



Photo by Zachary Fowler

My name is Zachary Fowler and last year on the date that I am writing this, August 16, I was alone in Patagonia, 87 days into my survival for Season 3 of HISTORY's survival series "Alone". On August 16, 2016 was the morning that I heard the boat come for a medical check. I had nothing to eat but 63 fish and two birds up to this point, and I thought I was going to fail the med check that morning. If I did fail the medical check I would be going home defeated. There was \$500k for the last man or woman standing. I intended to survive no matter how long, and win that money for my family so we could build a new home.

The medical team arrived with sad faces. They checked me physically and then started asking me about my mental state and how much I missed my wife and two girls that were waiting for me at home. After eating little more than three fish and some dandelion roots for the last 14 days, it didn't take much to break down my walls.

Through tearful eyes I said, "as long as I have strength in me I will never give up". And that was the moment my wife Jami came up behind me and hugged me and said "It's over, you did it. You out stubborned them all, you won". I won so much more than half a million dollars that day.

It's been a year and six months since the rest of the world saw that moment on TV. We said good-bye to the off-grid Yurt and bought a house in Union, Maine and have set up a whole new life for ourselves there. The prize winnings enabled me to leave the world of boat building behind and pursue my dream of making things. After 87 days of filming myself making stuff it seemed like a natural avenue to go and make YouTube a full-time job. I now make whatever I want and share it with the world in hopes of inspiring others to do the same and get out there and find their big adventure.

I had done a few YouTube videos before I left for Patagonia but it was a big step to go and leave the

world of building wooden boats, something I had been doing for 19 years, and go full-time YouTube creator. Just because you are TV famous does not directly correlate to YouTube views. After the airing of Alone Season 3 and the revealing of my win I was able to purchase all the equipment needed to make a fully professional production. There was a lot of show obligations involved in being the winner of such a show. For the first three months, my time was consumed by interviews and appearances, so I decided to video blog it all for my YouTube channel.

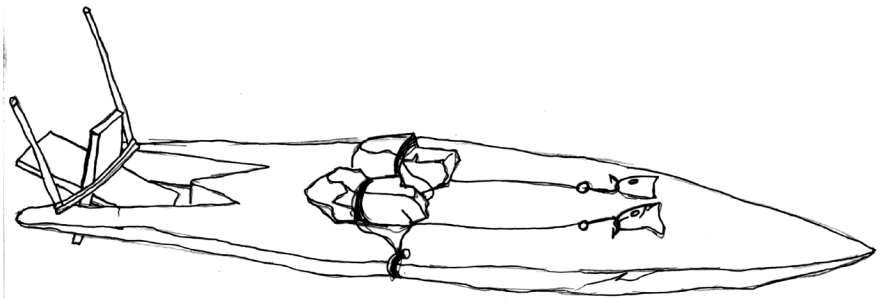
I wanted to get outdoors and show in greater detail all the things I had made on the TV show that so many people were fascinated with and helped win me such notoriety. I put out an average of one video a week with the Vlog (Video Blog) covering everything from me and my family living in a 12-foot yurt to the receiving of the half million in my bank account and the new mansion that we bought. Of course

anything feels like a mansion when you move out of a 12-foot yurt.

Now that things have settled down a bit I have been getting back out in the woods and started a new series on my YouTube channel: Fowler's Makery and Mischief "87 Days". It is a re-enactment of my time on "Alone" but from the stand point of as if I did it here in Maine. After all the Vlogging, it has taken me a few episodes to really find my voice and make something that is not a boring tutorial, but something that everyone can enjoy. I'm up to episode 6 and put out new episodes every Sunday morning, as well as videos on other things that interest me throughout the week. But the last two episodes are my favorite and that is what I really want to share with you here.

On the show, I quickly learned that there was no game to be had during the winter up high in the Andes mountains. The lake and the gorgeous trout were to be my sustenance for the duration of my stay. I had 24 fishing hooks as one of my ten survival items, and they needed to provide the food that would keep me going. An amazing species of bamboo grew all over the area that I was given to survive in, and made a great fishing pole. I started out by simply rigging a few 16-foot bamboo poles with short lines and baiting them with worms and grubs that I gathered from the rich Patagonian soil. I caught about a fish a day the first month I was there. Also, I smoked every fish for three to six hours before I finished it on some hot coals and after eating the flesh, the head and all the bones went into my pot for soup. I drank nothing but that fish head soup three times a day for the entirety of my stay, and it gave me the needed strength to make it through the days I did not have fresh fish.

It turned out the static poles were not the best option for me and



*The original drawing of the Duck Hunter 3000 but was later modified.
Drawing by Zachary Fowler.*

more often than not I found my lines stripped and sitting there. Sitting and waiting for a fish to bite so I could set the hook manually was not an option. I had a lot to do to get ready for winter and the nights were already below freezing, so I needed to come up with a way to set the hook in the fish's mouth while I was not there.

Most of my skills have come from old survival books I found at garage sales. I had a head full of knowledge and now was the time to put it into action. I started out by making a few of what would normally be used as rabbit snares that I had drawn out in

my sketch book before leaving for Patagonia, and thought they would make good fishing snares. I proceeded to set up several of these along the shore line, making each one a bit different, but all were made from that amazing bamboo. My goal was to set as many as I could, and in the end all 24 of the fishing hooks I had with me were in action at all times.

It took about three weeks before I had all my hooks out there fishing all the time on one or another of my fishing set-ups. Five of my hooks were set on spring-loaded traps that would go off when the fish would bite, and they set the hook more often than the static lines. Then, I had three trout lines which consisted of an 18-foot bamboo pole with an 18-foot 50lb fishing line with a rock at the end and three to five short lines at the end with hooks on them. The rest were all static lines on 12 to 18 foot poles that I stuck in the rocks at the bank and held the baited hook six or so inches under the water's surface.

I tried hand-lining but kept getting my line tangled when casting, which was unfortunate. I felt that the sweet spot for fish was about 18-feet out, and at this point I had nothing that could get my line out there and back safely without getting caught on all the wood and weeds that were in the water creating that awesome fish habitat. Every night there when I went to sleep I would lay there and think about what I needed to fix so that I could eat more and stay longer.



*The Duck Hunter 3000
Photo by Zachary Fowler*



Zachary Fowler holding a fish he caught the first time he took out the Duck hunter 3000.

Photo by Zachary Fowler.

On one of those nights the Duck Hunter 3000 came to me. At this point the only other game I had seen was a cormorant that would swim by about 50 to 60 feet out from the shore every morning. It was out of range of my slingshot and too far out for me to try and swim out and come up from underneath and grab him. A trap was needed to do what I could not. As a child, my father made me a rubber-band powered paddle boat for the bathtub. I started to remember when I was fishing in Maine on the Rockland breakwater I managed to accidentally catch more seagulls and cormorants on the cut bait I was using to catch stripers.

So, I combined those two ideas and the Duck Hunter 3000 was born. I made a 3-foot long self-propelled paddle boat with two hooks with fish heads on them on them attached to a rock which was then attached to the deck. The plan was that the paddle boat, now christened the Duck Hunter 3000, would motor its way out into the lake and sit there offering up a free meal for any bird that passed by. Once the bait was eaten and the bird was hooked, it would struggle and pull the rock off the deck causing it to pull the duck's head under water and dispatching him.

It all worked perfectly except for the fact that the birds were rare and the only one who ever came by was so leery of my contraption it never had the chance to be tested. After

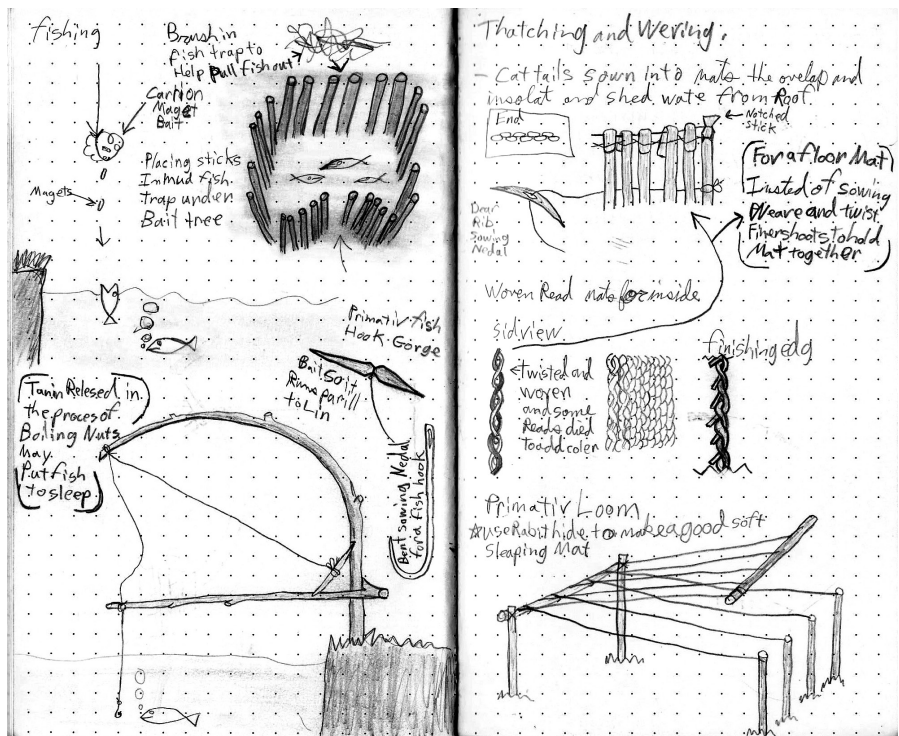
a few days of this I quickly saw a better application for it. That sweet spot I wanted to fish that was previously out of my reach, could be reached by the Duck Hunter 3000, so I brought her in for a refit.

When she re-launched, there was one of my spring-loaded fishing snares on her deck. On the show, you see me finding it upside down after her first kill; the leverage of the fishing pole on the deck of the little boat allowed the fish to flip it over. But upside down or not she brought home her first kill: a beautiful rainbow trout. At the lake in Patagonia where my camp was I found three types of trout: rainbow, brook, and then the oh-so-coveted pink fleshed trout. The pink ones were the best tasting. Half of the trout were filled with fish eggs and those were a treat.

As time went on the Duck Hunter 3000 was modified more and more to increase efficiency. I made a dock to service it and provide a launching platform that would allow me to get

out into the water further. On its own, the paddle wheel would take it out about 20 feet. In the end, I got up to about 35 feet with my 15-foot dock. Then, I ran the fishing line through an eye on the deck so it would not flip it over when it caught a fish. I made special outriggers to keep the trailing line I used to prevent it from becoming tangled in the propulsion system. The water was choppy for most of the time. Sometimes I would send it out and it would immediately comeback in, but when it was calm it would just sit out there fishing.

There were times when I would come down from my camp in the morning, and I would find the Duck Hunter 3000 just motoring back-and-forth with the fish it had caught. Somewhere around day 60 I found it washed ashore and damaged after a night wind storm. The paddle wheel was missing and the storm continued to rage on. I had a new idea and decided to take her back to my shelter eight stories up



Taken from Zachary Fowler's journal, which were designs and things that he studied before appearing on "Alone".

and over the hill for a major refit. I had been playing around with the idea of removing the paddle wheel and replacing it with a propeller driven by a single elastic slingshot band from my slingshot. It took me over a week for the refit. I carved a propeller approximately 4 inches in diameter with my multi-tool. Then, I heat straightened a bamboo shaft to put the propeller on and then made couplings and shaft guides out of bamboo as well. I also had to make a rudder to keep it straight since the propeller was off center. The propeller was not as durable as the paddlewheel so I also made a

big bamboo cage to protect it when it washed ashore on windy nights.

When it was all finished I had to wait to launch until day 76 because of the weather. It was a thing of beauty. I made it so I could wind up the shaft and set a trigger attached to the trailing line and when I pushed it out just before it would stop I pulled the trailing line.

So, when I pushed it out the propeller would fire up and take it out to deeper water to fish. When I re-launched her on day 76 she went three feet and stopped! The potential of the coiled elastic band was not released because of the fric-

tion of all the moving parts locking up. I needed grease and had none. Heck, if I had had any sort of fat out there I would have eaten it to slow down my weight loss which in the end totaled 73 lbs.

Suddenly an idea came to me, bush wax! AKA ear wax. Ear wax has many survival applications from treating wounds to now working as a friction reducer on the Duck Hunter 3000. It worked perfectly and she went out to her farthest distance yet. In the end, she only caught five or six fish since there were only a few days that the wind and chop didn't blow her right back in. But it was well worth it seeing my idea come to life and it provided me with some of the sustenance that I needed and to survive for 87 days.

Now, I'm doing it all again on YouTube. Episodes 5 and 6 in my "87 Days" series have been about making and catching fish with a new Duck Hunter 3000, this time christened as the S.S. Sparrow in honor of my daughter Sparrow. In the future, my YouTube Channel will continue to reveal and remake all the contraptions that people saw on the show and talked about so much as well as continuing to Vlog about my slingshot shooting, adventures, life, and family.

Zachary Fowler was the season 3 winner of the History Channel series "Alone". He lives and makes YouTube videos with his family in Maine. You can find his YouTube Channel called "Fowler's Makery And Mischief" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50w-aHztPMc&index=9&list=PLjSScLBAAtGMjOljXmn1PhR0iraRvagd1r>



Fowler in Patagonia with his wizard staff undergoing a medical check conducted by the "Alone" production team. Photo by the "Alone" safety expert.