

DAVID SARGENT

Lobster fisherman, sea urchin diver, scallop diver, wormer, and a clam digger.

Date: March 23, 2005

Time: 2:45 p.m.

Location of the Interview: Ellsworth High School Library

Student Interviewers:	Kristin Wing	Grade 10
	Elizabeth Miller	Grade 10
	Danielle Werner	Grade 10

School: Ellsworth High School

School Location: Ellsworth, Maine

Teacher or Parent

Interviewer/Chaperone: None

Transcriber: Shandel Hogdon

EM: Hi. I'm Liz Miller

DW: I'm Kristin Wing and on the phone with us is Danielle Werner. We are interviewing David Sargent who makes his living on the ocean. To start off the interview, Danielle wants to know what you exactly do?

DS: I lobster fish in the summer time and I dive for sea urchins and scallops in the winter and I also go worming and clamming.

EM: Where did you learn the trade?

DS: Just comes natural, I guess.

EM: How has lobster fishing or scallop diving changed since you've been involved with it?

DS: It has changed dramatically. The lobster fishing is o.k. Because it is regulated well enough but the diving is: Well, diving and scalloping you can only do from December first to April fifteenth; other than that you can't go diving and then you have to rely on clamming or worming and wait for the lobster shedding season which is primarily in July through November.

KW: How big is your boat?

DS: Twenty-two feet.

KW: How many traps do you have?

DS: I have two hundred and seventy-five traps.

KW: How many people do you have that work for you?

DS: One person beside myself.

KW And what does this person do

DS: When someone goes lobstering with me they fill the bait bags and clean the traps out to check for oversize lobsters which have to be thrown back and short lobsters that have to be thrown back.

KW: What type of bait do you use?

DS: I use herring and hide.

KW: Is it difficult to find bait?

DS: Certain times of the year getting bait can be very difficult but I haven't had any problems so far but some people do at certain times.

KW: Do you fish in any type of weather?

DS: Most of the time, yes, but sometimes the weather is too bad then you can't go fishing.

EM: Where do you sell your lobsters?

DS: I sell my lobsters to Down East Lobster.

KW: What are the joys of being fishermen?

DS? Cause' no one tells you what to do and the harder you work the more you make. (Laughter).

KW: Does fishing ever affect your family?

DS: Fishing very much affects the family cause if I don't go fishing for a while and don't make money than the family doesn't eat.

KW: Is it ever dangerous, too dangerous or...?

DS: A lot of times it is way too dangerous.

DW: Yeah, have you ever come into a close encounter that was scary for you?

DS: Yeah. Yeah.

KW: Are there any stories you would like to share?

DS: There have been times that I've gone out and we have been fishing in a spot where it was nice and calm and then by the time you get ready to go home (clears throat) I've had a couple of times where it looked like we wasn't gonna make it cause the seas had gotten so big.

KW: Yeah.

DS: That was very scary.

KW: Have the rise in gas prices made it difficult to fish?

DS: At the present time the gas prices are very much hurting the fishing industry. If you don't have a good catch than the high price of fuel definitely cuts into your profits.

KW: Which do you prefer to do out of your scalloping, clamming, lobstering or sea urching?

DS: I prefer to go lobstering.

KW: Yeah, which makes the most money for you, do you think? And what are the local rules for lobster fishing?

DS: Well, you have a minimum measure and a maximum measure. I believe the minimum measure is three and one fourth inches and I think the large size is four and a half inches. You have to also make sure you don't take a notched female lobster.

KW: What time do you usually go out fishing?

DS: I usually get on the boat between four thirty and five o'clock in the morning and return sometimes between four thirty and five o'clock in the afternoon, sometimes sooner than that.

KW: What else do you think we should know anything about?

DS: Fishing is a lot of hard work and if you are not prepared to be self-driven you are not gonna make it.

KW: How old do you think you should be to go out in a boat or.

DS: I mean it depends on how responsible the person is. It is a dangerous job working on a boat especially lobstering. If somebody young gets setting the traps out too quick the loose rope on the floor tangles around their ankles and that is how we loose a lot of fishermen.

KW: Now do you think that there should be a certain like strength at all or...?

DS: I think that it should be mandatory that everybody takes a stern man with them. They shouldn't be able to go lobstering alone.

KW: Yeah.

DS: There are a lot of people that I know that go lobstering alone. There is a grandfather and a son and a grandson; all three of them lobster fish where I do and they all three go by themselves. But I think, in my opinion, that is very dangerous.

KW: What is the limit for lobster traps you can have?

DS: Eight hundred is the limit that any fishermen can fish inside the three-mile line.

KW: Is that a lot, how many fit in one trap usually?

DS: That depends on where you land it. You can have traps that have none and then you can have traps that are right full. For instance, last year I had one that I hauled up and took thirty counters out of it.

KW: Have you ever seen lobsters fight?

DS: Yep, yes I have. (Laughter)

KW: What was the biggest lobster you have ever caught?

DS: I have seen a seventeen, eighteen pound lobster before.

EM: That is really big.

KW: Yeah, have you ever been scared of a lobster lie it was gonna bite you or anything?

DS: Nope.

KW: I think I would be petrified it was gonna bite my finger off.

DS: Some people get a little intimidated when you get a ten or eleven pound lobster in the trap. Sometimes it is a little difficult to get them out of the trap.

KW: Does the smell ever bother you or has it ever bothered you?

DS: No, but we have had a few stern men that have gotten sick. (Laughter)

DS: And the smell comes from the herring.

KW: Is lobstering the most difficult one do you think?

DS: H'mmm.

DW: Or sea urching or

DS: In my opinion, no, I think the diving is the most difficult; it is more strenuous.

KW: Clamming is a lot of work too, right?

DS: Not compared to diving.

KW: No?

DS: In diving, you know, you use every muscle in your body. You know clamming and worming, that is a pretty no brainer.

KW: Yeah.

DS: You just bend over for three and a half or four hours but as far as difficulty, diving is the hardest by far.

KW: Do you think your son might go fishing? Is he interested?

DS: Nope (Laughter)

KW: Have you ever done anything besides fishing?

DS: Yep, I used to weld in a welding operation.

DW: Do you think you will do fishing for the rest of your life?

DS: Yeah, I will probably lobster fish forever.

KW: Well, I think that is all we have for questions.