babbie and stuff like that, that goes up that river and they might rip all the way up there because the water Conditions good, nice and cold and then they park they might just sit there right and and they might sit there for like a month or two in the skin or maybe like two three weeks in the skin until the conditions are right the tributaries not pushing super hard, and then they slide in right and that's you know, you fish the river one day and you know kind of middle late August one of those upper trims and there's nothing there and then two days later, boom, you hope to Chrome bright steelhead, that just slid out of the screen overnight right. So there's summer fish pretty much the summer fall. Definitely some winter fish that come in in November. And then we have a dedicated spring run lower down that come in in like March April. So I would honestly say we have, you know, pretty close to four runs of like any any designation, you can find a fresh fish. If you want to go by that by just how chrome things are. You can find a fresh fresh fish from pretty much, you know, July all the way through till you know, maybe late April.



Dave S 35:54

And now let's take a quick break for a word from our sponsors. In today's world of mass produced products don't fly nets has reclaimed the tradition of handcrafted care with



their custom wood landing nets. Stone fly starts the design process by selecting wood for the handle based on a number of key factors including grain pattern and depth, but they don't stop there. This piece of art is accentuated by strips of hardwood that compliment and accentuate the handcrafted handle. To be honest, I have never been a huge neck guy mainly because I didn't feel like my old collapsible net was easiest to use and was not easy on the eye if you know what I mean. The stone fly net not only looks beautiful but has high quality netting that is easy on the fish and will last for years to come. Stone flies goal is to create a unique Custom Classic wood net that's second to none and can be customized for a little extra touch. For Ethan the founder of stone fly nets fly fishing has always had a traditional field going back to fishing the three way bamboo rod with his great grandmother when Ethan designs a custom that it's his hope that others will create amazing lasting memories for years to come. please head over to [wet fly swing.com](http://wetflyswing.com) slash don't fly to get your custom net now. That's [wet fly swing comm slash don't fly sto n e fly](http://wetflyswing.com) to get started right now. What's worse than a day with no bites A Day Without coffee or even worse a day with bad coffee. Thankfully that isn't the case for us. With more than 40 years of experience in coffee the anglers coffee team roast a full range of coffees with one goal in mind delivering excellent coffee to every single angler. That's why they've released a brand new coffee subscription program made just for you. Just visit [English coffee calm](http://Englishcoffee.com), provide your coffee preferences your mailing address and how much coffee you drink in a week. And they'll take care of the rest there's no obligations or hidden fees just great coffee delivered to your front door. And I've been using and loving English coffee and I am a coffee fanatic and have tasted bad coffee for sure anglers coffee is definitely great coffee I've been enjoying it. It says good to be honest with you. It's as good as as I've had that I can remember. And that's pretty awesome sand. Since I drink a lot of coffee So join me in supporting a great company who supports great coffee, fly fishing and conservation. As part of anglers conservation Alliance English coffee donates a portion of every sale to help conserve and protect our wild natural habitats and fish species. Right now they're raising money for Sol river which brings veterans and inner city youth out into the river to teach conservation fishing skills and more. Right now you can get 20% off your first subscription box or gift box simply use the code [wet fly swing](http://wetflyswing.com) at checkout just visit [anglers coffee.com](http://anglerscoffee.com) and get 20% off your first subscription or gift box using [wet fly swing](http://wetflyswing.com) and check out that's [English coffee.com](http://Englishcoffee.com) and can you fit I mean obviously the snow comes in and stuff but can you fish into the winter like January February?



Todd 39:03

Um You can offer tributaries and some of the tributaries with pretty much summer on fish there. They're gonna close either December 31 or December 15. Right so those fish are going to close so those fish overwinter and stuff and you're not getting pounded on which is good, but there's definitely some depending on whether you know we're pretty far north

or like 54 degrees you know North right so we're up there like Alaska is not too far. And so you could be fishing like this year, it's been pretty decent like we've been like you know, I'd say 32 degrees Fahrenheit to like 28 and then up to 34 so we've kind of been getting a ton of snow on the mountains but not a lot in town and waters pretty free because we had such we've had such big water the last eight months. It's just like the water table is very high. So water is still pushing out of tributaries pretty good. So right now you could fish but then you know I can look at the the temps next week and it looks like we're going to down into the you know, 1618 degrees Fahrenheit. So minus eight minus 10. And then it stops pretty quick, right?



Dave S 40:06

Gotcha stuff



Todd 40:07

freezes up. skeena freezes over. Oh, oh, yeah, Ghana freezes over, like the fast up we'll run through, but anything soft will be ice flows coming through because it's so long. It might be in terrorists, it might be you know, only, you know, 2628 degrees, but up on towards the bulkley. Or if you get farther up the skeena it's going to be you know, like 10 degrees Fahrenheit. So minus 15. So that water gets super chilled by time comes down to get floaty ice chunks. It's not fun to swing when there's ice coming down. It's it's kind of a hard, weird thing. You think you get lots of grabs, right? Yeah, you're really getting nothing. Yeah, so that becomes challenging. Yeah. But the nice thing Bori live we get lots of warm ups, we get Pacific warm ups because we're close to the coast. So it'd be super cold boom, you get five days of, you know, warm, wet weather like warm as in like 32 degrees, 34 degrees, but above zero above freezing. And boom things you know, when water temperature goes from like 32 degrees or 34 degrees, that 36 degrees, things wake up, right? So so it's kind of cool. So there's windows, I'd say throughout the wintertime that you definitely can fish and swing a fly. But I would never say I would never ever have customers come up here because just unless I got a local guy from Vancouver, like a really good client of mine and said, Hey, dude, it's gonna be good all next week? Come on up, let's go fish to skeena or something like that. Right? Then I could do it right? But it just you couldn't you couldn't market it? Or? Or have anyone decide to come up at any type of distance. Gotcha.



Dave S 41:30

Okay, cool. And I want to go back to the lines again. So again, talking to skeena you've got like, you could go with the dry line. And you know, for those certain special situations,

or what was the line you mentioned, that would be more of your standard skeena kind of for all around.



Todd 41:44

So all around it's so depends on the guys are fishing with rod. So I like to really match rods with lines, right. So if guys are getting into it, the shorter sticks, like this 12 foot and under and stuff, then the short heads are nice to fish, especially springtime, because a lot of times not fast, you're not casting very far very short. And then sometimes you want to just fish a lightly, you know slightly longer stick like a 13 footer and then a 13 footer, you can run any of the Long's longest gadgets or standards, gadget lines from any of the big brands, you know what I mean, we can go that or you can go, you can run any of the, you know, any of that kind of like I would call the heavy skandi lines. So you can fish, you know, type three or poly leaders, that stuff works really well too. So any of the rage lines from airflow or any of the longer, the longer you know, like as I say like 30 foot head stuff, any of the adaptive stuff from Rio or from loop, any of that stuff will work really well. It just depends on what your what you really want to fish it just think of going from, you know, a type two, three down to like a five or six like that kind of level and then fly and depending what size bug obviously when you start fishing, bigger bugs, then you kind of have to up your game a bit with a little more density at the end of your end of your stay line right to have it turned over nicely if you get nice Finally, tapered, tapered lines and long, skinny lines and you start trying to throw bigger bugs on there, it becomes yeah becomes a bit futile, right?



Dave S 43:11

What bugs so when would you be using smaller bugs versus the bigger bigger bugs



Todd 43:17

sometimes in the springtime water is really clear. So I use a lot of you know, I you know, I've dyed a lot of guys know me as I've dyed Rhea feathers forever and stuff and supplied a lot of British Columbia with real feathers. And that and and so I've dyed my own materials for a long time and and tide flies commercially for a long time. And so I projected Li go like a particularly go a lot smaller in the springtime, really sparse, single single tubes, reverse time era booze, and a few bit of reason they're in a bit of I call it marine mammal, which a little bit of polar bear. And yeah, so as springtime comes of water clarity, I kind of go stuff that sometimes it might seem pretty big, and until you see it in the water, but it's very translucent, very sparse, right. And then as watercolor gets a little more colored and

stuff like that, when you get summer water, you can go a little bit bigger. And that right so but i think it's it's here we have a lot of lamp rays in the scanner system also. So I think rather than having such a big profile, a lot of times that works but I think like just for me coming from the lower mainland and then coming up to fishing a big river system up here that has a lot of lamp raised up. We tie a lot of long, long, thinner stuff too. Right? Which is kind of cool. Right? So it might not have quite as big a shoulder but it's definitely I would say eally squiddy looking right, in that right so just lots of movement. And I would say lots of undulation in the fly.



Dave S 44:44

How long how long. It was a long flight.



Todd 44:48

Um, you know, probably like three and a half four inches in there.



Dave S 44:52

Yeah, yeah. So ranges so like a little so in the water. It's really just a little thin toothpick that's what Yeah, wiggling around.



Todd 44:59

Yeah. But with definitely with a bit of shoulder to it right so you want to have that the shoulder to create that nice little pocket behind the shoulder. So your materials kind of dance in there right so that's kind of it really makes it live and jiggly on on the swing. Right and you know, just some of the stuff we finish like guys go Where do you fish I just go look for the jiggle. Right? And that's like the riffle. Right You know, I mean, so look for the jiggle, fish love the jiggle, they love that broken, that broken water, right, you know, wherever you see that jiggle that's around fishing and stuff like that, and what the gentleman is skinny, right, and the fish are usually pretty grabby. Right so you know, efficient jiggle, water it skinny water, it grabby, efficient light tips, which is super fun to fish, right. The visual even for like winter spring fish the visuals right there, because they fit, there's no water in the fish. So you know you're covering the water, because you might only be fishing six inches deep, but the water is only a foot and a half deep. Right? So you're in that zone of that fish biting zone all the time. So it just makes it it makes it a nice way to fish.



Dave S 45:56

Yeah, cool. Cool. Okay, I want to keep digging into a few more of these tips. But we skipped by at the start a little bit on your background, we are off here do you just kind of mention a little bit you've got a you know, a connection to some of the the wrapping and stuff like that. I just want to touch on that because there's you know, especially like opsc we talked about not sure and you mentioned that the the intruder you know, Edward, obviously is one of the big guys, you don't hear a lot from out there. Well, can you just take us back to you know, your connection there, like the companies that you're working with? And you and I know George cook is somebody who you've known we've had on a couple times on the show just just a little bit of that background to connect you to the the history there.



Todd 46:32

Yeah, sure. So, um, I just back in the day, you know, I ran a four wheel drive shop, so I always played with stuff trucks and you know, I've always had different rigs, lots of toys and stuff and I decided to kind of get into the into the fishing industry. Well, it was kind of working started guiding full time back in 99 opened my business up was you know, pretty much starts baitcasting back in, you know, I'd say maybe like 96 ish. There was a I took when I started to actually learn how to fly cast decently. Right where I lived in East Vancouver and Vancouver grew up there born raised there, there was a shop called Golden leslye shop right and that was Mike Maxwell and Denise Maxwell they own the shop and stuff so I would go on there and frequent there and and I remember talking to Mike one day and he was he was a he was an awesome dude but definitely he had an opinion you know quite bitey and stuff to new whippersnappers and stuff and I seen these long rods on the on this wall like what are your crazy old man like what are you thinking with those long sticks and these were you know, the GT tigereye two handed rod Fisher blanks you know 15 feet long and he was one of the first guys I ever ever talked you know talked about fishing a two headed rod so that's where I kind of got started just on the fishing side of things. Um, so I was going about fishing in that and then one but you know, I was I was doing some spey casting stuff and always with shorter sticks. I was fishing you know a lot of Bob Mizer stuff and 10 and a half foot little switch rods and stuff because we had like in the Lower Mainland we have a lot of stripping a lot of not just steelhead fishing but there was a lot of serum bull trout and stuff and fish the upper pit quite a bit and so you'll always be able to strip and be a lot of salmon around the always be stripping through the backside of the swing and we'd we'd fish steelhead and stuff but it was definitely if you're guiding it, you had to have a secondary game, right? You just couldn't be like, you know, you and guy two weeks without hooking the steelhead sometimes it's just the way it is right and if you're fishing with a bunch of guys that are fishing gear and

you're the only guy fly fishing, it definitely can be very challenging in that right so I got into the the fishing and this to the rap tackle side of thing is one of my one of my good friends Michael blend Karn designer for our terrorists, like started our terrorists, you know, when they're building harnesses in the garage in North Vancouver, right, so, yeah, so I was a designer, like not a designer but a tester for our terrorists. And then he started building waders and started working with sensor wader. So kind of how I met George cook and Eric Neufeld. I was just at a at a steak lay down in in Washington State Aaron from carnation put on these little steak leaves and stuff and I was down there Chuck and doing a little demo with with the two hander switch rods and stuff with some short heads I would cut up and make and they see me with a Canadian flag on a set of like basically the g4 is that waiter what you see out there today right now and in there we're just kind of like what the hell this waiter come from right so that was kind of design of the waiters. That's how I met George and then you know a couple years later started wrapping Sims fishing products and a bunch of other fishing brands and I've now recently moved into the hunting side of things with Cisco hunting gear. And some brands up here in Canada like the western Canada reference chicken and mystery ranch products and crispy footwear. So those look brands I do now up here in Canada, but that's kind of how I know George and a bunch of the OCG crew have two headed guys doing and spade a spade spade casting things down the sandy river clave and down in carnation, Washington and stuff like that. Right. So I've been around Long time and you know swinging lots of rivers for steelhead and, and, you know, it's it's it's been a it's been an awesome journey right and I kind of ended up where I am now you know, I decided to move up to Northern British Columbia 10 years ago. And this kind of you know, just to do my thing up here because I remember Time flies for clients to tie in quite a few like probably a couple 100 dozen a year of pretty in depth intruder flies you know, even Georgie buy some flies for me and stuff, which is pretty funny. And he's a bit of a fly connoisseur. And, and then having guys all come up to Northern BC to fish for a week and I'd get them for a day or two at my end of things guide them and stuff. But it was like kinda It was kind of bummed out about because they go up there and this two headed thing wasn't really as popular but a lot of guys you officially definitely with some lodges that had guys that were spearfishing but the guides were more a lot of guides were boat drivers back in the day because they you know they fished everything and the two handed thing they were they didn't really the technique wasn't really super good. And we're I lived in Vancouver we did a lot of casting and not a lot of fish catching right? Just it's the it's the nature of the beast. And so you got to be very proficient at tying flies and and casting so I would teach guys to cast and and fish in anti flies and sell them bugs and then so I decided hey I gotta make the move up here so I can you know they come see me get you know everything in one kind of area and stuff because I really enjoy fishing with clients i think it's it's you know, I've been doing it for a long time and it's just seeing guys swing a swing a fly through a run and hook a fish is pretty amazing.



Dave S 51:33

Yeah, yeah, that's a that's a good good story there. Yeah, there's a lot of arcteryx definitely a big brand and then hunting that's interesting. So you're a what type of hunting Are you focused on?



Todd 51:44

So I pretty much do everything I say I live in a blessed place in northern bc so I bow hunt I rifle hunt, I waterfowl hunt. And that whenever time can be I got a couple labs that have hunted with with birds for a long time. But yeah, so it's just a natural progression it's it's a good time away from from the fishing side of things and that and it's just again it's no excuse I can do to be outdoors jumping on a jet boat we have a lot of like roads here so a lot of our hunting takes care takes place by running jet boats up remote rivers to get into areas and that that you don't have road access to and that so it's pretty cool you got to be very self sufficient you got to be able to you know run boats and in a lot of challenging conditions and stuff and be able to not you know expect to see people and and rely on someone that's gonna get your ass out of trouble if



Dave S 52:35

you if you get into it on your own. So



Todd 52:38

you're on your own Yeah, for sure. Right It's an amazing sport right and i think it's amazing that you know, I grew up my dad hunted and stuff so I grew up eating you know wild game and super glad that I was introduced to a young age and have that passion to go out and grind it out and go out there and and chase pursue animals and have the right and have the ability to do it which is super amazing.



Dave S 53:02

Yeah, no I love it I do a lot of hunting as well and yeah definitely obviously it's a similar people similar people involved in both of the both of it I did want to touch you know Edward I mentioned this and his name comes up occasionally. Do you have any connection to Ed over the years I know you've been doing this a while Have you connected with him at all





Todd 53:21

um just just from seeing them here and there but not really finished with them not a lot of a lot of one step away from it Yeah. You know separated by a degree or so or something like that right



Dave S 53:32

so see what he was hired to do back when he was hired the intruder in the you know, so



Todd 53:38

it's kind of amazing I got a pretty quick story just some pretty cool cats from from down south I get this you know, just this call saying hey, Todd, you want to go on this kind of like intercoastal like basically from Vancouver Island up up on this kind of big boat you know like but what a 45 bucks it's about an 80 footer sorry with the jet boats on it and then kind of just go fish with a couple of cool guy like shout I don't know, Shannon McCormick, Howard, Howard Cole. All these guys go to Jackson, Wyoming, and dairy. And these are three cats I knew. And they're, they're again, they're they're old G's from the steelhead swing School of you know, the LP and in Washington State and this gadget and you know, it's all hidden stuff. And so me and Howard are sitting on this boat Time flies, and I had a bunch of real with me and stuff and I'm tying these fries and he's like, dude, where did you see my fly box? And I'm like, no, it just this is something I've been tying for a little bit because it's kind of a it's kind of like a weird thing. Like I've never met him before within like an hour we're tying the same stuff that he's got that I have and we've never really crossed paths before. So I think it's more of a consciousness of how things get developed. And you know the intruder by all means like kudos to you know, to add in George and those guys that that kind of started that thing you know, they had a few years on me and stuff but there's like you just wanted to you know, I was a gear Fisher To start with, like I grew up fishing like I started fly fishing all the time, but when I started fish in your River. You know, I was fishing like a center pin it's classic bc stuff center center pan gooey Bob court float by split shot, right you know an old silex or a pink worm right we used to pour pink worms because you couldn't buy pink bass worms right so you get the molds from basketball and you have this crazy mix and you know probably got some toxicity from us right now to get the right amount of rubber melted and poor pink worms and you would short float pink worms on a cork float and it was ridiculously good. So you start thinking okay, well how how come I can hook this many fish, steelhead fishing you know in back in the day when I was younger like in my teens I go steelhead fishing and hook you know 12 to 15 fish you know you know a day on the on the gear rod and like I remember my last year before I just strictly went cold turkey is I think I've put maybe 250 winter fish on the



beach that year which is what I look at it now it's it's like God I wouldn't tell anybody about this and the steel Gods will like spite me because of it right? But the next year I think I landed I had one grab on a fly rod right and then I was like What is going on? And then I was introduced you know my first like client kind of spell casting back in like not a client like back I just a friend of mine introduced me this gentleman who's again he's a gentleman that a fish with like for 25 years Tony stellar, a doctor a retired doctor from Laguna Beach. He was one of the first guys I seen you know, he was a Spry young guy at 72 back then and he's like 95 now and still fishes you know three four weeks a year and I feel bad that he didn't come up last year due to the pandemic we've had but yeah, he's one of the guys first showed me like actually fishing with a two hander and stuff and I would just that just blew my mind like I dabbled it with a bit but you just was really good at it right? And I was just like looking at that and after that I was like I was I was sold and everything you know that's that's I've been doing that since like the you know late mid 90s and stuff right so it just that's just the way you know to me it was this the ultimate way of fishing like cold water species and having your fly in the zone and being the chocolate with bush behind you and stuff and not having to wait up to your neck to try to get a cast and a single hander out there right and again now like the people coming up today you have the you know the commando heads for single hand rods it's amazing right to be able to spray cast with a single hand rod is like it's crazy right like that. If that happened years ago, I might not have went to a two hander right because you know everything's gone back again from bigger rods and stuff we fished you know a 14 footers back in the day even 15 footers I think my first stick was like a 10 151 you know Sage European 15 foot one fish the Thomson with it and stuff like that which is amazing rivet of fish and then now we're back down to 11 and a half 12 footers right and that's you know, we're back you know my my single hand spay rod was like an old RPL at 100 right? And that was like the old single hand Sage brownie and that's you know, that was one of the one of the deals we fished with back in the day with a high speed high D you know on the on the coca holla for for for summer runs and stuff right?



Dave S 57:56

Yeah, I love this conversation because I mean especially like when you talk about oh PST who we mentioned here you know they're known for that with the commando and some of the shorter I mean, what is the short what is a good average defeat? Well, first I guess we have the single hand spay what what would that be and then what is the next step up of above the single hand spay like what length abroad is the single spay and talk a little about that?



Todd 58:18

Okay, so single single hand spate or single hand rod with spey casting techniques. Anything in that kind of nine and a half foot nine foot nine to 1010 foot 10 and a half anybody feels comfortable in your hand, that's not going to be too long and too aggressive, the cast single hand type thing, so pretty lightweight, with those lines, and you know, variable techniques have a cast and you can easily fish 7080 feet a line with nothing at your backcast right, which is nothing behind you can fish a lot of those highbank spots, where you know, which a lot of people don't fish right because even with you have a two hander, you know, sometimes you'll hit the trees, but with a single hand, you can really cut cut a lot and and you know, and can't your auto rabbit to get under trees and that right and, and throw throw your dump or your poke out in front of you. Sweet back to your D loop is even with you not even behind you. And this give a hall each way. Right? So you can raise your arm a bit. Little backhaul, right. So like let's say think of a double haul single hand cast, you do a backhaul on the water. So you get a really tight little villu and a little forward haul, and you fling that line, 6070 feet and a lot of those spots, you only need a 3040 foot cast because you're fishing a highbank side, right? So any of those sticks now there's so many good ones. And I've even gone back and looked at some of my older single hand stuff that were you know, in the 10 foot range that were pretty soft, and that and those things are great sticks for fishing two handed spay techniques with a single hand rod. Right and then going up from there anything 11 and a half, I'd say till 12 feet, you know in the seven or six to eight week is kind of a newer steelhead stick now right? You know, and then I've been in Even testing some you know a little bit bigger stuff from OpenBSD in the 910 weeks off for shannock and stuff and that's not much more than a 12 a 12 foot Rod 12 foot three rod right so you know it's kind of amazing to fish was such a light stick and fish really big fish which is super cool it goes back to the day when you're fishing single hand stuff for steelhead.



Dave S 1:00:20

Exactly Yeah, that's interesting. So and what I guess it's still more of the two handed game but are you breaking out? You know, are clients breaking some of that out the single hand stuff?



Todd 1:00:30

Well, if we have like specific like salmon around like say there's call round a big round of coal or something something like guys would like to fish Silver's and stuff right? Then for sure we'll fish some of the you know, commando smooth lines so you can basically cast 10 feet 70 feet strip right inside your rod Ted cuz you're stripping professional tons of fish will

come back and eat it on the strip. That's kind of how you fish those Silver's and that so by all means we fish a lot of those I always have a couple of those rigged up and that and I like fishing dries with them too. Right like commando smooth fish and dry you can fish right in tight. It's very nice way to fish. And that and you know, I think it's definitely it pushes pushes the envelope for where you can fish a single hander, which is really cool. Guy.



Dave S 1:01:14

And can you break that down? Just so I mean, I know we've talked about this I just want to clarify on the the opsc stuff so commando smooth, is it pretty straightforward as far as what you know, the different products they have out there?



Todd 1:01:26

Yeah, so so commando smooth is integrated running line. Okay, so think of a full flyline shorthead that's got running line attached, not just a head itself, right. So and then your commando head is going to be just a short running line, a short short head with your attach model style opsc running line, or whoever's running line after it like the laser line behind that. And then you have the newer commando groove, which is floating at the backside, and then it's a full intermediate and the front, so it's gonna swing a lot slower, do some of the stuff. I've fished that quite a bit like at first, I was like, I was like, cut cool, it's cool line. But like, I don't think it's going to be applicable for a lot of stuff. I started fishing, when we had like a bit of high water this year, and it's pretty amazing line because you could fish you get to slow your swing down, you might not get that deeper because I was fishing lighter tips with it like I was fishing on the commando groove. So think of having, you know, 12 feet of intermediate and then whatever tip in front of that and I was fishing like only maybe a type three in front of that some fishing, you know, intermediate type three of about 23 feet long. So it was it was only fishing a foot and a half deep, but it was really slowing this down. Because it goes through that initial Yeah, the initial surface of the water and it got into the column and it was actually very effective. Whereas I would if I was fishing just a floating head it would almost swing too quick and I started going with a heavier tip and then know what snag up on the dangle. Right so just there's there's multiple ways to skin the cat and I think you just need all these Arsenal's in your in your in your pocket to fish variable conditions. Gotcha.



Dave S 1:02:54

Okay. And then and then just to finish that up so and then the commandos smooth. How

is that different than the commando groove? The smooth, not, not the not the head, but just the commando smooth.



Todd 1:03:05

Yeah, the smooth is gonna be a full floater and the groove is gonna have a floating back end with intermediate front.



Dave S 1:03:12

That's it. Okay, perfect. Perfect.



Todd 1:03:13

Yeah, that's it. And then the crew, the crew, the crew is gonna be a head also. Yeah,



Dave S 1:03:17

yeah. And there's gonna be head. Yeah. So and then if you had the commando group, if you're working there. So let's just take us again, back to we talked a lot about the skeena. If we were to go to say the Maurice Well, I mean, I mean, some of those are pretty wide to or like to a smaller river and what lineset of how that would be different than what you'd fish on the skeena.



Todd 1:03:36

So if I was gonna, like say eldest sister Kayla or something I was gonna fish the kale on it, it was the fall I would fish to commando group for sure, because the waters usually quite poor, she's got a big lake above it. So once the water comes up, it stays in shape longer, but it once it comes out from the lake, it pushes pretty hard. Think of a channel that's like, doesn't go anywhere. So it's an old river channel. So you know, as the water comes out, just comes up and pushes into the bank a bit. So you efficient high bank, sometimes on both sides of the river, because it's an old channel, bigger rocks, bigger structure. So that's when you know, it might be a bit fast on the surface, the fissure there, but because there's enough rock structure, you have to kind of get down through that upper column of water and have that slow swing. And and you know, when you're when you're fishing that groove, it definitely slows the swing down quite quite a bit. Right. So once you fish it with like, say just with a standard head swing sort of seems a bit speedy until the groove on it cuts down right away. So the start of your swing, and then it just, there's a lot more chub in

the line, just to hold everything back and it just kind of just barely it's Yeah. It's one of those swings that you're feeling like, Oh, this feels this. I should get a grab any second because it's like, Wow, it brings you to attention right away. You look at it. It's like Yeah, it looks a little fast. Waters high conditions aren't perfect. You throw it out there. It's a bit fast. You try go deeper, like a heavier head on the floater. And it's like and it's still not that great and you throw the groove on and it's like oh dude, this is pretty Next, then you start your brain starts thinking of Oh, well, there's a lot of spots I can fish Hi, bank might be a bit fast, but the inside edge is really nice, but you just can't fish that inside edge of a high bank sometimes, you know, that's where the fish are because the fish it pulls through too quick, right? And by time you're waiting in such a long dangle, your fly's not moving. So efficient that inside edge of a high bank, you're cashing into maybe faster water than you usually fish. But because it's down and cuts through that column, it's swinging on in the money shot water, just you know, three, four feet off the bank, it's swinging at the right depth, right. So you're almost fishing a little bit of vertical technique with it. But you're not really fishing vertical widge, it's



Dave S 1:05:37

something hard to explain unless you've really gone out there just slows the swing down. That's the easiest way to say it. And then you're also like you said at the start you're throwing on he might throw on a T 17 or t 20. A short length onto the onto those.



Todd 1:05:49

Yeah, especially if you're fishing shinnok, right. Because this thing of the Joker the biggest baddest buggers in the river, and they're gonna, they're gonna sit in the heaviest of runs unless the water is really high, and there's lots of color then they'll sit on the outsides, but a lot of times they're sitting in that heavy, the heavy chop and they're sitting down low, it just seems like it's really fast where they are, but underneath that water is again pretty nice, like straight flow water, but they're just gonna push into that head. So you have to get your fly down in that zone as quick as possible. So you have your fly in somewhat of the zone where the fish are, right? Especially if you're if you're like dinosaur hunting for big guys, right? You know, like the biggest baddest ones are going to be there. A lot of the jacks and smaller fish 1012 pounders, 14 pounders will be you could be in classic steelhead. waterbottle means type six, we'll get them and stuff like that. But if you want to target the big dogs, that's, that's where that's where they're gonna be. They're sitting in the biggest plug style water you can set to right. Yeah.



Dave S 1:06:45

Okay, and then for steelhead, what would be the heaviest you might use for a tip?



Todd 1:06:50

Um, probably like a commando groove. 10 feet at 14 to 18 Yeah, yeah, yeah. 10 feet at 14 pretty much but t 11. is like is pretty money. Yeah, yeah. Or the LP st run which is like a type six very similar



Dave S 1:07:03

right to all right. Yeah. 12 feet.



Todd 1:07:06

Tall feet of a type six.



Dave S 1:07:08

Gotcha. Okay. Cool. Well, let's uh, and I just want to note you we've been talking a lot here me as I remember Simon Cosworth was on quite a number. I guess it's been a few years I think he was talking about you know, that might have been his big tip was you know, intermediate intermediate is a good thing to be thinking about. And I think obviously, yeah, you talked a lot about it and we've talked a lot about it on here it's it's an important line to have in your arsenal so it's good we highlight that let's start off I get this little segment it's called the 222 which is top two flies top two tips top two resources just kind of as we as we take this out of here what would be so couple flies Do you have any names because so you take a look online or do you kind of have just your own stuff



Todd 1:07:47

I got my own stuff there's kind of a like a blue balls intruder we call outs and stuff like that and you know it's it's a black and blue pretty legit fly it you know it's got it's got all this stuff in it from jungle cocked you know saddle hackles and Andrea bit of polar bear and stuff but it's super sparse super movie made of a hot you know, usually a little I would say maybe depending on the fly a little spun PB in seal for mix at the front in bright pink and stuff so your egg sucking Li style thing but just like a pimped out version of it. That'll be kind of my one and then I fished a lot of peachy pinky kind of fatty stuff in the springtime

really sparse I'd say very much you know bc spot prawn looking but not not like that just the overall color combination the amount of wiggle with the variegated you know black and white and her spent on it and stuff like that right so just that kind of stuff really seems to work well here and then you know just sometimes guys are all on the big stuff and something you know you got to look at everyone's you know, I say is one of the tricks is or you know, maybe one of the other things to do is when everyone else is fishing you see a lot of guys fishing big stuff like switch it up fish something different, right? Go small, right? Because if they see a lot of stuff one way they could go opposite day, right? Yeah. Bizarro world.



Dave S 1:09:08

That's it. No, that's good. Like that is good tidbit. So I'm seeing on those tips would you have another tip you throw out there as far as helping somebody find a steelhead if they're up there?



Todd 1:09:16

Yeah, for sure. So I would just I would really look for like the water again. This is business like if you know if you're coming up here right now as a Canadian that's pretty desolate because we have no international guys and stuff like that. So this year was pretty cool right there was there was a lot a lot of water a lot open spaces and stuff but if it's busy and you go fish within the balsley and stuff like that, maybe don't try to go to the like the best run that you think is the best run right go try to find be water, just little nuggets, little pockets, little spots where guys like if you're a guided angler, like as a as a guide, and I'm running a jet boat, I'm not going to if I have two clients, I'm not going to go and fish those little spots, right? So I'm going to go to the bigger runs right and put my two my two my two sports out and they're going to fish that stuff and they're going to get a fish there because it's gonna hold fish right It's an in tributary, it's gonna hold fish. But I don't want to fish that after, you know, three guys have been on it for an hour or something like that, right? So you go fish, the little B water between spots, the traveling lanes. And I think a lot of times those pay really good dividends, right? Yeah,



Dave S 1:10:13

that's right. And what are those traveling lanes? How would you find a little nugget? You just have to pretty much fish the water? I mean, how would you find that little? Is there any way to read the water to kind of know where that nugget might be?



Todd 1:10:25

I would say depending on how your mode of transport is, if you're walking, then obviously it's a little tougher to find those little nuggets. But if you're drifting, you're drifting along, all of a sudden, your raft kind of slows down. And it's like, oh, this feels pretty good. And you look at shore like, oh, there's a depression, there's a big boulder. I might only be a 10 foot 20 foot long slot, but it's like, well, should I pull over? Well, no one else has fished it that day, look on the beach, and he tracks pull over usually try to pull above it or enough below that you don't get there's one in there, you don't kick them out by rolling over top of them right. And then I like to pull my raft away from those spots because if someone sees me they're like, sometimes those are savior spots, right? These walk up fish that quick. Sometimes that can be a game changer in a day saver, right? Just those little spots, right? And if you if you can get you know, you get two or three of those little spots in a day, you might have two or three fish, right that's a that's a great, a great thing and you might not even fish even we all love to fish the big classic. You know, take a cast take a step swings beautifully, like you know, you feel ripped off. You don't get a grab right. But a lot of water comes out of those little jiggles those little short jiggles that are like painful. There's multiple currents there's only a short seem right it's a short cast in like this like the I have a run or something a lot of guys miss the eye of the runs D right. So traveling fish love the eyes right there moving to the next run. So those a little couple nuggets that you that you got to look at it a river and just like if no one fishes them, that's definitely a spot they got to move through. And if they could, if they slow down there, it's an opportunity to get a fly in their face and usually pretty aggressive their spots. I can always say be ready for first cast in there.



Dave S 1:11:56

Yeah, cool. And just quickly, as far as resources, you have a couple of resources. Somebody want to dig more into steelhead fishing the skin any of that, that you direct them.



Todd 1:12:04

Yeah, for sure. You know, my website, you can check me out. Triple w appstream Adventures calm. Bob Hooton has some really good books out there. So he's got a couple of really nice books that are you know, it's



1:12:18

Yeah, it's,





Todd 1:12:19

you know, our whole fisheries. I know the conservation thing is tough, but you know, without me saying it, I feel like you know, we definitely everyone takes a toll on our fishery and that right and, and us as Katrin Elise fishers that definitely, definitely, you know, you definitely takes a toll on stuff. So I think we all one of my big things is just to be just treat each one very precious. Right. It's a rare, rare diamond to get one on the fly. And when you get one, you know, keep them in the water. Try to have a buddy fishing with sometimes doesn't have it's always nice to have someone that landed with a super soft net. Right and you keep that fish in the water. You need to snap a pic of it. Just make it super quick. And, you know, and release it as good as as you caught it and stuff. Right. So everyone's precious.



Dave S 1:13:03

Yeah, for sure. And I just had a little note here. I you mentioned I think we talked to a yasi he's another we talked a little about Oh, PST today. I'm just curious who was yasi? He was can you just describe this quickly? It was he like a founding partner of a PST and that crew.



Todd 1:13:17

Yeah, I think him James and Ed kind of work together on it. With that, and you know, he's a funny character. Japanese gentleman from Japan. So I've fished with him for probably the last like eight or nine years. And, and he comes over and he's super jonesing for steelhead right now. I just talked to me today. Oh, cool. He can't he's stuck in Japan. And so he he's all right. He's pulling his hair out. Definitely. So yeah. But you know, he's a great guy super enthusiastic about it. And I think definitely, sometimes it causes a bit of pain with with with everything because he's very enthusiastic. Right. And both steelheading it's definitely a lifestyle choice for him.



Dave S 1:13:57

Yeah, good. Good. All right, Todd. Well, this has been fun. I am. You know, I mean, obviously steelhead fishing. We've talked a ton on here and you can't dig into everything but I really love that we dug into some of the gear again, especially with the Oh PST stuff because they have some you know, some unique shorter stuff going on. But yeah, man, any you want to give a shout out in the next six months or so? Anything new coming for you or your business or anything?



Todd 1:14:20

Yeah, hell yeah. I just I'd like to just hopefully we get through this and I can see, you know, family and guests again, right. That'd be the biggest thing and just just just get through it. And, and, you know, we're always we're always trying to push the envelope here. And you know, just get out there and if you have a chance to go sling get out of the house, right? Doesn't matter. Like high water, low water. You never know. You're always surprised. always surprised. I learned something every day out there. Right. So just just just keep keep on keepin on.



Dave S 1:14:49

All right, Todd. Well, thanks. Again, [upstream adventures.com](http://upstreamadventures.com) if anybody wants to connect with you, yeah, until we see you on the next one. Thanks again.



1:14:55

Thanks, Dave.



Dave S 1:14:58

So There you go. If you want to find all the show notes with all the links we covered just go to [wet fly swing comm slash 188](http://wetflyswing.com) if you can head over to [wet fly swing comm slash giveaway](http://wetflyswing.com) to join the next amazing giveaway to one of our amazing trips coming up. I want to take another minute here just to briefly run down with you a little bit on one of our sponsors to start with and I'm just going to go to the website. I'm just going to go to I'm going to go to actually [what fly swing dot.com slash anglers](http://whatflyswing.com), anglers and that'll that'll redirect over to English club Okay, so I'm just going to go through this really quick and I might even do a video later on this but it's pretty cool. So you open it up the first thing you see right now is a guy holding a rod, steelhead rod, or maybe no maybe it's just trout rod. Anglers coffee, it says fuel for out here, fuel for out here. So basically, yeah, I mean, it's it's all their coffee bags have a different fly pattern. I've been using the muddler blend, which on the site right now is 1650 as I keep scrolling down coffee by anglers for anglers subscribe, so they have a subscription program, which is cool. They got this blue, this old school blue looking truck, which is which is pretty awesome. And as I keep scrolling, just some different options or some shows you where it's made. And I know the guys that I've been talking to they've been doing this for quite a while. So this is like one of their passions. It's kind of similar to like the [wet fly swing podcast ROI](http://wetflyswing.com). Where you know, we all want to dig in and support the community and build something great. So that's exactly

what they're doing. So I'm going to click on there's a little subscriptions and gifts. Link. Just quickly check that out. And let's see gifts for coffee for you. Or there's a gift link. And so I'm just going to go if I was going to do the muddler, I can just click Select Options. So here you go. So whole being drip. I go. Probably probably gonna drip, Subscribe and Save. So delivery one week. Now how often do I get it? Oh, so yeah, you can just basically sign it up. So. So 1650. And the cool thing about this is that if you sign up now there you get actually 22% off. So what does that roughly 20%. Let's just do that exactly. So 1650 16.5 times point two, two equals 363. So it's not a bad deal. So 16.5 minus 3.63. So for 1287 you get a bag of coffee. And this is good coffee. I actually, I've been drinking it. And it's probably like I said, some of the best stuff I've had. So a five pound bag is \$75. I'm not sure if that's a better deal, I'm just guessing is then buying the single 12 ounce bags. So again, so that you could get like \$15. So you could get that for 60 bucks. For fit. Let's just do this real quick. How many ounce I think there's 16 ounces in a pound. So let's go 16 times five equals So that's like 80 divided by 12. Yeah, so that's actually 6.6 bags. So roughly so that's that's the way to do it. So you could get 6.6 almost seven bags, which would be seven of those bags typically. Okay, so I'm just running by these numbers. So that's probably the way to do it. You buy it as a big bulk. It's either that or you just do it weekly. What you can do here anyways, I'm kind of rolling through I'm gonna go back I'll mention the blog. I want to see what they I don't think they have a whole lot on the blog. That's a fairly new site. Yeah. So they don't have anything there. Let's say they do have. Oh, right. Right. So they got the soul River. That's another thing Chad Brown and the soul river stuff. They're sponsoring what he has going which is cool. So yeah, I just want to do a quick rundown on anglers. I might do this again for our other sponsors, just to let you know and if I do have a video I might add that as well. I think that would be cool to add is as a video to kind of show you to walk me through some of this stuff. But right now you got audio. I'm not sure how long this is taken. But so, so yeah, I just want to do that really quick. Solid Wrap it up out of here and just thank you for listening in. If you like this or if you clicked and purchase that, I would love to hear from you. You can send me an email just Dave at wet fly swing COMM And let me know you know, again, we're trying to support these good companies that are supporting us. And I would love to hear from you. But if you can just click through and then take a look for yourself. I want to thank you again for stopping by today check out the show. I'm looking forward to catching up with you soon. Maybe see you online or on the river.



unknown speaker.... 1:20:31

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