

Interview #14

Location: Barnegat Light, NJ

Date: 1/31/06

INTERVIEW

(?loud background noise that sounds like a pterodactyl)

INT: He'd go cod fishing []

RES: So he was one of the people that actually saw cod around NJ?

INT: Oh yeah. I caught codfish; I had up to 5000 lbs in one day on a set line.

RES: Really?

INT: Yep.

RES: So when did you start fishing?

INT: I started fishing, well I was mating on a boat when I was 14.

RES: Was that with your father or?

INT: No, that was with another fellow, but I started fishing with him when I was about 8 or 10 going out with him.

RES: I spent the last 2 years up in Newfoundland; you sound like a Newfoundlander. That's how they all started their careers – on the water since they can remember.

INT: The only time I was away from it when I was in the service for 2 years. I got drafted, so but...

RES: Ok. So if you were mating by the time you were 14, that's about what...you were born in 45?

INT: 46.

RES: 46. So you were mating since [] roughly?

INT: Yeah.

RES: Ok. How much education were you able to get?

INT: I graduated from high school.

RES: And are you married?

INT: Yeah.

RES: Do you have any kids?

INT: One boy and 2 step children.

RES: The reason we ask about kids is we're interested in sort of the next generation?

INT: Yeah my son, he's fishing out of Barnegat Light there.

RES: Oh I think I've run across his name.

INT: XXXX?

RES: Yeah.

INT: XXXX, yeah.

RES: I might have actually talked to him on the phone trying to track you down.

INT: Yeah, it's XXXX; that's my boy.

RES: Did he get started with you then?

INT: Yeah, pretty much so yeah. I lived in Florida; I moved to Florida for 10 years, and I was fishing out of there and running back and forth. I fished in here in the summertime like all the way up until November and then ran back down in...well I came up in April, and then I ran back down in like November there. That's before they started monk fishing, you know, wasn't hardly too much of a fishery left here. There wasn't any codfish left and stuff like that, so I was fishing out of Florida there.

RES: What years were those?

INT: like 1980 till about 90- 1990.

RES: Ok, so from roughly about 1960-1980, you were fishing around here most of the time in Barnegat Light?

INT: Yeah. Well in the summer, I was back up again too. See I was fishing winters in Florida there, but I use to go to Florida with my father. Before I went to the service, I was king fishing out there like in 66 or so – 67 there.

RES: What part of Florida?

INT: West Palm Beach, well Riviera Beach, and then when I moved there, I moved to Port Pierce. And then when they stopped commercial fishing down there, I got out of there.

RES: The net ban you mean?

INT: Yeah, they got out there like in...I got out of there in 90. I sold and moved back up here.

RES: Is that why you moved back up here?

INT: Pretty much so. I mean I use to net sharks and everything else down there, you know. We use to net them and...

RES: With your dad?

INT: No, I was by myself then. I was using my own boat then. That was like in, I would say like 84-85 and around there.

RES: And what is your status now? Are you the owner/operator?

INT: Yeah.

RES: And how long have you been doing that?

INT: Owner/operator? Probably since about 1972.

RES: Ok, so this is before you moved down to Florida?

INT: Yeah.

RES: So you mated for roughly 12 years, and then you got on your own? Is that accurate?

INT: Yeah. I kind of...I started fishing by myself there – commercial fishing – around 1971 I guess. I got married in 70, and then I bought a skip there.

RES: And then when you got started on your own, did you get started through your father, or did you get...how did you...

INT: No, I just...

RES: Saved up and bought?

INT: Yeah, bought my own boat there. Back then it was you bought a boat for 2,500\$ - a skiff.

RES: So was that an open design then?

INT: Yeah, it was like a pot skiff, you know, like a regular old lobster boat.

RES: What were you after at that point?

INT: We were fishing weakfish, stripers, just about anything we kept, you know, butterfish and all of that stuff.

RES: What kind of gear were you using?

INT: Just gill nets.

RES: You were inshore, basically an inshore gill...

INT: Yeah, we pulled them all by hand too, you know, so it wasn't any power; it was all done by hand.

RES: What about electronics?

INT: Just a bottom machine and a CB radio.

RES: Did you ever have the Loran on that?

INT: Later on, I got a Loran, but I don't think...I didn't have a Loran on that boat no.

RES: When you first started?

INT: Yeah.

RES: You talked a little bit about this. In terms of the economics, was it difficult to get started in fishing at that time for a young guy that wanted to get started? You were young then, younger...

INT: Yeah, it was...well there wasn't a real lot of money into it then, you know. I mean we didn't get paid much for our fish. We got 15-20 cents for bluefish, you know, and 35 cents for weakfish. Weakfish were a lot of times more, but you know, it...seasons were shorter, you know, we didn't have a long season like we do now.

RES: Why were the seasons shorter then?

INT: It was just colder. We didn't have any of the, you know, warmer water there. We didn't have any...bluefish came in up later and left, you know, sooner, so the water got cold quicker. And like I say, we did have cod fishing then, so I did cod fish there.

RES: Gill netting?

INT: No, we were set lines – a trout line like...

RES: Sorry, that was then or?

INT: Yeah.

RES: So you did have a long line then for cod?

INT: Codfish yeah.

RES: Did you ever have any fisheries training – your twine course, or a marine engine, or navigation, anything formal?

INT: Nah, nope.

RES: Learned on the water?

INT: Yep.

RES: And what (loud background noise that sounds like a pterodactyl) Barnegat at the very beginning?

INT: Yeah Barnegat, yeah.

RES: And what was it like there then? How many fishermen were there?

INT: I wouldn't say there was probably more than 12 gill netters, 8 or 10 maybe if that, and some of them were Norwegian.

RES: So you didn't socialize with the Norwegians?

INT: Oh yeah.

RES: You did.

INT: Yeah, yeah.

RES: SO did gill netters kind of hang together as a group?

INT: Yeah. There wasn't a big fleet there. I mean there was no scallopers there. Later on, there was one little dragger there; Kirk Larson brought that there.

RES: Later on? Roughly what time was that?

INT: Id say probably in the 70's there- early 70's.

RES: So really in the 60's – throughout the 60's – it was an inshore gill net fleet for those species in Barnegat Light?

INT: Oh yeah, yeah.

RES: And were most of those small vessels, like the 30 class?

INT: 30 foot, yep, 33 foot was a big gill netter then.

RES: And how were they crewed?

INT: Just one other fellow.

RES: Just 2 on the boat?

INT: 2 on the boat.

RES: DO you remember how the finances worked back then? Was it 50/50 or?

INT: Nah, they gave them a third.

RES: One for the boat, one for the...

INT: They split third with the crew there, took the money/all the expenses off the top, and then the captain took 2/3 and the mates got a 1/3. Now I think they don't get as much there now because the gear. You're using a lot more gear and a lot more expenses there now.

RES: What kind of nets were you using back then?

INT: Just 3 1/2-80 monofilament.

RES: (?pterodactyl in background again) [] monofilament?

INT: Yeah. And we were using some nylon drift nets at night for bluefish.

RES: And so going back to how fishermen socialized, how did...did people go to the bars together, or did they go to...what was the sort of social life like for fishermen? Did you see much of each other, or was it really just on the water or on the docks or?

INT: No, you'd see at the bars or whatever, a party, you know, locally at a house party or something like that.

RES: Was that the focus of your social life – with other fishermen and fishing families?

INT: Yeah, pretty much so, yeah, yeah.

RES: What about like politically; were fishermen organized in any way back then?

INT: No.

RES: Like a lobby group or seafood association?

INT: No, no. They didn't have any money to put towards I, you know. You know, some of them would try it, and...I guess Belford or [], that was the first started it, you know, with, you know, was one of the first ones in Manasquan there.

RES: But you guys in Barnegat weren't...

INT: No, no.

RES: When did, or if ever, did people start to get organized in that way?

INT: I would say within the last 6,8,10 years maybe.

RES: Roughly 95?

INT: Yeah, maybe 90 I guess it started.

RES: Early, mid 90's. And why did people start getting organized? Some folks would say well it's because the regulations came, other people would say well we needed to get together because the market...

INT: Well, I think it was more or less due to the regulations too, you know, trying to get... a lot of the sports were trying to put us out of business, so we tried to come back on those guys you know.

RES: What do you mean by that? How did that start?

INT: One thing, they passed the law on stripers where you weren't allowed to take them in NJ. And before, we use to be able to land them and sell them in the market. And right now, it's the only state up and down the whole east coast where you can't sell a striper in NJ, which hurts. I mean the public themselves don't even get a chance to eat a salt water striper unless somebody gives it to them. You've got to eat the hybrids out of in the market, you know, where they sell it to your restaurant if they sell them in a store.

RES: When did that come on?

INT: Oh that was in the late 70's I guess.

RES: Was that the first regulation that really hurt, that really affected your fishing operations?

INT: Yeah, I mean for fishing their wise, yeah. I would say so yeah. That was the first foot hold they had in for, you know, stopping stripers there.

RES: You mean the rec guys?

INT: Yeah, yeah, beach bug associations and boards that pretty much what done it, you know. We didn't have any money, you know, the commercial were a little handful of guys. They couldn't fight those guys, you know, they're all moneyed up.

RES: So that's where you saw the pressure coming from first was the rec sector putting pressure on the stripers?

INT: Oh yeah, yep, beach bug association.

RES: We'll come back to some of the regs. Let's go a little bit more into the background. When you started, you're fishing blues, and weaks, and stripers when you could?

INT: Um hum.

RES: What was your season like? Starting say now in January, what do you do?

INT: Well right now, this time of year, we'd be working on gear. We'd be rigging up for shad nets and stuff.

RES: You'd be out of the water?

INT: Yeah. Well the boats would be in the water a lot of times.

RES: But your gear would be out of the water?

INT: Yeah, we wouldn't have any gear in the water, and you'd just be building nets for the spring time and summertime there.

RES: Ok, so you'd be starting with getting your shad gear ready?

INT: Right. Shad fishing would be the first thing that...

RES: And when would that start?

INT: We were allowed to start fishing, I think, was the first of March back then. It all depended on the weather – would sometimes if we had a mild winter, we'd start the first of march, but if the water was really cold and all, we'd kind of wait a little while there

before we'd start trying it. That still is the main factor here now with the water temp with the shad.

RES: Can you fish shad anymore?

INT: No, we allowed 50 lb by catch, or if you have a shad license – which I do have – you're allowed 5% of your catch. So if we have a 1000 lbs of other stuff, we're allowed 50 lbs of shad.

RES: Ok, but only as a by; you can't direct for it?

INT: No, there's no direct fishery anymore. We got knocked out of that.

RES: I've heard that mentioned before. Was that a big hit for you?

INT: Yeah, yep, and there's plenty of shad. There's no shortage of shad.

RES: Did you ever see...is that something that's come back. Did you ever see it dip at any time?

INT: Nah.

RES: The population's always strong?

INT: Yeah, we always had decent shad fishing, you know, I don't ever see where we had...it all depends on the weather, you know. If you've got a lot of northeast and all of that, you don't catch a lot. The south west is your fishing for shad in the spring of the year, cause it pushes them up onto the beach where we can catch them.

RES: What do you catch...what fisheries are you directing for when you get your by catch allocations?

INT: Well right now, we're just working on weakfish.

RES: Ok, so you will get some shad in with weaks?

INT: Yeah, oh yeah, we catch those. You're using a heavier net even. We're like 70mm right now for weakfish, and before it was like...

[explanation that the pterodactyl is really a pair of parrots].

INT: But shad fishing.

RES: So you were shading until March, this is back when you started. [] what would happen during the season?

INT: Well later on then, we'd start blue fishing and weak fish.

RES: Later on being April/May?

INT: Yeah, we would catch them all year round there, bluefish then, because they wouldn't go as far up. They would go out on our ridge and stay there, you know. We'd be catching small bluefish in around the inlets and all.

RES: And when you say your ridge, you mean in front of Barnegat Light?

INT: Barnegat Ridge, yeah, that's like 13 miles off. And we still fish that nowadays, you know, that's were we kind of fish pretty much. And then if they move up further, we'll go up towards the mud hole and fish – drift netting the bluefish.

RES: Ok, I actually have a couple of charts. Maybe you could point these places out to me where all of your...I don't know if this is going to be the right size map, but...

[Tape stops while maps are taken out.]

INT: Here we are. You've got it right here. See here's your ridge here.

RES: Ok, yeah, this is where somebody else must have been talking about yeah. So that was the fishing area for blues?

INT: Yeah. This is your north ridge, and this is your south ridge here.

RES: You're #14, that's the way I mark that down. We take the names off of them.

INT: Ok.

RES: So you'd be in those all year round then, but starting really focusing on them by March/April?

INT: Yeah, like in the summertime, the bluefish would get off here, and we'd get off there and drift net.

RES: Ok, but you say they're not coming up there anymore?

INT: Well they are, yeah, they were there pretty much all summer this year, you know. And it all depends on if there's any amount of baits; they stays on the ridge itself and holds them there. You know, they're pretty much they thrive on all kinds of bait there, so I mean that's what holds them in an area. If they run out of bait, they're going to charge somewhere else, you know. And a lot of times, these fish will get way off shore, and they'll spawn off of here too. They'll be spawning offshore – either that or up in the mud hole here.

RES: This is the mud hole up here.

INT: Yeah, yeah, they'll get up in here.

RES: Is that accurate, where I've drawn that?

INT: Let me see. Anywhere in that deep water there, they pretty much will...here we go, here in this section here in this deeper water in here, they'll get along this edge in here and come all the way down through here.

RES: Ok. Ok, so that's a little bit about blue fishing. You also mentioned weakfish; were they closer in? Where are you catching the weaks?

INT: We were catching anywhere from 4-5 miles off to maybe inside the ridge here we'd catch them sometimes. That was like in like July we set them there – anywhere from June into July.

RES: Ok. And except for the long lining for cod, have you always done gill nets for different species?

INT: Yeah.

RES: you've always been an inshore gill net fisherman?

INT: Um hum.

RES: Even when you went down to Florida?

INT: Um hum. Well I tile fished off of Florida. I [] fished off shore there, tile fished with long line, and then did some bottom fishing offshore for snappers and groupers and stuff like in 250 foot of water.

RES: You said before there was about 11 guys, or roughly around, in the fleet at that time in the 60's?

INT: Yeah, not much more than that if that.

RES: And were they all following this shad, and weakfish, and bluefish, and stripers when they could?

INT: Yeah, yep.

RES: Any other species? What about butterfish or?

INT: Oh yeah butterfish, anything, you know, we could sell pretty much, you know. If we could sell anything there, we could, you know, just catch it...

RES: And do it?

INT: Yeah. We even caught clams back in, you know sea clams, along the beach there - dry dredged them. You know we...

RES: Ok, are those the hard clams or just like...

INT: No, surf clams. We use to dry dredge them and bait up our own cod gear with them, you know.

RES: Ok, so that was only for bait those clams?

INT: Yeah, yeah.

RES: When did you have to give up the cod?

INT: I guess it was, It had to be late 70's I would say – probably 78.

RES: And what happened?

INT: It just got so there wasn't any more around hardly.

RES: Do you think they got caught or do you think they moved?

INT: Yeah, I think the Russians hurt them pretty bad there back then. That's where a big load of stripers went too.

RES: You think?

INT: Yeah, cause the boys in Atlantic City seen them when they were trawling inshore...

RES: Yeah, the Newfoundland guys said the same thing. They use to be within 5-6 miles offshore.

INT: Oh yeah. Well they were, they would, when the wind would blow like hard northwesterly, the fleet would anchor up just 4-5 miles off the beaches. You'd see 25 boats laying off there – factory boats, and...

RES: Huge fleets would just stand together.

INT: Oh yeah, um hum.

RES: That socialized fishing with efficient [].

INT: Oh yeah. When something went up the ramp on a Russian boat, it didn't come off – dogfish or nothing. They took everything. They processed everything.

RES: Vacuumed the...

INT: Yep, yeah, there wasn't anything that went back down overboard.

RES: When was that when you last saw that?

INT: After they passed the 200-mile limit there.

RES: So if there's 11 boats, and two people on the boats, that's roughly 22 fishermen in Barnegat Light? Would you say that's accurate?

INT: Yeah, I would say that that's pretty much what [] and all of that yeah.

RES: So families wise, that's about...how many families would that be? 22 families or I guess there's brothers and father/son?

INT: Yeah, most it would probably be pretty much like...there wasn't too much father son there. It was just like another family there, another two guys a lot of times would like it'd be 2 different fellows. And sometimes partners are just working on the boats there.

RES: Ok. How many related businesses would you say there were back then – supply stores, docks, gear?

INT: Dock wise, there was 2 docks.

RES: What were they?

INT: It was, well it was called the independent – that's Viking Village now – and there was Meyers' dock - that's the lighthouse marina there. That was the 2 docks.

RES: So there's been around then for a long time those two?

INT: Yeah.

RES: So those are the 2 main docks now?

INT: Yeah.

RES: So they've just changed hands?

INT: Yeah, and the other 2 docks, they were built later – like the 15th and the 13th street docks in between there. They were put in there later.

RES: Those aren't utilized really that much are they?

INT: No, they're pretty much like sport docks there.

RES: How important to the area would you say fishing was at that time?

INT: I'd say it was pretty important. I mean Barnegat Light, that was pretty much what it consisted back then, you know. That's all there was up there, just fishing.

RES: How was it important sort of socially or economically or both?

INT: Both.

RES: One of the things that we're trying to look at is this idea of fishing community – what makes a fishing community. What does that mean to you?

INT: Well, it's a lot of...most of the people out of the community were all working on the water mostly, you know. Very few of them had other jobs in Barnegat Light. There wasn't a whole lot of housed up there then.

RES: You started in...you were about 25. What would a 25-30 year old guy have done if he didn't go into fishing in Barnegat Light? I mean was there construction? What other options were...

INT: No, not really back then. There was a little bit of construction, yeah, going on, but that didn't start happening until the...I guess after the March storm there took off.

RES: The March storm?

INT: Yeah in 62, you know, then it started.

RES: People had to rebuild?

INT: Yeah, yep, but back then it was just mostly all fishing in the 50's and early 60's yeah.

RES: You mentioned that you can't shad fish really anymore; that's pretty much closed out to you. Are there any other fisheries that have been made unprofitable to you or that you don't participate in for whatever reason?

INT: Well we got restricted for the weakfish, but that doesn't really affect us anymore because the summertime the weakfish kind of went further up the coast here now with the warmer water. And we got a new trend of fishing there is croakers there in the fall, you know, so I mean we've been working those.

RES: In the fall?

INT: Well I would say August, right around the first of August we start looking for them.

RES: Is that a pretty recent thing croakers?

INT: Yeah, well with the water being warm, they kind of I guess []. The fish, they're ranging up this way, you know. I would say probably Point Pleasant, they get a few, but the majority of them is right around our area here. That's where they stop right around Barnegat Light in that area.

RES: Do you think that's associated with water temps changed?

INT: Yeah, yeah, I do.

RES: When did you notice that change in the water?

INT: Oh 6 to 8 years ago, you know.

RES: Ok, so that's relatively recent?

INT: Yeah. With the Croakers, you know, it just kept getting warmer and warmer. I mean we'd get...we get Spanish mackerel, we get king mackerel up here now, we get cobia, you know you see flying fish up here inshore, and you know so...

RES: Do you guys keep, do you use any kind of temp gauges on the vessel?

INT: Oh yeah, we've got...

RES: So you could see that as #'s wise?

INT: [] We kind of run with the gear in cold water [] start getting that, you know...

RES: (?) (205)

INT: Yeah, it starts getting warmer.

RES: Do you use down birds or is it all just...

INT: No, just surface, you know, a couple of feet underneath, you know, with right in the [] you know, the boats.

RES: Yeah. Back when you started, what would you say the biggest challenges were to being a fisherman?

INT: Just putting your time in and being good at it, you know. You know, I went through a lot of friends that did it and got out of it, because they couldn't make any money in it. I

mean you just had to keep, you know, doing it all of the time, you know, and put your time in the ocean there – put sometimes 8-10 hours in out there then you know looking for them.

RES: Would you say that's the biggest difference between a successful and unsuccessful fisherman is the amount of time that they've spent on the...

INT: Yeah, I would say so, yeah it's definitely that. I mean you've got to put your time in the ocean.

RES: Do you keep records?

INT: No. What do you mean of how long I've been out there?

RES: Where you get hot spots, what you do...

INT: No, I kind of know my hit, you know, where, you know...I mean anymore, you've got the Loran, and you've got the plotters, so you do push your way points in on your, you know, say those, you know, what, you know, your spots. But back then, it was just all memory and yeah. You had range markers on the houses on the beach, you know, and stuff like that. You take the wrecks off of that.

RES: Yeah, it's more of an art.

INT: Yeah, getting things lined up so you don't get hung up with a net and...

[]

RES: How have your vessels changed over time? You said you started with a 30 foot pot skip roughly?

INT: Yeah,

[]

INT: Where were we here?

RES: We were talking about your vessels. You had a 30 foot...

INT: Yeah, I had a 30-foot skip, and then later on I had a boat built in Lantana, Florida – an aluminum boat in 1974. I had that all the way up until 1982 when I built a bigger boat.

RES: Ok, what was the aluminum one like?

INT: It was like an open hull boat, it had a small cabin up front, it had a 671 engine in it. And then we a...we had a...I use to sometimes fish by myself, and I had a Japanese ball

hauler with a roller. It would pull one side of the net, and I would pull the other side just by myself. So I use to cut down expenses, you know, and anything I made then, I put in my pocket instead of splitting it with somebody.

RES: Is that dangerous?

INT: Yeah, I got run up through the hauler once and broke some fingers, you know, and then I was fishing in spring of the year with another fellow with a cast on – shad fishing, that's when I got it. Early in the spring, I got run right up through the top. It hung me up here.

RES: You're lucky all you got was some busted fingers.

INT: Yeah, the size of the corks that went through were that big around, so and I had a big jacket, and sweatshirt, and slicker jacket on, so my arm was about that big around. That's just one of the things you live through.

RES; You ever call that cross handed – fishing that way it's what they call it in Newfoundland? You're going out alone, you call it cross handed.

INT: No, no. I still fish by myself once in a while. If my mate doesn't show up or something, I'll go by myself and fish, you know.

RES: So you're still fishing 2 on a boat? That's the idea?

INT: Yeah.

RES: So that really hasn't changed?

INT: No. Once in a while, some of these guys go three handed, but I don't know. I go two handed.

RES: That's enough?

INT: Yeah.

RES: Was that aluminum boat roughly the same length?

INT: That was a 36 foot.

RES: A little bigger. Why did you go to the bigger boat?

INT: Just a lot more comfortable with a bigger boat in the ocean, you know.

RES: Comfortable you mean safety?

INT: Yeah safety and little...I wanted to get something where I didn't have to do a lot of maintenance on it too, so aluminum was pretty much maintenance free back then. I mean that boat's still up in Point Pleasant right now fishing. I gave it...I handed it down to my boy, and he started fishing with that.

RES: Oh ok. 671 is a pretty big engine for a 36 foot...you weren't dragging with that were you?

INT: No, no. It was only 300hp really.

RES: Then in 82, what use to be [] from 74-82?

INT: Yeah.

RES: And then what...

INT: I sold the...I got a 44-foot [] they had built for me up in Bayville.

RES: In 84, you're in Florida at that time right?

INT: No 82, yeah I was in Florida. I moved to Florida in...my brother was...I had him do the contracting up there with the guy, and I was fishing out of Florida there, and I'd come up in the spring there.

RES: And picked it up?

INT: Yeah, he put the engine in it and all for me and had a lot of the work done.

RES: What made you decide to go to a 44 at that point?

INT: I just needed a bigger boat, because they were catching more fish – started to catch more fish and all of that.

RES: So it's more that you couldn't handle what you were already catching rather than wanting to catch more?

INT: Yeah, right. I mean with that boat right there, we had as high as 25,000 in one set-weakfish.

RES: Wow, in the net or?

INT: Yeah, one net one set, we had 25000.

RES: Where was that?

INT: That's right off of Barnegat Light.

RES: So you still fished there in the wintertime? In the mid-80's, you'd come up to Barnegat and fish in the winter?

INT: Yeah, yeah, yep. When I fished in the summer, I'd come up here. I would come up like in April and fish all the way up until November, and then would go back down to Florida in ...

RES: So even those years when you were living in Florida, you really were fishing up here for a good chunk of the year?

INT: Right, yeah.

RES: Do you still have that 44, or is that...

INT: Yeah, yeah, I still have that.

RES: What's the name of it?

INT: The XXXX.

RES: XXXX?

INT: Yeah.

RES: How about the amount of nets that you've used? Has that increased over time? You had to use more...

INT: We get more sizes in nets...I probably got 25 miles of net stored on my lot over there in Barnegat Light.

RES: How many when you started would say?

INT: When I first started?

RES: Yeah.

INT: 1200 foot of net is all we used. I mean that was a lot of net, because you had to pull it by hand.

RES: So how many nets is that – 1200 ft?

INT: That's 4 net.

RES: So 50 fathom nets or is that what you're...

INT: Yeah 50 fathom. Sometimes we didn't even use that much, you know. Back then, I mean you only needed 600 foot of net to get all of the fish that you wanted, you know. At certain times, you'd have to get somebody on the other end of it to help you – pulling by hand you know.

RES: If you're up to a mile now, is that because you have more of the same kind or are you getting more diverse type...

INT: Well monk fishing, you use more nets, you know.

RES: When did you start monking?

INT: Oh heck, I started when I came back up here. I guess it's probably 90 I guess.

RES: So you've been at it a while?

INT: Yeah.

RES: Any other species that you've gotten into more recently?

INT: Well we were allowed to take sturgeons back then too. We were catching sturgeon and monkfish. I originally started...that's when they started, these guys around here started, catching sturgeon. Then the monk fish started, you know, they started catching a few monkfish, and then they started learning how to catch those better with the tie downs and everything else in the net.

RES: And the market came on to them too.

INT: Yeah, and they started...I mean when I was shad fishing years back, I shipped monkfish in, because they use to come up and eat the shad out of the shad net. They'd be...we'd catch them in the shad nets, so I would ship them to market and the only thing we got back then was 25 cents a pound for the tail meat.

RES: Wow, what do you getting now?

INT: 3\$ for tails.

RES: There was just no market for them back then I guess? I mean you had to go to monkfish...

INT: Yeah, everything. They didn't like the name of them, you know, the mother in law them called them – goose fish, head fish, tangler fish.

RES: Funny looking fish too yeah. [] fish is what they call them up in Newfoundland.

INT: Yeah, they had more names for a monkfish than you can shake...well they doctored up and called it a monkfish. That's how they get a, you know, a menu.

RES: Yeah, well it's like the sea bass – the Chilean sea bass – it was the tooth fish or something...other common names.

INT: Yeah that...well it's bad because it sounds like it's a sea bass like our black sea bass, you know. I don't particularly like them myself.

RES: I find them a little too bland or something. Maybe it's the texture, I'm not sure, but they just seem...I don't know.

INT: Yeah, I mean you can just do anything, pull something out of the ocean and...

RES: Yeah, it's like a [] skate.

INT: Yeah, well they eat them too. We we're selling them.

RES: Ok, so you mentioned shad is a fishery that you've kind of gotten out of because of regulations; is that fair to say?

INT: Right, yep, well the just stopped us from catching them, you know. I mean there's plenty of shad; we just aren't allowed to take them.

RES: And sturgeon?

INT: Sturgeon.

RES: Would you say that's also true of sturgeon that there's lots of them?

INT: Eh, I wouldn't say there's lots. I think they're on the decline, you know. Yeah, there's not as many as you...I mean there's fairly a lot around. We catch them even in the summertime around here, We catch them when we're blue fishing or something along the beach there. We'll get some of them around a sewer pipe or something there, they'll hang around a sewer pipe.

RES: They like the stuff in the water...

INT: Yeah I guess, I don't know. Either that, or they just like the wreck or something there, but Seaside sewer pipe usually has quite a few of them down there. We get a lot of juveniles. We use to catch a lot of juveniles in the shad nets.

RES: What about fluke; were you ever in the fluke fishery?

INT: No, I never did fluke fish. We'd catch a few in the gill nets, you know. We'd catch sometimes up to 100 pounds when we were shad fishing, cause fluke in the spring in

here, they'll get up in the water and will go. But yeah, we're allowed to take those as long as there's a season for them. We're allowed a hundred pound by catch I think.

RES: Yeah, but you never really directed for those?

INT: No, never got into it. Now you have to have a, you know, regular directed fishery for them if you want to take any amount of them.

RES: Any other fisheries that you've gotten out of – shad, sturgeon...or that you don't pursue to the same level that you use to pursue?

INT: Yeah, that would probably be about it I would say, you know. Well weakfish, you know, in the summertime, they shut us down during that period of time we use to do those big catches. They knocked us out of that from September, not September, it's May 20 I think to September 3 we were knocked out of.

RES: What do you mean by that? When did that happen?

INT: When we had to take a reduction – 8 or 10 years I guess now, something like that.

RES: So roughly 97/98?

INT: Yeah.

RES: And what was that regulation? That was the...

INT: Well they just, we had to just take a cut on the weakfish. We had a plan they, you know, we had to take a reduction, and they took those months – period of time there. We had to give them so much of our year for weakfish.

RES: So the season was closed to you or you just had less or?

INT: Yeah, the season was closed for us during that period, and then they gave us the by catch there and all you know. It use to be 50 pounds, and they gave us up to 150 I think now.

RES: Ok, so you're allowed 150 lbs of weakfish...

INT: During the summer period.

RES: And that's May to September?

INT: Yeah.

RES: And you use to be able to direct?

INT: Oh yeah, we could weakfish all year round then.

RES: Ok, so it was a major change for you or?

INT: Yeah, it kind of hurt me, because there was a couple of us – it was me and XXXX and XXXX and the XXXX boys, they would fish there []– but there wasn't too many of them doing it, cause not many of them had big nets to catch them with. We use to set them, you know, pull them down like a purse seine almost. We'd gill net them, but we purse seined them – almost like pulling them down.

RES: So your best, was that your best weak fishing time?

INT: Yeah, I mean volume wise, yeah.

RES: Was during that time when you got...

INT: Well in the fall, in the early years, we use to catch as high as 4000 a day sometimes steady back in the early 80's there. That's when XXXX, he use to fish with me, and I had him for a mate, and he use to mate for me, and we use to go down to beach haven and catch 30-40 boxes regular everyday just like clockwork.

RES: And what happened to that?

INT: It just fell apart, you know. Probably too much dragging in the Carolinas in the wintertime took them out.

RES: So the stocks went down?

INT: Yeah, yeah. I'd say a lot of time fish was good one year, and the next year you wouldn't see this fish come back. Just the past, I would say, 5 or 6 years ago, we had a good stock of like 2-3 lb weakfish, looking forward for the next year, and never seen it.

RES: What happened?

INT: Hahaha.

RES: Who knows.

INT: It went up somebody's ramp I think in the Carolinas, cause them boys know right where they lay, you know, all winter, so it's no big secret you know. They just...

RES: Go drag on them.

INT: Yep.

RES: That's an efficient way to catch fish.

INT: Oh yeah, yeah. They kill a lot of stuff, but I mean they kill a lot of juvenile fish dragging. I mean there's hosts of small fish they kill and just put on top of the water there and the seagulls eat them. They say gill netting is dirty, but I think dragging's the worst there is for killing wise.

RES: Yeah. Is there a conflict between gear sectors around here?

INT: No, I mean we don't have any problem with the draggers here, you know, but other draggers we do you know. I don't think...we don't even have a fish...there's a couple of fish drag guys out of Barnegat Light there now, and then they just came there.

RES: No, no, there's not many. There's more down in Cape May.

INT: Yeah, Cape May and up the line – Belford and PP and all of that. But the fish draggers aren't too bad, it's just your scallopers are on it. Clam boats are worse for us yet, you know, because they...

RES: You mean Quahog and surf clams?

INT: Yeah, the regular surf clams for anchoring monk net, cause they just cut right through you, and they don't stop- those guys.

RES: So that's your worst conflict is with the quahog guys or with the...

INT: Yeah, and the scallopers to. I mean scallopers, you can't stop them with a net. It doesn't affect them. I mean they just bring it up and cut it off if they have to. They're just dragging, dragging, dragging, and it wears off. But the regular fish dragger, it kind of messes them up. It gets caught in the doors you know, so I don't think they... you don't particularly want to get caught in a gill net.

RES: They want to stay clear of you just as well as you want to?

INT: Yeah. The worst thing going is your clam boats and your scallopers for gill netters.

RES: Is that frequent – problems with those guys?

INT: Yeah, yep.

RES: Like every trip or like once a month or?

INT: Well you try to get where they're not working for one thing, but sometimes they roam around looking for spots, you know, and, you know, during rough weather when you've got high fliers on your gear, they can't see them anyhow. So they're going to get you. I don't think a lot of times they don't do it on purpose, but some of them I...one guy I know does. At a point, I wouldn't say any names, but I had a run in with him.

RES: Why? I mean why would somebody do that on purpose? Just ticked off at you for...

INT: Yeah, they just don't want to pull the dredge up to get to one side to your other if they're working in an area.

RES: Can't be bothered...

INT: Yeah, so they cut through you.

RES: Is that happening more than it use to? I guess back when you started, there was only gill-netters out there, so...

INT: Yeah, there wasn't too many, you know, mammoth scallopers. I mean now, you've got day boat scallopers, and you've got regular seasonal scallopers working, so there's a lot more scallopers in the ocean.

RES: Do you have a gen cat license for scallopers?

INT: Yeah, I've got a scallop permit.

RES: Do you use it?

INT: No, I don't scallop. I'm 60 years old, so it's a little late for me to get into the business, you know. I mean if you got to go, you've got to run your own boat, and you've got to shuck your own scallops, you know.

RES: For what 400 pounds a day; it's not very much.

INT: Yeah well 400 lbs is a lot, because there's big money in it.

RES: 9\$ a pound or 10.

INT: 10-11, you know, so.

RES: So that's not enough to entice you to get into it?

INT: Nah, not really. I like gill netting. I mean I do it because I like it, you know. I mean I like to chase fish, you know. I like blue fishing and weak fishing and stuff like getting croaker fishing. Monk fishing I don't particularly like, because you use a lot of gear. I lost 50 shots of net one year.

RES: Why?

INT: Scallopers shot me. That's \$10,000 worth of gear shot.

RES: That's the main conflict then in the monk fishery?

INT: Yeah, I'd say so, you know, for...cause most of the other netting, we take our nets back with us, you know. They're not left in the ocean. That's the only gear we have anchored.

RES: What about your profitability over time? I don't need any #'s or anything like that, but in general, has it gone up, or has it gone down?

INT: I'd say it's gone up.

RES: Gone up? So your profit margin in 1972 when you started on your own is lower than it is now?

INT: Oh yeah.

RES: Why? Is it the species or fish?

INT: Just the price of fish has come up + markets are handling a lot more, and I don't know, we can catch more too. We're more efficient at it, and we travel. I mean, heck, we'll sometimes run 40 miles for bluefish now, where back then we'll burn maybe to Seaside or something – 10 miles or something –with an old boat.

RES: But you've got to pay to travel out there.

INT: Yeah, it costs you for fuel, but I mean you pretty much go when you know you're going to catch something you know. What hurts up anymore is the dogfish regulation too. I mean there's so many damn dogfish, we can't even blue fish in the spring like we use to.

RES: What reg do you mean?

INT: We're not allowed to take them.

RES: That's hindering your bluefish catching?

INT: Oh yeah, plus we could catch dogfish and get a catch of fish where sometimes you wouldn't catch the bluefish. A lot of times you set a net out there, you set it in the water for 10 min, and you've got 5000 lbs of dogs in it, and you're picking dogs for 4 hours. It just stops you, you know, you can't go blue fishing.

RES: Were there any regs at all when you started?

INT: No, none whatsoever.

RES: So your limitations were whether or not you had money and could get a job on a boat?

INT: Yep. You could take anything, or catch anything, and sell it.

RES: You mentioned this a little bit, the first reg that you remember really coming on and affecting your work was stripers?

INT: Yep.

RES: Shad fishing you got jerked out of?

INT: And dogfish too – also we got knocked out of...

RES: Dogfish you got knocked out of?

INT: Yeah.

RES: Ok. When did that happen?

INT: I guess we go shut off of dogs probably for 10 years now or better.

RES: What happened there?

INT: They just said they were endangered, which they weren't.

RES: So where did that come from?

INT: NMFS.

RES: Did you think it was bad science, did you think it was political?

INT: Bad science yeah, yeah. That would have been the best thing to ever happen in my book, catch the dogs up. The only thing what it would do, it would stop you if you didn't catch any where you couldn't make enough money, you would stop fishing that fishery – catching the dogs.

RES: Sorry I didn't understand that, say that again?

INT: Well, what would stop us from catching the fish is just that we wouldn't have any market for them, you know, it wouldn't be a volume of fish where we would catch.

RES: So you're talking about the dogfish?

INT: Yeah.

RES: So hypothetically if the dog fishery was open, you think people would start to catch so many that it would become unprofitable?

INT: No, no, what happens, when they have a market for them, they have the processing plants where they utilize everything out of the shark. Nothing goes to waste on them, they use everything – the cartilage, the skin, you know the meat – and what happens is if you don't have enough of the product to go to a processing plant, a fresh market – there's no fresh market in NY for a spiny dog – there's for sand sharks...

RES: [] you can't...

INT: No.

RES: No, ok.

INT: You can't get enough money for them. I mean you get 22 cents. I mean that's what we use to get for them for a lb of dogfish.

RES: So then you think even if the reg wasn't there, would people go into dog fishing?

INT: Oh yeah if we could catch them, sure. We could sell them to the plants again; they would open up.

RES: Oh ok, I see what you're saying, ok.

INT: I mean everybody's complaining – your sport fishermen are complaining about on when they go on the wrecks there's so many dogs, your draggers are catching them; they can't fish. I mean we can't gill net half the time in the spring for the dog. And XXXX just this past year has tried mackerel fishing for Boston mackerel, and alls he had was dogfish everywhere he went – with a small mesh net too, and they're pretty thick.

RES: So opening up a dog fishery would help you guys economically and it would also probably help...

INT: Definitely, most definitely, yeah. I mean alls they do anymore is just take. They don't give us anything. They take stuff away, and they don't return anything, you know.

RES: Why do you think that's the case?

INT: I don't know. That's just like the shad fishing; I mean there's plenty of shad, and you had some lady doing the survey up in the rivers there saying that we were cutting off the shad from going into the rivers, yet they can still shad fish in the rivers, which doesn't make sense to me, because you've got land on each side, and there's one way that shad's going to go and that's up the river. And you've got him caught dead to right, where we have to contend with the weather and everything else here.

RES: So they're still allowing people to set on the rivers?

INT: Oh yeah, yeah, yep.

RES: I've heard this story before about there's one person that really pushed that agenda.

INT: Yeah, um, hum, it's called female.

RES: Is that the way you see it too with her effort?

INT: Yeah, she did the whole thing.

RES: What was her deal? Why shad? Why then?

INT: I don't know what her agenda was there, but yeah she just wanted to save it for the river fisheries. She said we were intercepting the fish from going into the rivers to spawn, yet the fish would channel...you could catch a shad anywhere from the beach all the way to 25-40 miles offshore. Sometimes the scallopers would catch them in the dredge off of there, so I mean it's not like they're in one spot. They're migrating all the way offshore.

RES: How much of a chunk of your income was based on shad? I mean was this just like a 1% or was it 50%?

INT: No, I'd say probably between, using that type of net, we probably I'd say 20%.

RES: 20% of your income got wiped out?

INT: Yep, um-hum.

RES: And yet overall, your profitability has increased to a certain extent?

INT: Right.

RES: So other species have picked up the slack or what's happening?

INT: Well, we just work harder on croakers or something like that when they come, you know.

RES: The effort gets displaced onto...

INT: Yeah.

RES: How important has monkfish been to you?

INT: Monkfish is a big fishery. I don't go at it as hard as some of the other guys, you know, I just can't take the cold and all of that. Right now I'm fishing again, but the

weathers nice, you know. I can't take the really cold weather anymore. My hands are shot, but yeah a lot of them depend on it.

RES: How much longer are you going to keep fishing?

INT: I don't know.

RES: As long as you can?

INT: Yeah haha. Yeah, I like fishing, you know, I like summertime fishing and all of that – croaker fishing, and blue fishing, and bonitas, and drift netting. Yeah, as long as I can get on a boat and get off, I guess I'll be fishing.

RES: Going back to regulations, you've mentioned quite a few, are there other ones that have been particularly harmful or, you know, ones that interact with each other going [] cumulative effects like []?

INT: Yeah well, on blue fishing, that also affects us there when they've got a shut down on them. We get shut down on blues, I think, November 6 or something, so we're not allowed to take a bluefish from then until the 1st of January. But after January, most of the blues are gone anyhow; the water's too cold.

RES: Was that a big time of year for you – November-January?

INT: Yeah, we use to catch a lot of big blue fish, you know.

RES: So did that really hurt you then being shut down out of..

INT: Well we have to go do something else. I mean we'd dog fish or something like that. And then they knocked the dogfish out, you know, so I mean you just have to jump from one thing to another, you know. And they keep knocking things off of you. If they ever shut down monk fishing then we'd really be kind of messed up. Then the only thing you'd have to do is try to catch a mackerel fighting the dogs.

RES: Yeah, which with gill nets is...well if anything it's tough chasing them with a gill net.

INT: Yeah. Well we use to do it. I mean we caught 5-6000 lbs of mackerel there gill netting them there. That's when the dogs weren't too thick again, you know.

RES: So what do you see for the fishery in another 10 years?

INT: I don't know. I don't know what's going to happen. I don't know if they're going to regulate us out of business or what. I don't...the fish are there, you know.

RES: Do you think, I mean it sounds like you were doing alright, at least economically...

INT: Yeah, I mean I make it because I don't have any super big payments and all of that you know.

RES: Are there people that aren't making it?

INT: Well a lot of them you know had a tough time, and they all jumped in the scallops, and mostly all of your gill netters now are scalloping. They jumped into that fishery. Now if that ever goes belly up, you know, where they catch a lot of that stuff up then they'll be going back into the gill net fishery, which puts pressure on the market for us, you know. And more boats in the market doing like...

[]

INT: A lot of the pressure onto our fishery, you know, with a certain amount of gill netters there, and the less gill netters you got, the more money you're going to get for your fish with the volume of fish going into the market.

RES: How many gill netters are there now in Barnegat? You said there was 11 in the 60's; how many are there now?

INT: There's probably 15 full gill netters I would say.

RES: 15 full time, so that's actually an increase.

INT: Yeah, I mean that's without...with the scallopers now, a lot of the scallopers converted over to, you know, the gill netters converted over to scalloping you know.

RES: So that 15 includes those people or doesn't include them?

INT: No, no.

RES: Those 15 are pure gill netters?

INT: Gill netters, right.

RES: Like yourself or XXXX I think and that group.

INT: And XXXX, and XXXX, and there's xXXX...

RES: Is that XXXX...

INT: Yeah, XXXX's boy. And XXXX, and two of the XXXXs they're all in...XXXX and there's another one that just got into it...

RES: Has the social life changed at all for you guys? You mentioned that you use to mostly hang out with fishermen?

INT: Yeah, I don't hang out as much now that I came over into mainland, you know. I mean I still go out to dinner with XXXX and all of that, you know, and I don't go to the bars as much as I use to or anything like that. That's in Barnegat Light, you know, where you kind of go hang out there you know. Anymore drinking and driving you can't do it anyhow, so you've got to watch it.

RES: Well that's a fair drive here too. What do you got 20 min to even get on the island?

INT: Yeah, it takes me about 35 minutes.

RES: T0 get to Barnegat Light?

INT: Yeah, about 30 min there, and that's without any lights and going early in the morning too you know. As soon as they turn the lights on over on the island, you got to drop the speed limit there.

RES: Yeah I know, I've been driving that road quite a few times. I hate those lights.

INT: Yeah.

RES: There's a cop that always hangs out there too.

INT: Them cops are bad.

RES: What brought you over here?

INT: Ah my wife, she had horses, you know, and I just got crowded out over there. I was there when it was all meadows, and heck you could shoot a gun in your back yard if you wanted to. Now you can't do that there, you know. I mean it just...all the yuppies pretty much took over the island there.

RES: What did that do to the community?

INT: A lot of the people that lived there moved out, you know, sold their houses for big money and got out of there.

RES: Where'd they go?

INT: Just over to the main land here – Manahawkin, Barnegat, Waretown, in and around there, you know, Westcirt.

RES: Do you think the importance of fishing to Barnegat light has changed because of that? You were talking about community and you just said there was pretty much all there was back then was fishing.

INT: Yeah, I think so, you know. Well the dock itself [] seen a lot of revenue, you know what I mean.

RES: Viking Village you mean?

INT: Oh yeah, there's a lot of...I mean they, between the scallopers and the fishermen, there's probably 100 people you know involved in there anymore.

RES: So 16 boats, 30...

INT: It's not no more than that. I mean some of the scallopers have 8 guys on them, and there must be a dozen scallop boats there plus all of the gill net...

RES: You're talking about the fulltime like...

INT: Yeah, yeah, plus your part time, you know, your day boaters, there's 2 or three guys on a boat there. So yeah, I'd say there's at least 100 or more people involved in Barnegat Light there and just in Viking Village there without the other dock even, you know.

RES: So fishing in a way has gotten more important to Barnegat Light for the #'s anyway?

INT: Yeah, yeah, oh yeah. I mean Barnegat Light puts out a lot of fish and scallops now.

RES: Are there many fishermen that, I know XXXX does and a few others that I've talked to, live in Barnegat Light? Are there many left there or are they having to leave or choosing to leave cause of the money they can...sell your house for a million\$ or whatever?

INT: Yeah, I wanted to get over in the woods here anyhow. I like it here and kind of being by myself and all of that. But yeah, a lot of them...well some of them didn't even live there. A lot of them didn't have the money to buy right off the bat there because the prices of land was so high. And houses, I mean, it would cost you 4-500,000 \$ there to live there.

RES: Oh I'm sure it'd be that. My wife and I live up in north of Cape Anne, Mass and the housing there is ridiculous.

INT: Yeah, I mean a cheap house now is going for 750,000\$ over there you know.

RES: What is...well actually that's [] of another question we've been asking people about is new people getting into the fishery. People have said well because of limited entry and this license thing, it's so much more difficult to enter. Do you think that's true?

INT: Oh yeah, definitely. I mean you've got to have permits and all of that to catch any of these fish you were catching now, you know. And if you don't buy a permit, and the permits are pretty expensive anymore. You know, a monkfish permit, I don't know, they were selling for 50 or 60 thousand dollars or more.

RES: Independent of the vessel?

INT: Yeah, yeah.

RES: So what are the guys your age, when you started, now do? 25-30 years old, how do you get started?

INT: Just working on deck I guess, you know, and start learning there, and then see if you can't get into it and buy a boat, you know, if you got somebody that puts the money up for you or something like that, you know.

RES: Your sons gotten into it; are there a lot of people his age from Barnegat that are getting into fishing?

INT: Yeah, well I more or less handed my boat down to him, you know, so he had a boat right off the bat.

RES: Do you think he would have been able to do it if you hadn't given him that boat?

INT: Yeah, he probably would have, but he wouldn't have had it as good I don't think. Now he's got another boat; he bought a bigger boat there. He bought a 44 footer there, so he owes quite a bit of money between that and the house and the boat payment and all of that.

RES: Yeah, it sounds like [] people are getting into bigger boats. The whole level is just up amazing degrees.

INT: Oh yeah. Well the permit's what jacks the boat up too. A lot of times if you buy a boat with permits, that's, you know even if it's a junky boat, they get big money for it because the permits are worth so much. Yeah, you get an old junky piece of wooden boat there with an old engine in it, you're paying \$100-125,000 for it.

RES: With itself is worth...

INT: Yeah, about \$5,000.

RES: What about your season length; has that changed over time?

INT: Yeah, right now we fish pretty much all the way up until February, and then for a short period of time...well if we were shad fishing we would go for shad fish the 1st of April into the middle of March you know.

RES: So it used to be longer?

INT: No shorter back then.

RES: Oh you said shorter, ok.

INT: Yeah, now it's longer here now of course.

RES: Why?

INT: Just monk fishing. I mean you're monk fishing and your season's just...I mean the weather's a lot nicer anymore. I mean years back, of course, we use to bust the ice and all to try and get out, you know. And a couple of winters back there, it was pretty tough there, and this winter here's been pretty mild for us. And we're still catching monkfish here yet, so...

RES: So monk extended your season more?

INT: Yeah, yeah.

RES: What months are the best for monkfish for you?

INT: Well usually, well December, cause monk fishing then is your, you know, you get your liver price and your meat. But in right now, the price of monkfish is pretty high. It's like a 1\$...

RES: For the meat?

INT: Yeah, 1.58 for a head on monk, you know, and like 2.90\$ for tails.

RES: What about the way you marketed your fish; has that changed over time?

INT: Well we sell all of our fish to Viking Village.

RES: Always have, even back in the 60's?

INT: Yeah, yeah. Well I use to ship my own fish to NY.

RES: Oh you did? Directly?

INT: Yeah, yep.

RES: And when did that change?

INT: Well the dock started taking over the fish. We could have still shipped fish on our own, but it was a lot easier, because the dock would buy our fish, and we wouldn't have to do the tagging and the re-boxing and ice over the weekend period.

RES: And they charged a fair price for that service?

INT: Yeah, they charge us 12 cents a pound for them.

RES: And that was fair?

INT: Yeah.

RES: Well, we usually end up by asking you if there's anything that, given the study that's focusing on regulatory change and the impacts on fishermen and communities and those things, that I haven't asked about that I should that you would add or would think's important for me to you know keep in mind?

INT: No, I'd just like to see them bring back some dog fishing for us. That would help. Well it would take a little bit of strain off of the monk fishing too. I mean, you'd give somebody else something else to do instead of target one species.

RES: Would you say, I mean one of the things that I'm hearing, I think you say, is that you've become less flexible in a way. You use to be able to fish lots of different species and bounce between them and get little bits of everything, and now is that less so or?

INT: Oh yeah, definitely. You know, I mean you're strained to what you're going to do there. I mean you can't fish your dogfish, and there's not really too much more to fish for in the wintertime. You've got your...you're not allowed to take a sturgeon anymore, so you can't take one of those, and you can't...the only thing you have is monkfish.

RES: What do you think about the monk? What's the status of the monkfish? Is that a healthy fishery?

INT: Yeah it is, but I think they're cutting us back next year, which I think is better anyhow if they cut us back, because it would increase your market value of them. Less volume going into market is usually more money, and if they cut, it means you don't have to use as much gear half of the time. You wouldn't have as much gear in the ocean to catch your trip limit there.

RES: If there was one regulation you could change besides dogfish, what would it be?

INT: Stripers.

RES: Open up a commercial...

INT: Yeah, I mean do what they do like in Maryland and all of that; give us some body tags and, you know, where we use X amount of body tags for a fish, and when we're done with that, we're done with them. You know, it's a shame. It's a shame for the public, because the public doesn't really know that they can't eat a salt water striper in NJ, you know. I don't think half of these people know that they can't eat a striper in NJ, you know, in a restaurant. They see striper on the menu, they don't know it's a farm raised fish. And a farm raised fish in my book is like eating a piece of paper. It's much tastier, you know. It's just like you're farm raised salmon.

RES: [] I've actually never had a farm raised striper, but I've had plenty of farm raised salmon and...

INT: Yeah, they're feeding them them fish pellets and all of that, you know. They talk about chemicals and all of that, you know, but it's a shame that the public doesn't get a chance to eat a fish - a decent fish. I mean the restaurants would thrive over it if they ever opened up a market.

RES: Well you could charge a lot for a plate of striper.

INT: Yeah, I mean the people would if... it's a good fish too. I mean it's a damn good fish to eat where I wouldn't have to import all of this stuff in the wintertime, you know, like your tilapia and all of that stuff.

RES: Yeah, another farm raised fish.

INT: Yeah, it's all farm raised stuff that they're bringing in. Pretty soon it's all going to be farm raised.

RES: Yeah. Actually they're worried about that in Newfoundland. That's they way that it's going - farm raised salmon and cod's gone up there.

INT: Yeah, but yeah I mean I'd like to see them do something with them, because I mean there's no shortage of stripped bass.

RES: Are there any species that you think aren't doing very well? You mentioned sturgeon?

INT: Sturgeon, yeah, that's a little on the hampered side.

RES: Are there any others that are not as strong as maybe you would like to see or could be stronger or?

INT: Well I think your weakfish are a little on the decline side, but it's not on account of us gill netting, because we don't even target them in the summer anymore; we work on the croakers.

RES: Because you can't target the weakfish?

INT: No, no, we're allowed to fish weakfish from September 3 on, but the nets, we upgraded our nets, so we catch a large croaker. And most of the nets we use to use back then were like 3 ½ inch, but now were using almost 4 inch where you don't catch any of the small weakfish with that net. And there was plenty of small weakfish this year- a lot of like you know 6-8 inch fish, and we had schools and schools of them, which should be a good sign, but when it goes in the Carolinas, I don't know what happens there you know. You know, they do so much dragging and all of that, you know, if they get on them small fish and just tow forever there, they kill them. Then they just float them on top afterwards. They just shove them out the, you know, so it's kind of...

RES: What about the way things are managed? Is there anything you would change there – those councils, or the commission, anything in that structure that you think is not working or?

INT: I think they should have a little better surveys before they start passing laws on, you know, or go out with us fishing – a gill netter- and we can show them that there's plenty of dogs, you know. I...

RES: So that's really a science question. So you think the science...

INT: Yeah, before they start putting laws out... I mean they use a survey boat; it's dragging in cold water where its not any fish, you know. They should get up with a guy that fishes year round or whatever and knows what they want to catch and go out with them instead of trying to have a trawl boat come there and you know take surveys. If that, get on a survey boat that knows what he's doing there, you know. But I heard some of that stuff where the guys didn't even have the doors right on the survey boat, you know, wasn't even catching right or something there was passed on down the line there when they were taking these surveys.

RES: And you were pretty suspicious at the time?

INT: At times yeah. I'd like to know where they get their science for these dogs, and you know...

RES: Because it's so contrary to what you're seeing all of the time?

INT: Yeah, really. I'd like to take somebody out there that says there's no dogs, and I'd like to get them on the end of that net and let them pick for 5 hours and chuck dogs back, get a few spikes in their arm, and whatever.

RES: It probably would be a different...

INT: Yeah, they'd change their view a little bit. I mean back in the early 70's, I mean, there was solid dogs. I mean then they started catching them, and it helped the other fisheries I think. I mean a dog, he's a predator; he eats anything that comes along. When a dog moves in, they just eat everything up. You know a shark is a shark; he's out to eat something. I mean they eat them right out of our nets and all of that, the fish you know. And...I don't know. I just don't know. I'd like to see them open that up and leave it on for a while so we'd catch up you know catch some of the dogs up so the other fish can come back.

RES: Do you think that's going to happen?

INT: I don't know. I don't know if it is or not. It would help the other fishery, I know.

RES: The monk fishery?

INT: Well all of your fisheries – sea bass, weakfish...

RES: Anything that gets eaten by the dogfish or if it's in the net....

INT: Or your fluke. I tell you another thing they should look at is these cormorants.

RES: Yeah?

INT: They're a big predator all along in your docks, eating all of your small toe togs and sea bass and all of that. They are a vicious predator.

RES: DO you see them more than you use to?

INT: Oh! more than ever.

RES: Why?

INT: There's just thousands of them.

RES: Did you think it has something to do with temp change, or do you think there's more birds or?

INT: No, there's more birds. Years back in the early 60's, you could shoot some of them to get rid of them.

RES: Ok, so you think that might have something to do with it that people aren't shooting them anymore?

INT: Yeah, well they're not allowed to shoot them; they're protected.

RES: I know they get blamed up in Newfoundland to for a lot of those...they're in the fields of the big...

INT: Yeah, well they steal...

RES: Certainly the visible part of what's going on, you know, cause it's...

INT: Yeah, you watch them come up around the harbor there, and they're just you see the little sea bass going down there throat. Weakfish, they thrive on schools of weakfish in the ocean. I've run up to them where the birds are working on them and up along the beach there you think it's a bunch of fish coming up, an it's these cormorants with the seagulls diving on them. And they come up, and when you push them off of them, they'd be spitting up all weakfish all over – little fingerling weakfish.

RES: Wow.

INT: So they are a big predator to your fishery. I mean all of your small fish in your bays and all of that and your oceans too. I mean people don't want to see it, but it is.

RES: And you think that problem's gotten worse?

INT: Oh definitely. Down in the Carolinas, they sit in them bays and all of that where all of those small fish, you know, they thrive down there.

RES: What about water quality; have you noticed any change in that?

INT: Water's gotten a lot cleaner, yeah.

RES: Cleaner?

INT: Clarity, yeah, yeah. I mean you can see down further in the water, you know, but there's a mud slick in it at times. I don't know what it is, but a lot of times we'll get it on our nets. You'll have real clean water; yeah there'd be a big load of junk on the net.

RES: Like what? Is it an organic thing like a creature or?

INT: No, it's just like a mud – almost like a mud.

RES: Is it dark or clear?

INT: It's like brown.

RES: Like actual dirt and mud?

INT: Yeah, it almost looks like shit, you know.

RES: That could be what it is you never know.

INT: Yeah, we use to get that along the beach when they use to pump the sewers out, you know, like around shit bottom and Seaside and stuff like that. You'd get to close to the pipes, you'd start getting that. Yeah, it was bad back then. Now they say they cleared it up, but now you still get a lot of smell from the water from the water you get around the pipes. You get a lot of chlorine smell. There's a big odor of chlorine when you get near the pipes.

RES: Do you think that affects the fish?

INT: Yeah, it does in a way it think, you know. I don't know, some fish it doesn't affect like your croakers and stuff like that, but maybe your fluke or something like that it might do something with.

RES: Stay clear of that?

INT: Yeah.

RES: Well those are the questions on the survey. Anything else you want to make sure we get down?

INT: No.