

CALEB T

Interviewer: Brandon
Date: September 18, 2003
Place: Friendship Village School
Transcribers: Brandon and Caleb



Q: How long have you been lobstering?

A: I've been lobstering for about three years.

Q: How old were you when you started lobstering?

A: I was about nine and a half.

Q: Do any other of your family members lobster?

A: My father and my grandfather and my uncle.

Q: Who do you go lobstering with?

A: Sometimes my father.

Q: How often do you go out a week?

A: I only went two times this year, but usually I go out four times a week.

2

Q: What months do you lobster in?

A: June, July, August, and September.

Q: Do you have a license, and what did you do to get one?

A: Yes, I do have a license, and I didn't have to do anything to get it. I had to send in for it.

Q: How do you know where to set your traps?

A: A fathometer shows you how deep the water is, and the trap has a certain amount of rope on it.

Q: When does your day begin?

A: It starts at about 5:00.

Q: When does your day end?

A: It ends at about 12:30.

Q: What is your job on the boat?

A: Sternman, and bait bags for the traps.

Q: What color is your buoy?

A: The color is yellow, then black, and then red.

Q: What do you use for bait?

A: We usually use herring.

Q: Where do you get the bait?

A: We get it from a bait truck.

Q: How many traps do you set and pickup a day?

A: We usually set 45-50 every load.

Q: What is the normal catch for the day, and what is the biggest lobster you ever caught?

A: The normal catch is about 300 pounds, and the biggest lobster I have ever caught is about 2-feet long.

Q: Describe how you haul a trap. How big is it, and how much does it weigh?

A: You haul a trap by grabbing it, put it in the block, then you put it the hauler, then you turn the hauler on, and then pull the trap up. Then you gotta grab the trap, take it off the hauler and off the block, put it on the washboard, and then you take out all the lobsters and measure them. The little ones you throw overboard. The traps are 4-feet long, and they weigh about 50 pounds.

Q: Fifty pounds? That's a lot! How do you keep from getting pinched by a lobster's claw?

A: When you hold them, you cross the lobster's claw so it can't bite you.

Q: OK, what size lobster are you allowed to keep, and how do you measure them?

A: The normal size lobster is, I think, 3 1/4 inches, and you measure them with a little metal thing.

Q: OK, why do some lobsters have v-notches it their tails, and what do you do with them if they do?

A: Most have v-notches in them because they're females, or they're eggers, and you have to throw them overboard.

Q: What is an egger?

A: An egger is a lobster with eggs.

Q: OK, what happens if you get caught with a short lobster, or a v-notched one?

A: I don't really know.

Q: What other fish get caught in your traps, besides lobsters?

A: We catch sculpins, flounders, stripers, that's all I can remember.

Q: What is your favorite fish to get caught?

A: The striper.

Q: What is your least favorite?

4

A: A sculpin.

Q: Oh, now what other kinds of sea life do you encounter?

A: Well, we saw porpoises once, and a blackfish, seaweed, sea cucumbers, anything else that lives on the bottom.

Q: OK, where do you sell your lobsters?

A: I sell mine at the Fishermen's Heritage Lobster Co-op.

Q: Now describe your lobster boat.

A: Mine? Mine is gray, 21-foot long; it's a Seaway, and that's it.

Q: What's its name, and why did you name it?

A: I'm probably gonna name it *The Hauladay*. I named it that because I wanted to!

Q: How big is the engine? Is it gas or diesel?

A: It's a 25-horsepower Yamaha; it's gas.

Q: Do you use a propeller cage, and what is it for?

A: Most outboards do not have cages. It's for when the rope hits it, it'll slide off instead of getting tangled up in the wheel.

Q: What do you wear when you go lobstering?

A: You usually wear oil pants and gloves.

Q: Describe the parts of the lobster traps.

A: There are heads, a bait line, a door. There are three sections: the bait line, the middle, and some people call it the dinner plate in the back because in the back they can't get out.

Q: Do you ever use toggles? Explain what one is.

A: A toggle is a round plastic thing, and if you lose the buoy, then the toggle saves the trap and saves the day.

Q: What do you keep the lobsters in, once they're caught?

5

A: We use a lobster tank.

Q: How do you know where to go in the fog, and what electronics do you have?

A: You know if you have a compass or a plotter.

Q: I thought radar would've helped, too. What safety equipment do you have to have?

A: You have to have enough life jackets for everyone on the boat; that's about it.

Q: OK, have you ever fallen overboard and what happened?

A: No, I have never fallen overboard.

Q: Have you ever gotten sea sick? Describe the circumstances.

A: No, I've never gotten seasick.

Q: Has your boat ever broken down at sea? Describe what happened.

A: Yes, I don't even know what happened; it just broke down.

Q: Has your boat ever got hung up on something or run aground? What happened?

A: Nope!

Q: Have you ever lost a trap while hauling or lost bait bags? Explain what happened.

A: Yes, a bait bag, because I was tying it, and it fell off the top head, and when it fell in, the fish were scared (chuckles) .

Q: What is the scariest thing that ever happened to you on your boat?

A: The water coming over the house.

Q: What do you like most about lobstering?

A: The money!

Q: What do you like least about lobstering?

6

A: Nothing.

Q: So you love lobstering?

A: Yes.

Q: OK. Do you like to eat lobster, how often do you eat it, and how do you like it cooked?

A: I eat it about once every two weeks, and I like it cooked boiled.

Q: Well, that wraps it up. Say goodbye, Caleb!

A: Goodbye!

Q: Well, this has been Brandon Poli, reporting on Caleb Thompson. That's all, folks!