

**TAKE**

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**Matt Watson**

**REBECCA MURDIE CHATS WITH  
TELEVISION'S EXTREME FISHERMAN...**

## 1 Who does your business card say you are? And who are you really?

**MATT:** My business card says, 'Extreme Fisherman' but it's a bit of a joke. That title was bestowed on me by media in the U.S. What I really am is a producer, presenter, director, writer, gear-rigger, underwater cameraman, coffee boy, manager, contract negotiator, part-time fisherman and fulltime Dad. But the only thing I'm qualified for is being a roofer.

## 2 So, who do your wife and kids say you are?

**MATT:** They're all a bit different. My wife is very coy and says that I work in television. My son, Shaw (8), says I'm on a fishing show. And my 11-year-old daughter Hannah says, "*my dad's Matt Watson and he's got his own fishing show and he's really awesome and he's on TV in heaps of countries and blah blah blah ...*"

## 3 If you could be a fish in the water, which fish would best describe you and why?

**MATT:** To be honest, I wouldn't really want to be a fish – it's a pretty brutal environment! Unlike Nemo, where the fish all hang out and are mates, in real life they're all trying to eat each other! So if I had to be a fish, I want to be right up the food chain ... like a Mako shark! They're tough, fast and way cooler than Great Whites.

## 4 There are plenty of good fishing shows on TV today – what's made yours such an on-going success?



**MATT:** I guess we've embraced our 'Kiwiiness'. I call things as I see them, and I've not been afraid to do things a little differently. Our viewers can expect to see things they've never seen before, not just in terms of what we catch and how we catch it, but also in the way we film – particularly the underwater stuff.

## 5 Being in the public eye can make life extra busy: how do you still find time for the hustle'n'bustle of family life?

**MATT:** I find that 99% of the people I meet are polite and have something nice to say – and I really don't feel it's a burden to stop and say giddyay or have a quick photo. That said, I'm just like any other busy person – it's about getting the balance right. I take time off during the

Christmas holidays each year (that's, like, sacred family time) ... and I try to make sure I'm around for birthdays, anniversaries, kids' sport, etc. We'll often stay out at the shearers' quarters on our farm on the coast. I do plenty of diving and fishing – but in my own time and at my own pace.

## 6 The greatest highlight of your career?

**MATT:** In terms of my television career, it would be doing interviews with Letterman, The Today Show, 60 minutes, etc. After the show took off, I was really nervous about all the media attention I started getting. But looking back, I'm proud of the fact I managed to be myself and I felt I represented New Zealand well.

But my real career is as a fisherman. So I'd have to say my greatest highlight was catching a Black Marlin out of my dinghy in my home-patch, just off the Bay of Islands.

## 7 Favourite childhood fishing memory?

**MATT:** Catching a big snapper with my dad in our secret spot on the Manukau harbour – I'd never seen my dad so happy and animated. We won the big local fishing comp.

## 8 Near life or death scenario while being at sea?

**MATT:** I've had a few close calls, but funnily enough I've never felt that I was going to die in any of them. I had a Mako shark have a crack at me while I was in the water filming, and it wasn't till I watched the footage later that I appreciated how close it was.

## 9 For the fishos out there ... what's your best tip for baiting a hook without baiting your finger? And for the ladies ... how on earth do you get fish-stink out from under your fingernails?

**MATT:** There is not nearly enough space here for me to tell you about baiting up! If there is one hint, use fresh bait – catching it yourself is best. It doesn't smell and it works better. And for the other part of your question ... what do you mean? Fish doesn't stink!

## 10 In your opinion what's our biggest conservation dilemma right now? And what can we do to help?

**MATT:** Over-fishing is definitely a problem – and there are some very destructive bulk-harvesting methods being used to make sure we've got 'fish-fingers' in the supermarket. But ultimately it's driven by consumerism. If no one bought the products containing over-fished (and unsustainable) species, they wouldn't continue catching them. So next time you're at the supermarket or restaurant, ask if it is a hook-and-line caught fish, and if they can't show you it's sustainably sourced, then order the chicken. ❁

