

Interview #15

Date: 2/17/06

Location: Barnegat Light, New Jersey

INTERVIEW

RES: I was just going over your history talking about going into the XXXX, moving on to the XXXX, moving onto the XXXX. You were talking about getting started in fishing, and that it was also easier at that time. You just basically got on the water and started going. What would you have done if you hadn't gone fishing at that age/at that time? What other options were there in Barnegat Light?

INT: In Barnegat Light?

RES: Yeah. Were you fishing in Barnegat Light at that time or was it...

INT: Yeah, all my fishing's been out of Barnegat Light. I mean we did go when...a few winters we went down to Puerto Rico and fished out of there with the XXX, but most of it's been in and out of Barnegat Light other than when we went south, you know, for the winter. And that was for maybe 5 years that we did that.

RES: What time period would that have been?

INT: January – April.

RES: And what years?

INT: Probably from about, in the 90's, 94 to...actually it's probably 10 years we went down there – 94-02 say.

RES: Did you ever have any formal fisheries training like a nav course or a...

INT: Well I hold a 100-ton captains license, because before we got involved with the commercial fishing full time, my dad had a party boat, which is what we grew up doing, you know. We took people out for the day fishing, you know.

RES: That's what your father was; he was not commercial, he was...

INT: Yeah, he ended up going commercial, you know, we did that in the summer, and then in the winter in the off season, we'd go commercial. And in those days, we were tile fishing.

RES: Ok. It sounds like that's how quite a few folks here got started going from the rec charter, and then tile fishing, and then moving more into other species.

INT: Yeah, that's true.

RES: Back then when you started, were fishermen, did they socialize together? Was there a strong sense of community? Was there...

INT: Yeah.

RES: Like how? Did people go to the bar together, did they hang out together, did they...

INT: Yeah, pretty much all you know all of that. They talked with each other on the radio when you're out fishing, and yeah everybody was friends.

RES: Is that still the case?

INT: For the most part yeah. Now there's more boats, you know, involved in doing it, so you don't know all the people as much now as you did then. You know then, it was just, you know when it was, you know, a group of...a [] group of guys, and now it's expanded, so you don't know everybody.

[Transcriber's note: Interviewee says "you know" a lot, so I cut it out when necessary]

RES: So how many boats would there have been when you got started?

INT: Probably a – XXXX, XXXX, us, and a few other guys. There was probably 10 boats I guess -10 or 12 boats.

RES: Ok, and what kind of fishery were they in at that time?

INT: Mainly tilefish – tilefish in the winter, and sword and tuna in the summer.

RES: So that's the long line fleet?

INT: Right.

RES: Were there other sectors around here like gill netters or scallopers or?

INT: Yeah there's always been gill netters, the smaller boats yeah.

RES: How many of those would you say there would be?

INT: Back in the...back in...I don't know probably 8 or 10 I guess – possibly more.

RES: And what exactly time? Is that around the 70's you're talking about?

INT: Yeah 70's/early 80's.

RES: What was Barnegat like at that time?

INT: A lot like it is now. It really hasn't changed a whole lot.

RES: What about all of these water front homes, these great big mansions and things that I see driving into town? Were they here?

INT: Well no not as many of them no – not nearly as many. The island has built up, you know, through the years.

RES: What has that meant for fishing guys? Does it get harder to live here? Do people have to move away because they can't afford to live on the water, or does it really not affect people because they've been here a long time or?

INT: It doesn't affect people. Actually I did live on the island, and I sold the house because of the property values and all, you know, the money we can get for our house over here compared to what we could buy on the mainland was...

RES: Was the difference?

INT: Yeah, we got a bigger house and more space and everything, so that's why we made the move, but not because we didn't like Barnegat Light anymore. We didn't get driven out.

RES: Do you miss living out here?

INT: Yeah I do; it's a good place to live.

RES: It's a beautiful place.

INT: Yeah.

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

INT: Very important. It was the main income, you know, the biggest income besides I guess construction over time got big -obviously with all of the houses doing up and everything. But fishing's always been kind of the mainstay with this town. It's...

RES: You're talking economically?

INT: Yeah.

RES: What about culturally? I mean do you feel like a fishing community now as much as it did then, or has that changed at all in your eyes?

INT: I don't think so, no. It's still a fishing community. That's what draws all of the tourists here- to come see the fishing boats and, you know, the docks and the boats and all of that.

RES: So there's roughly...you've got about 10 in the pelagic long line fleet, about 10 in the gill net fleet – 8-10 – so there's about 20 vessels operating out of Barnegat Light? Is that right, or were there others as well?

INT: Well that was the commercial fleet. Then you had the rec fleet, which was bigger in those days too, you know, there was more party boats and charter boats and that kind of thing.

RES: How many would you guess? 100? 50? 10?

INT: At the most there was... [thinking] 3,4,5,6,maybe 8 party boats, and I don't know how many charter boats there would have been. I mean they still have 3 party boats left here now.

RES: Was there still two docks at that time pretty much? Viking Village, or they use to call it Independence or something like that or Independent?

INT: There was the head boats, the party boats, operated out of Viking Village, there's that other dock on 15th street which is the...

RES: In between here and Viking Village?

INT: Right. There's two other docks between here and Viking Village, and there was party boats in both of them as well as Viking Village had them here.

RES: Ok. And how was your fleet, the pelagic long liners, how were they crewed? How many people would have been on a vessel?

INT: Mainly 4. When we went to the Grand Banks, we took an extra guy, so we'd have 5 on the longer trips. 4 was pretty much the average, 5 on the longer trips.

RES: So you've got 4 people on a vessel and roughly 10 boats; that's about 40 fishermen working in the industry – in the pelagic long line fleet?

INT: Yeah, right.

RES: How many pelagic long liners are there now?

INT: There's only...they're all part time now out of here, and there's probably about 5 that do it part time.

RES: And they're still crewed with about 4 people?

INT: Um-hum.

RES: So that's changed a lot. You went from 10 full time boats to 4 or 5 part time?

INT: Yeah, well the part time boats are involved with other fisheries when they're not long lining, so it's not like...

RES: Like scallops or?

INT: Scallops, or gill netting for monkfish, or bottom fishing for tilefish, or you know that type of stuff. They keep going all of the time. I mean it's not...it's not when the pelagic long lining is done, the boats don't tie up.

RES: Ok, but what do you attribute that change to? I mean why aren't people fulltime pelagic long lining anymore?

INT: Because the other fisheries, you know, during the winter like the monkfish and the tilefish and stuff like that is more lucrative. You don't have to travel as far, and you know the fishing is good for the other species, so they kind of go with the changes.

RES: Yeah. When you started, what were the seasons like? Describe a year to me; what are you doing in January?

INT: We were tile fishing – bottom long lining.

RES: And is that like at the beginning of January?

INT: Yep.

RES: And how long did you keep doing that?

INT: Stay doing that till about May.

RES: And is it pure tilefish that you're after at that point?

INT: Yeah, back in...

RES: Back in the day, back when you started?

INT: Yeah, right.

RES: Ok, so then what happens in May?

INT: Then we'd switch to sword and tuna fish from like May until October or November, and then after that, we'd go back to tile fishing.

RES: Ok, so you were really concentrated on 4 species?

INT: Pretty much, yeah, back then yeah.

RES: What about shark? You ever go after machos or anything like that or?

INT: We didn't specifically fish for them, but they were a by catch, you know. You kept them when you caught them. It wasn't like we were macho fishing, but you did catch them.

RES: Yeah. But those are the ones that you directed at?

INT: Um-hum.

RES: What would you say the challenges to fishing were at that time?

INT: Weather more than anything else.

RES: What was the experience like fishing back then? Can you describe what it was like on the water?

INT: Well the fishing was good, you know. We'd go out for 3 or 4 days and come back with 20,000 lbs of fish.

RES: And what would that be 10,000 lbs of sword and 10,000 lbs of tuna, or what was the breakdown roughly?

INT: It would be, yeah, about half and half- 50/50.

RES: So an average trip was 3 or 4 days?

INT: I thought you were talking tile fishing, but no, the sword fishing trips were like two weeks.

RES: I should start actually, because that was your first, with the tile fish. Those were 3 or 4 day trips?

INT: Yeah.

RES: And you could come back with 20,000 lbs?

INT: Yep.

RES: That's not bad.

INT: Nah, it was good. I mean sometimes, you know, they'd have like what they call a... like every seven years, it would be like...every few years, you would get real good you know.

RES: Like a cycle.

INT: Yeah, like a cycle. We were coming in with, you know, sometimes 30,000 lbs.

RES: Wow, in a 3 or 4 day trip?

INT: Yeah.

RES: No trip limits, no size limits, no kind of regulations on that fishery at that time?

INT: No. Then, the fish were all pretty big anyway, you know, so there wasn't really that many small fish.

RES: Where were you selling them?

INT: New York.

RES: Did you go direct there, or did you sell it to the docks?

INT: No, we'd sell direct to the market in NY. The truck came and picked them up. There was a local trucking company would pick up the fish here at the dock and bring them to NY.

RES: Ok, ok. Has that changed?

INT: No, it's still going on.

RES: Ok, you're not selling through the dock?

INT: No, this dock doesn't buy fish. It, you know, you just unload them here, and you decide who you want to sell them to and a truck comes and takes them there.

RES: Ok. How do you decide who to sell them to?

INT: Well whoever paying the most, or you know whoever...

RES: So there's buyers on the dock offering different prices or do you have a list or?

INT; No, there's not buyers on the dock here; there's, you know, you sell them to 3 or 4 different guys, and kind of watch who's paying what, you know. They're all basically the same, but sometimes one guy is a few cents higher than another guy, so...and then you develop sort of a friendship or whatever.

RES: A relationship with the buyer?

INT: Right. So you might stick with him for a while, but then if he starts getting light on the prices, you...

RES: Switch.

INT: Right.

RES: Like any other business really.

INT: Yeah.

RES: What kind of gear were you using? You're using bottom long lines? How many tubs...do you use tubs or trawl tubs?

INT: Yeah, tubs - trawl tubs. We would take anywhere from like 60 to 100 tubs out with us.

RES: How many hooks are on...

INT: 250 hooks a tub.

RES: Did that change over time?

INT: Yeah, we developed other ways of fishing. It was still trawl gear, but instead of being in tubs, we started putting them in these boxes, and got these baiting machines where...

RES: Automatic baiter?

INT: Yeah, we'll just go out and do that. So actually then, you only had to carry maybe 25 tubs...worth of tubs with you.

RES: SO you actually decreased the amount of hooks that you've got in the water?

INT: No, we still set the same amount of hooks, you know, we'd still set...say if you set 24 tubs a day, which was kind of a common thing for us anyway, we'd still set the 24 tubs, but when we pulled them in we'd put them in the boxes and then they were just ready to go back out again. So it wasn't like if you fished them once, you had to manually re-bait them.

RES: Oh ok, so you were carrying 60-100 because you've got 3 sets of 24 or whatever it is.

INT: Right. Then we had a...there was more of a land based kind of...it was like with the tubs; you'd bring them in, you'd go out and you'd fish them, and then you just bring them in, and there was people on the dock, you know, on land that would bait them you know.

RES: Ok, yeah.

INT: And then you'd put them in the freezer or whatever and then take them out when you went out.

RES: So when does that start changing?

INT: When we started doing with these automatic baiters.

RES: Do you remember around what year that was? The 80's?

INT: Yeah, in the early 80's, probably 85/86.

RES: Ok, so what happen to all the people...

INT: Or maybe even before that.

RES: Ok. What happened to the people on land, the baiters?

INT: Some of them went fishing, some of them just moved on to other things.

RES: Who did they tend to be, the baiters? Were they older guys or women, or kids, or who?

INT: Kind of a combination of all, you know. There was a few women that did it, there was a lot of kids, you know - what we did after school when we were going to high school, we'd bait tubs, you know, after school - and there was a few older guys that did it too, like a few retired guys or guys that weren't...maybe some gill netters that weren't fishing in the winter or something like that.

RES: Did you make money doing that, or was it just a few extra bucks?

INT: Well, it was ok. You started out getting paid maybe 7\$ a tub; you could do three or 4 of them after school. So yeah, you could make money.

RES: How were crews paid at that time?

INT; A % of the catch, you know, they'd get a...

RES: Was there one for the boat, or how did you guys do the...

INT: Well the boat would come in, you'd figure out the expenses of fuel, and the bait, and the food, and you know whatever else.

RES: So gill, food, and bait all came off the top?

INT: Right, and then the boat would take like 50%, and then the rest of it would be divided between the captain and crew.

RES: The captain got the same as the crew?

INT: He got paid a little more. The captain might get 10% more than the crew.

RES: Has that changed over time?

INT: No, it's still pretty much the same, you know. Everybody's got maybe a little different pay scale, but it all works out basically to the same.

RES: The %'s are more or less the same?

INT: The captain will always get 8-10% more than the crew members.

RES: So if you're up to 3 or 4 days at a time, how many days did you come back in for when you were fished?

INT: It would depend on the weather and everything. Sometimes you'd only be in for a couple of days; sometimes you'd be in for a week. A lot of it was fishing around the weather.

RES: And then when you're sword and tuna fishing later in the year, you're out for a week or so – a week to 2 weeks?

INT: 10 days to 2 weeks, and then between trips...see those trips tend to bite better on the full moon when the moon is coming up or going down. So if you go out, you fish the moon, say you're on a 2 week trip, and you come in, you might be in for a week and then you go back out again.

RES: Ok. That's a long time away from home.

INT: Yeah. Or with the Grand Banks, when we fished up there, we'd go out for 30 days.

RES: How did you find that?

INT: It was a long time away from home, but, you know, once you were out there doing it and everything, it was kind of a way of life. I enjoyed the fishing; it didn't enjoy the time away, but the fishing part I always liked.

RES: How do you enjoy scalloping vs. that?

INT: I like the scalloping because, well right now it's good money, you know, where there's a lot of scallops.

RES: You're getting 10-11 \$ a pound now, aren't you?

INT: For the bigger scallops yeah. The price is starting to go down a little bit now for the smaller ones at least, but the bigger ones are still 10-11\$ a pound. The smaller ones are like 8.

RES; That's good.

INT: Yeah, it's good you know, and you only go out for the day. We have a 400lb limit which is, depending on the size of the dredge you're fishing you know some boats can better fish in the bigger dredges. They're out for, you know, 10-12 hours is it. The boats with the smaller dredges, it's taking them 16-20 hours.

RES: How many days a week do you go out?

INT: We try to get 4 or 5 a week in. Right now, we're only seeming to get 2 or 3 you know.

RES: Why, because of the weather?

INT: Yeah, the wintertime. In the spring, and summer, and fall, you know, when the weather's nice, we'll get 4 or 5 a week.

RES: How many guys are you carrying now?

INT: On this boat, we're taking 3, you know, me a 2 crew members.

RES: Ok, so that's pretty standard?

INT: Pretty much. Some of the guys are going with just 2, you know, a captain and one deckhand. Most of us are 3-handed.

RES: Ok. What about your profitability over time; how's that doing? We don't need #'s, but just in general, when you started, we're things profitable? We're you doing well at it?

INT: Yeah, we were.

RES: With the long lining and the bottom long lining as well?

INT: Yeah, it was good.

RES: It was a profitable fishery to be in?

INT: Uh-huh.

RES; And through time, does that stay the same, or did it go down or up?

INT: The bottom long ...well it did go down there for, you know, when we...we stopped tile fishing there for a while like in the late 80's till just in the last 4 or 5 years or so. We've gotten back into it during the winter, but...

RES: That's when you went down south?

INT: Yeah, if the fishing got to where you were catching a lot of smaller fish and things like that, you know, the prices weren't as good on the smaller fish as they are on the big fish. And the fishing slowed up there for awhile, and then it bounced back. Now it's a stable fishery, it's good, it's regulated with...you know, there's different categories of the tilefish things. There's a fulltime, a part time, and a there's another category too, it's, I'm not sure what they call that one. We're in the part time category now, because even though we started, we were the first port to go, and all of these guys, you know, the older guys – my dad, XXXX, and XXXX, and all the guys from town here – were the ones that originally had started the tile fishing. And then up in Montauk, there was a fleet that jumped in behind us, and when we stopped fishing down here in Barnegat Light, pretty much everybody did.

RES: That's the late 80's you're talking about?

INT: Right. And then guys in Montauk kept going, so they did it pretty much fulltime, you know, straight through. And when they came down with the regulations, we got only a part time permit because of being out of the fishery for so many years.

RES: Are people pretty irritated about that?

INT: Yeah, I don't think we got a fair shake on that. You know, those guys up there got more of the quota than what we got even though we were the pioneers of it. And the reason we stopped fishing is, like I said, you know we started getting smaller fish, and less fish, and we pretty much just backed off and gave them a break.

RES: But at that time, it was a question of profitability. I mean you weren't making money on small fish.

INT: Right. Then we just moved on to the long lining, which was better then.

RES: Were there any regulations at all on you at that time? The beginning?

INT: I'm sure there were. I can't really recall what they were then, but...

RES: What were the first regulations that you remember affecting you?

INT: Blue fin tuna. We use to be able to catch and keep them, you know, and then after – I don't know when it was exactly – they put a...they shut the fishery down and you were allowed to bring in one fish a trip for a while there. Now it's up to 2 fish, but you have to have...to keep one blue fin tuna, I think you have to have 2000 pounds of like other fish on the boat – sword, yellow fin, and macho and whatever else. And to keep 2 of them, you have to have 6000 lbs. If you have 30,000 lbs, you can keep 3 blue fin.

RES: Ok. So it's basically a by catch?

INT: Basically, yes.

RES: How did that affect you? Were blue fin's a big chunk of your income, or was it more like extra?

INT: They could have been a big chunk of our income if we targeted them. We never really...in those days, back in the beginning, they really weren't worth that much, because there wasn't like the sushi market and stuff like that that there is now. And now that there's, you know, all of the sushi market all over the place, a good blue fin tuna can bring in quite a bit of money.

RES: 10,000.

INT: Well, you know, a good one maybe 10,000 – a real good one, you know, big and all. But you can get up to 20 or 25\$ a pound of #1 real good blue fin. That doesn't happen all of the time, but it can happen. So it did cost us, you know, we'd still interact with them at certain times of the year sometimes, and you'd have to release them.

RES: Do you think they were making it when you released them?

INT: Some of them, most of them probably, you know. The ones that...there was obviously a couple of dead ones, but most of them made it.

RES: So blue fin tuna, really, you felt like that hurt your financial...

INT: Yeah, on some...like in the spring of the year when they come through across the George's Bank and all, yeah. There was some years you could load it up with them, you know, there was still plenty of them there, but they were restricted, so you couldn't keep them.

RES: What about any other regulations? You mentioned tile fish and not getting the whole license that you felt you should have because of your history. Were there any other regs that you remember really affecting you, or causing you to change the way that you fished, or your profitability?

INT: No, when we started fishing back in the 70's and 80's, there use to still be the foreign boats were here, you know. You had the Russians and the Spanish boats and all. That was before the 200-mile limit, so that hurt us a lot. I mean those big factory ships were allowed to fish here, you know, they could stay here for months and load up with fish.

RES: So that was a good thing in a way that they got taken off? Is that what you mean?

INT: Oh yeah, yeah.

RES: Were you involved in any fishing organizations?

INT: At that time, no. We are now.

RES: What are you involved with?

INT: Well we have, with the pelagic long lining, there's a Blue Water Fishermen's Association, which is []. And there's a scallop committee here in town you know, which I'm not a committee member or anything, but we're involved with scallop fisheries. So we try to keep up on those, you know, what's going on with that.

RES: Why did you get involved in those groups?

INT: Well because we had to fess up because of environmentalists, and rec fishermen, and everybody else is, you know, breathing down our necks about pelagic long lining being in the water. You know, sport fish fishermen thought we were catching all of the tuna and marlin and everything else. Marlin we're not allowed to keep; we never have been. Actually we were years ago; we could keep them, but now we can't. And they were never a good part of our income. I mean they were a by catch. You'd catch one every now and then. You still don't catch that many of them, you know, because they're a warm water fish, and we're trying to stay out of the really warm water now, because of the sea turtles, you know. That was another big battle with the pelagic long lining because of, mainly, environmentalists with that.

RES: Do you think they're off target, the environmentalists?

INT: Yeah, because they figured I guess, you know, if we were catching we were killing them, which wasn't the case. It isn't the case. 99% of the turtles, or 99.9% of the turtles, are going to live.

RES: So you felt pressure from both environmentalists and the rec sector and that's what helped to organize the pelagics?

INT: Yeah, we had to, because they put an amendment...they tried to put an amendment through to shut down long lining, so that's why we formed Blue Water Fishermen's Association.

RES: Amendment to the management plan?

INT: Yeah, that was in 1991 I think.

RES: Ok. And so that was in direct response to that?

INT: Yep. And then we had a size limit imposed on the sword fish, which is a good thing, you know. They have to be 31 lbs [dress?] weight to keep them, you know, which isn't a problem. You don't want to bring a small little fish like that anyway – a swordfish. A swordfish can get up to 4, or 5, 600 pounds.

RES: 31's pretty small.

INT: Yeah, you don't want to be fishing on them.

RES: What about other regs?

INT: Well there's closed areas because of turtles and the blue fin tuna. There's a closed area up on George's Bank through, I guess it starts sometime in May. May or June it starts, and it runs through...I know the whole month of June, there's a certain area of Georges Bank that's closed. I don't remember the exact dates right now, because I haven't done that for a couple of years now.

RES: Ok, so let me make sure I'm clear here. You were targeting blue fin, and you don't do it anymore or?

INT: No, we never targeted them, no. I mean they were a by catch, and when we were sword fishing we would catch them sometimes.

RES: Ok, so you mean you haven't gone sword fishing in a couple of years or?

INT: Well I sword fished last summer with this boat, but not up on George's Bank where that closed area is.

RES: You mean specifically in there?

INT: Right. When I had bigger boat, we fished up in that area in the spring and early summer, and we'd usually go up to the Grand Banks about July and fish July through November on the Grand Banks.

RES: So why did you get this smaller boat and go for scallops? I mean this boat isn't really meant for pelagic long lining anymore. Have you left the fishery or?

INT: I still have the permits and all of the gear and everything. I mean if something ever happens with this scalloping, I can go do that again.

RES: On this vessel?

INT: Yeah. The reason I got out of it was because with the bigger boat the expenses were starting to kill me. The only permits I held with that was for long lining. I had the general category scallop permit, which if I knew then what I know now, I would have probably rigged that one for scallops, but I didn't do it.

RES: Well nobody knew I don't think for sure that you're going to get 11\$ a pound.

INT: Right, so I sold that. Mainly it was a financial thing, you know. With the long lining, we weren't...we just weren't making the money that we did previously.

RES: Why?

INT: The fish prices didn't really go up with the economy say, you know, like the fuel prices and everything else went up, and up, and up, and the fish prices really didn't come up accordingly. There was times when you'd get good money for the fish, but there was a lot of times when you didn't get good money for the fish, and it was an expensive fishery to be involved in.

RES: Because of fuel and...

INT: Fuel and gear, and crew, food, you know. The longer trips, you'd spend \$2,000 just on food, and then you'd burn, with the bigger boat, \$6-8000 worth of fuel. You know, it cost us about \$20,000 on a local trip to go out. On the longer trips, it was 30-40,000 in expenses.

RES: Did regulations play into that at all?

INT: With some of the closed areas, yeah.

RES: How?

INT: I mean you couldn't go and fish there, you know.

RES: And they were highly productive areas and, therefore, profitable and...

INT: Yeah, right. So, you know, we got kicked out of some of the better areas to fish in. And there was times, you know, when they would...through a couple of years, we could only catch like 15 swordfish a trip, and it would be mainly like a tuna trip you went on. Swordfish were a by catch, and that was because of a quota. They put quotas on them. You know, regulations did hurt us financially.

RES: Was there any...do you see any positive, you've mentioned size limits, regulations out there – ones that you agree with, that you think are good?

INT: Yeah, I think the size limit is good. Any other positives... I can't really think of any other positives.

RES: What about the way things are managed with council and the commission and that structure of management? Do you think that they do a good job? Do you think that there should be a different way, and I guess the fisheries service too? Do you think there's ways that the structure or the approach to management should be changed?

INT: Well I think if they were better informed on what's really happening, you know, they base a lot of their decisions on assumptions more than facts it seems sometimes.

RES: What do you mean like the status of stocks?

INT: Yeah, with the blue fin, for example, you know there's more blue fin than what they think there is or want to admit there is. You know, we have observers that we have to take out from time to time, and they collect the data and everything else, and I don't know how much of that data is really tied in with the management, you know. That's what it's supposed to be for, but...

RES: You don't think it's used or you think the data itself is bad – like the observers aren't recording correctly?

INT: No, the observers are good. I don't know if it's used to the full effect or not, you know, if they're really applying it.

RES: How do you feel about the observer program in general? Some guys have said it's kind of a pain in the neck to have somebody standing over their shoulder and judging them and...

INT: Oh it can be. It depends on the guys you get. I've always been pretty lucky when I've had observers in. We've had pretty decent guys. I had one guy that was kind of a pain in the neck, but most of the other ones I've had, or all of the other ones I've had, were...

RES: Were pretty solid?

INT: Yeah. I really haven't had a problem with any of them except for the one guy, which he didn't get along with the crew.

RES: So you didn't have to have him again I guess?

INT: No, we didn't take him again.

RES: Other than the closed areas that you mentioned, have the places that you fished changed at all, or do you pretty much go to the same grounds that you've always gone to?

INT: We're going to the same grounds pretty much, you know, year after year during the different seasons. You know, like in the fall, you'll fish down here in the Hudson Canyon more. That's a pretty common area to fish in. And earlier in the summer, you're up on George's Bank, and you're sword fishing- or Grand Banks depending on the boat, you know. The bigger boats would be on the Grand Banks, and the medium sized boats would be on George's, and the smaller boats would be down here on the Hudson.

RES: So basically, you went as far as your boat enabled you to go.

INT: Uh-huh.

RES: And the closed areas that you talked about for blue fin were on the Grand Banks?

INT: No, George's.

RES: George's Bank, ok.

INT: The mid Atlantic (?bite)(270) they call it, which is right...there's environmentalists are putting pressure on the fisheries service now again to close down that mid-Atlantic bite because of pilot whales, you know, and they're after the pilot whales.

RES: What do you think about that?

INT: I think that's a bunch of bull too, because we don't...

RES: Have you ever seen a pilot whale?

INT: Oh yeah, you see them.

RES: Have you ever had any gear interaction with them?

INT: Yeah, every now and then you'll get one that gets its tail wrapped up in the main line or something, and all you do is you pull it up, and you cut one side of the line, and pull the other side off of them, and he swims off.

RES: SO they're not hooked in or snared or anything like that?

INT: No. Most of them, pretty much all of them, that you get are just tail wrapped. They get their tail caught on the line. They hit the line and they kind of roll or something, and it just catches around their tail.

RES: What about the health of the resources that you've been interacting with. Have any gone up noticeably, in your estimation, or have any gone down?

INT: The sword fishing has gone up since we've had these regs, and then the tile fishing has gone up too. There's a quota on a total allowable catch between all of these different categories, so each category has their own weight limit, and when that category reaches that, then they're done. So the fishery has gone up; the same thing with the sword fishing, you know, they...

RES: Since when are you talking about?

INT: Well since, we stopped in the 80', you know. It's gone way up since then.

RES: When you stopped in the 80's, when you went down...you talking tile fish?

INT: Right.

RES: Ok, when you went down to the south?

INT: Right.

RES: Ok, so you've seen a recovery since then?

INT: Yeah.

RES: Ok. Is that, do you think, because of regs, or do you think that's because just as a cycle?

INT: I think it is because of regs.

RES: Kept people from getting small ones?

INT: Um-hum.

RES: I should probably let you go here right. Is there anything else that you want to, you know, that I didn't ask you about – any regs that you think are really a problem that we didn't talk about that I need to keep in mind or we need to keep in mind on this project.

INT: No, but if I do think of something, I'll give you a call and let you know.

RES: Yeah, please do. When I go back and listen to the tape, and I have a question, can I call you back to clear things up?

INT: Yeah, uh-huh.