

Interview #4

Location: Cape May, New Jersey

Date: 10/10/05

INTERVIEW:

RES: So you wouldn't encourage your children, or you did encourage your children?

INT: No, I didn't encourage my children. You're away from home. It's not a good family life. You know for me it was ok; I made a good living, but it's not something I want for my kids. So that was one of the reasons I sold the boat. The other reason was, there are a lot of reasons but, that was one of them.

RES: You thought no one would want the pass, or you didn't want to pass it on to kids [] at that point because it's an economic decision, I imagine, in part.

INT: Economics, and personal, and it was just a lot of reasons, but I you know...

RES: Flash back on a question was how much education were you able to get?

INT: High School.

RES: Did you ever take any formal fisheries training like navigation, or a twine course, or learn it on the water?

INT: On the water. The only thing I have beyond high school was a safety instructor course that I took a few years back for the drill conductors. So, you know, I'm coast guard approved to teach safety, you know, for fishing vessels. So I can...well I'm not sure I'm certified anymore but I can do that.

RES: Yeah, you have those skills to do that.

INT: Yeah, and we have with XXXX...I did belong to a group that since has been disbanded, and we probably instructed between 4 and 500 individuals in safety at sea, you know, life rafts, fires, all that, you know, are your life rafts upgrades, what you need to do if you have a problem. But we gave it up, because we couldn't get enough people to come to our classes. I think the market got saturated. Now they're trying to revive it, but I'm out of it. I've lost interest.

RES: What is your current position?

INT: I do the woodwork here.

RES: Woodwork at XXXX

INT: Yeah, for boats. That's all I do, just on the boats.

RES: And how long have you been doing that?

INT: I've been here 11 years.

RES: 11 years. And you said you began fishing here in 1976 you said?

INT: No, I started fishing in 19...

RES: No, in Cape May.

INT: Cape May, '76 yeah. But then I had a boat; I was running my own boat. Actually when I moved to Cape May, I ran boat for somebody else for about a couple years then I bought my own.

RES: But still scallops?

INT: Still scallops yeah, yeah.

RES: When you moved here, was it difficult to get started in fishing?

INT: No, no I had a boat.

RES: You owned your boat, you were clear...

INT: Not at that time. I ran a boat for somebody else. I was living in New Bedford, and there was a gentleman down there that owned a boat that wanted to retire and called me up and wanted to know if I was interested in coming to Cape May to operate the boat.

RES: Ok, so he had had a position and needed a captain and...

INT: Just walked on and go on the ocean.

RES: That was enough to make you move from New Bedford at the time?

INT: Yeah. I've been to [] just wanted a change of scenery.

RES: So for personal reasons also it was time to...

INT: Yeah. Plus I've been to Cape May many times, and I like the town here. It looked like a nice place to live, which it is.

RES: You mean physically or...

INT: Yeah, just a nice, yeah, a nice area.

RES: What was the fishing community like down here then?

INT: It's about the same as it is now. I mean I don't really see all that much difference. There's some different people. Naturally in 30 years, a lot of people that I fished with then have gone on to other things, so you get a new crop. But I mean fishing is fishing. I mean it's...

RES: Did fishermen socialize together at that time?

INT: Ah, they did. The socializing they do are in the bars. That's where they do their socializing, which I didn't care for that scene. So I, you know, I didn't do that, you know. I'm not a drinker, but that's where a lot of the socializing goes on. And that is not unique to fishermen, you know, I mean...

RES: Oh yeah that's true for school too or ...

INT: Yeah, I mean, for any crew. And you tend to socialize with your own, because you have things in common. And so there are bars here that cater to fishermen – less now than it was then – but there are bars in town that ...

RES: There were more then?

INT: Yeah.

RES: What happened to them all?

INT: They've gone on to other things and, you know, upscale what have you, so...

RES: Upscale, is that been happening a lot to the community? I mean I look around, I see these buildings...there's construction everywhere.

INT: Yeah there's no upscale here, but in Cape May, you know, it has evolved. There was one bar near the lobster house that was strictly fishermen, and that's now closed right now. It's going to reopen again as a restaurant just as you come over the bridge. That's going to be something else. It's called restaurant 1919, but he didn't last very long, so next year it will be something else. But that was a waterfront bar, and then it just there's another one down the street called Mayers, and that's still a waterfront bar.

RES: Ok, and that's still a popular one for fishermen?

INT: Yeah, mainly fishermen, that's their trade.

RES: Were fishermen organized at that time? I mean politically or socially, was there any kind of union or...

INT: No, not here. There's never been a union here.

RES: No, so they just got together socially and that was...

INT: That was it yeah, yeah. There's no...New Bedford had a union at one time, but I'm not so sure what they have now. But here they were never organized.

RES: I'm gonna focus on the time that you're in Cape May, because this is a New Jersey fisheries study. You fished from here from 1976 to?

INT: Oh I probably stopped fishing back in the early 90's say maybe 91 or whatever it was. I forget now; I kind of got off gradually. But during that time, I also spent almost 2 years on the west coast.

RES: Of the US?

INT: Yeah. I took my boat to Oregon. I spent a year there, and then we went to Alaska and we were there for, I don't know, 6 months.

RES: Oh I fished in Alaska for salmon.

INT: Whereabouts?

RES: I was out of Petersburg down on the...

INT: Oh yeah, sure. We were Kodiak and [] and all those places.

RES: Were you [] or were you...

INT: Scalping, still scalping. And we scalped off the coast of Oregon; we found quite a bit there, but that got depleted, so that's why we moved to Alaska.

RES: Ok, and then you come back here?

INT: Yeah, came back here late in 1982.

RES: Ok. And when you were here, were you always out of Cape May/Wildwood area?

INT: Yeah, Cape May

RES: S when you started here in Cape May, like how important was fishing to Cape May at that point?

INT? Very, very important. Big part of the economy, you know, and ...

RES: More than it is now or less than it is now or, and how did you feel as a fisherman at that point?

INT: Well, you know, I was happy doing what I was doing, you know. I was making a fairly good living. I didn't mind doing it, you know, this is what I'm living all my life. But as time went on, I got older and older, and I could see that, you know, this is a young man's business. So I decided to quit.

RES: So, was that the primary reason in '91 around that you finishing up that you felt that...

INT: Yeah I just... between my age, and the fact that I had children that I wanted to do other things with, regulatory reasons a big part of it.

RES: Can you elaborate on that?

INT: There's too much government.

RES: What do you mean by that?

INT: Regulations. I mean it just like we have now.

RES: Which ones in particular?

INT: Well you got days at sea, you can't do this, you can't do that, so I mean there are just too many to list. I mean it wasn't how I was brought up, you know, I'm from the old school. The old school says you go out on the ocean, you do the best you can, you get products, you bring it back to the docks, you sell it, and then you go again. Now, you know, they have regulations. You've got to sign in, you've got this, you've got boat tracks. To me it was just too much regulation.

RES: When you started in 1976, were there regulations back then?

INT: No, there was nothing.

RES: It was free...

INT: Just go.

RES: When did they start; do you remember? What was the first thing, first regulation, that affected your work?

INT: Ah, I can't put a date on it. When they started, the first regulation was in meat pounds.

RES: So what was that? So you remember what it was?

INT: Well you couldn't bring in any scallops that had a count, there were counts, take a pound, and I think it started with like a 40 count or if it's above that, they could cease your trip.

RES: They were too small?

INT: They were too small. And as time progressed, they count went down to 30, and it was a horrible program, well intended, but horrible the way it worked out.

RES: Why?

INT: Because they give you 10% allowance, and the natural instinct to try and get up against the allowance so...

RES: Because that's more profitable.

INT: It's more profitable. I mean this is what you're... this is your job is to bring in profits. The more you bring in, the more revenue. I mean it's very simple.

RES: Simple economics.

INT: And if you ... we can't weigh the scallops in the ocean. We had no real good way of getting to that number, the magic number. And if you were over...

RES: 30 or 40 or whatever it was.

INT: Yeah whatever that # was. So if you were over, the government would seize your trip, and there was a lot of trips seized here and in other ports. So it got to be a real contentious program. Eventually, they changed it to days at sea and got away from the meat count.

RES: Is that what it is now, principally, days at sea?

INT: Days at sea yeah, yeah. It's regulated by days at sea, so it's effort control. This is control...the scallop industry is controlled by the New England Fisheries Management Council, and how they control it is by effort.

RES: Right. That's how they do a lot of their, all of their, fisheries.

INT: All of the fisheries in NE are controlled by effort, whereas the mid-Atlantic in this region is controlled by quota. So there's two different philosophies there. Is one better than the other? I don't know, the mid-Atlantic is doing a better job than the NE.

RES: []

INT: Yeah, and it gets political, and it's a real horror story the way it's been done. So anyway that's...

RES: But you originally had this count regulation first...

INT: Yeah, and don't ask me for a date, cause I don't remember when it started. I have ...

RES: Was it roughly, like, soon after you started or 10 years after you started or?

INT: It was probably back in the middle 80's.

RES: SO you've been in it for about a decade down here and then that came on? About ten years you've been fishing for it and ...

INT: Probably I fished for, yeah, maybe 8-10 years under this scenario. Now don't forget now, I still owned the boat. So even because I wasn't myself going out, I still had these regulations over my head as an owner.

RES: Right. From 91-when did you won the boat but...

INT: I sold the boat in '99 six years ago.

RES: But you were no longer the captain at that point?

INT: No.

RES: But the license was in your...

INT: It was my boat, my problem.

RES: Do you remember when the days at sea started up when they started doing it that way instead of...did it go from the count to the days at sea? Was that the transition?

INT: Yeah.

RES: Do you remember about when that was?

INT: Not off hand, no.

RES: What was that transition like? What did that mean for you? Were you still captaining at that time?

INT: No.

RES: So somewhere after '91?

INT: Yeah, it would have been after '91. I was off the boat then. I had the meat count to deal with. Well it was hard. At that time, there wasn't an abundance of scallops like there are now.

RES: At what time? When you were still captaining?

INT: As I, when I owned the boat, you know. The scallops historically [] out. The abundance is up and down. This is most of your...most of your wild animals have periods of up and down – predator and prey – and the same thing with scallops. I don't know what's eating them, but I

mean they do go up and down. And for a # of years, the abundance was [] like it is now. So it was a period of low abundance when they implemented the days at sea.

RES: Sometime early 90's/mid-90's?

INT: I don't know probably; I don't remember. So with the limited time in the ocean, your earning potential has obviously diminished, which made it, you know, made it hard. There were some tough times, very tough time.

RES: Abundance was low, you got a limit on it anyway...

INT: You got limits, the abundance was down, you can't catch any product, and then you don't get the time to spend catching them. So, I mean, it was a double whammy.

RES: What was the price like back then? Do you remember?

INT: No. It wasn't like it is now.

RES: Well now it's like 9.50 a pound...

INT: They got 8.50 here yeah.

RES: \$8.50? That's pretty good.

INT: Damn good, damn good.

RES: Back when you started, how many scalloping boats were around? Do you remember, back in the 70's?

INT: Here in Cape May?

RES: Yeah, ballpark?

INT: When I came to Cape May, there was only 3 or 4.

RES: Mostly a day dragger fleet at that point?

INT: No they were full time scallopers.

RES: No, I mean the boats in Cape May overall?

INT: Yeah, they were mainly catching flounder or whatever, you know, fish products.

RES: So 3 or 4 big scallopers all big...

INT: Yeah, full-time.

RES: What sort of vessel did you have then?

INT: The one I was operating when I came down, it was an 88-foot what they call an Eastern Rig.

RES: []

INT: Well the wheelhouse is in the back, and the towing posts are forward.

RES: What were the other boats like the scalloping boats? Was that a standard design?

INT: Yeah, at that time yeah.

RES: How many crew did those boats carry for scalloping?

INT: Anywhere from 11-15.

RES: Ok. Well that's changed eh?

INT: Yeah, there was no limit then on the crew size.

RES: Do you remember when they started doing that? Were you still on the boat?

INT: Well it seems to me when I was on the boat when they went down to 9 men. That was the next step down, and then eventually they went down to 7, which that's where it's at right now.

RES: Why did they do that?

INT: To control the harvest. Less people/ less shucking ability, you know. It's all in getting the meat out of the shell.

RES: Was that concurrent with the meat count philosophy, or was that after when they went to days at sea? Do you remember?

INT: If I recall, cause you're asking me a time line that I'm having trouble remembering...

RES: Well, I can get the dates it happened when they...

INT: Yeah. I'm thinking that the 9 men scenario came in while we were on the meat count. That's my thinking right now.

RES: And how did that affect you when that happened? I mean was that a pain in the butt or was it...

INT: Yeah it was a pain in the butt, because you didn't have enough people to handle the equipment, you know. Traditionally, 11 men works out great. You have 4 men...

RES: That was the ideal crew for...

INT: Ideal crew. You have 4 men on deck at all times, which is what you need. You've got 2 dredgers, so you need 2 men for each dredge. The cook just works in the daytime. When he wasn't the cook he would come out during the day and help out. The mate and the captain were in the wheelhouse. It was a perfect world. Now...

RES: Then they went to 9...

INT: Then they went to 9 so we're, you know, some...

RES: The captain or the mates got to help out ...

INT: Got to help out, so you got to change or go different hours, you know, to cover what you had before. And when they went to 7...I wasn't fishing for 7 men. I was out of it by that time; it made it even harder.

RES: So it makes it harder in terms of like physically you've got to be up longer working harder. Was there any difference in safety?

INT: Yeah, sure. You're working longer hours, so naturally people are more tired, tiredness leads to carelessness, forgetfulness, and yeah I think it's a safety factor.

RES: Back when you had 11, can you describe a typical day to me?

INT: Well with 11 men, you work 6 hours on 6 hours off around the clock.

RES: And how long is a trip?

INT: The trip was usually, when I first moved down there, our trip usually 9-10 days. As the resource got more depleted we started making longer trips. There were boats in this harbor that were making 18 day trips, 20 day trips, you know, which really was counterproductive because you were getting an inferior product.

RES: What do you mean smaller?

INT: Age, age, you know. You got scallops that are 3 weeks old, which, you know, are not as marketable as a scallop that's 5 days old, you know. You lose your shelf life, so to me that was you get a product that isn't as good as it is now. These boats are staying out 5,6,7 days, so you're getting a much nicer product. So that was one of the drawbacks to that.

RES: And that's a reflection...they're only staying out 6 or 7 days because of days at sea thing or?

INT: Not now, there's an abundance of scallops right now, and they can get enough product in that time. That's why they came back to the dock.

RES: Ok, so they're filling up and...

INT: Yeah, and they're holding the price up. Plus they're working longer hours, so they really can't...they got to get back to the dock and get some sleep. These guys are working long hours.

RES: What so you think the hours are now?

INT: They're probably working a minimum of 18 hours a day.

RES: That's a long day.

INT: Yeah, that's a long day. Some are working longer.

RES: By the time you take your shower and get some food and everything, you're getting like 3 hours...

INT: You probably don't take a shower hahaha; you just want to go to bed, you know. Yeah, it's hard.

RES: How many fishing related...when you started, were there more or less fishing related businesses? Were there more...do you remember if there was more like, you know, railways, or supply shops, or you know?

INT: No, that really hasn't changed.

RES: What about docks? What about commercial docks? I know there was an A&J or...

INT: A&J, but that's still there. They're actually they're...

RES: Lunds now?

INT: Yeah, Lund's bought that, and they're rebuilding the dock, and it looks like they're doing a pretty nice job. So as far as fishing docks, we pretty much have what we had then. Cold Spring, they have this dock here. You have Lund's, which now it says A&J's. You have a dock in Wildwood, and then there's another one another 2 Mile. So that part has pretty much remained the same. There was no condo conversion or anything for, yet anyway, and right now there's an ordinance here in Lower Township that you can't put condos.

RES: Oh really? So starting at the bridge there by Sea Gear over where that's the beginning of Lower Twsp.? That's why there not so many...

INT: Well this starts, what precipitated all of this was the build over at the Canyon Club you know, all the condos and you could see what was happening. When A&J went bankrupt, they had a commitment to sell that to a developer, cause the bank took it over. And then there was...everybody got up in arms, and the Lower Twsp. passed an ordinance that this area here is only for fishing or marina related businesses. There won't be any condos. You cannot put a dwelling up here.

RES: What do you think about that?

INT: I think it's a great idea, seeing what's happened in other ports.

RES: Other ports around the country you mean?

INT: In the country yeah, yeah just this trend.

RES: How is this...I mean there is still some development in Cape May. How has that affected, say, the average fishermen or you or people around? I mean prices have gone up for sure.

INT: Sky high. I live in Cape May; I bought my house there 25 years ago.

RES: That was probably the right time to buy it.

INT: Oh yeah, I guess so. I wouldn't buy it today; I couldn't afford to buy it. I wouldn't spend that kind of money. Now things have changed. We have, my wife and I, have a couple of businesses in Cape May, and we can see how Cape May changes over time. But this, I think this, is common to most shore towns – condo development. In Cape May City, which I'm familiar with, 60% of the tax bills are sent to out of town addresses. 60%, that's a lot.

RES: Well, actually I believe that. I mean, I went to try and get some food yesterday after doing some interviews, and downtown was just shut.

INT: Well, that's always the case. Cape May is always...it's a resort. Our town dies in the middle October - we kind of die. We do get a little business around Christmas time and Thanksgiving. This year, it's pretty quiet, much quieter than I've seen...cause my wife has a gift shop on the beachfront, and that's really doing nothing now. We're not even open during the week it's so slow during the week. So there isn't much tourism right now. In the summertime it, you know, picks up again. This year's down. Why? Gas prices, and the demographics have changed, condo conversion...

RES: How have the demographics changed?

INT: The people that come here. For a tourist economy like, you know, Wildwood and Cape May to survive, you need your motels, you need your families to come and stay for a week in a motel, they have to go out and eat, they got to do this, they go to do that. Whereas the condo's, they call for pizza, or they cook in. So the...

RES: They're not leaving much money behind.

INT: No they're not, so I think this is one of the main reason why things are down. Most of the businesses in Cape May this year are down, and I think that's probably one of the reasons.

RES: Yeah, that makes sense. What has that meant for commercial fishing as an industry? You mentioned in the 70's it was very important, I think, to the [] Is it still as important...

INT: It's still, yeah, it still brings a great...

RES: Relative to tourism, is that ...

INT: Well tourism is a lot bigger obviously. Tourism and recreational fishing is a lot bigger than commercial fishing, but commercial fishing is year round, you know, we're not seasonal. These boats go year round, so it, you know, brings a fresh money into the economy year round. It may be less during the winter because of environmental factors. But it is a year round business - tourism is not, recreational fishing is not. Recreational fishing will come to a halt pretty soon. Right now, you know, they're catching stripers, but that will stop.

RES: What's the relationship like between the commercial fishing and the tourism? I know there's friction with the recreational...

INT: Oh yeah, that's always been, you know, it's...

RES: Has that changed?

INT: No. Oh we talk to each other, but I mean there are issues. You know, there are extremities on both sides. For the most part, they get along. But then you have extremists that want commercial fishermen to disappear off the face of the earth, and there are commercial fishermen that feel the same way about the recreational. And one of the feelings is, you know, we're trying to make a living; you're doing this for fun. So what is more important? I don't know.

RES: Has rec fishing gotten a lot bigger since you started?

INT: Oh yeah.

RES: What was it like back in the 70's?

INT: That I can't tell you, because I wasn't involved in it. Now I am, because I am a member of the NJ Marine Fisheries council, which has a meeting today actually.

RES: Yeah, XXXX ah...

INT: Yeah he's there just about every meeting. So, you know, I'm more involved in that now than I ever was, cause I never really had that much interest in it. And I'm also a member of the

Atlantic States Marine Fishery Commission that regulates inshore fishing all the way up and down the coast.

RES: Yeah, I was at the meeting just a little while ago at the...

INT: Yeah you were up in Calloway Township yeah. So I'm a member of that, so now I'm, you know, I'm more familiar with the recreational side of it, which I never did before.

RES: When did you get involved in fisheries management?

INT: I've been on the Marine Fisheries Council I think this is 6 years.

RES: The Atlantic States?

INT: No the local – NJ. I just go ton the Atlantic States this summer, but the statewide one was in '99.

RES: Why did you do that? Had you been involved before and just not a member or...

INT: No, no I hadn't been involved.

RES: What made you get involved?

INT: Somebody asked me to do it, thought I'd be interested in doing this. They needed somebody to represent the...I represent the processors, the docks. That's my seat. I was asked, actually it was XXXX asked me if I would be interested. They wanted somebody from, you know, that knew fishing and was familiar with it. I said sure, and that's how I got into the ASMFC. They needed somebody and ...

RES: How do you find it?

INT: It's interesting. The NJ part, I'm comfortable with that because it's fairly simple. The ASMFC gets more involved, complicated, because they're, you know, you have 15 jurisdictions that you're dealing with, most species, and it gets a little more involved. So being the new kid on the block, it's a little hard. Most of the people there...I use to go to these meetings years ago for a little bit. I've been there forever.

RES: You've been going to meetings forever?

INT: No, the people who are there have been there forever. I haven't, no. I did go to some of these meetings years ago just to see what was going on, and the people that are on these boards were there then. So they have the benefit of continuity, which I don't.

RES: And it's pretty complicated with the regulations and...

INT: It's very complicated yeah, yeah. You sit there for 4 days and listen to this and...but I think I'm learning.

RES: When you started scalloping down here, what would you call the biggest challenges of participating in the fishery?

INT: I'm not sure that I understand what you mean.

RES: Well, now I talk to people and they say well the biggest challenge for entering or participating in a fishery are regulations and crap, entry costs to get a license is expensive, and that wasn't the case in the 70's, but...

INT: Yeah the cost, cause the cost was less then, but it was relative if you understand what I'm saying.

RES: I don't.

INT: Yeah, it was relative, I mean, I'm looking back 30 years. So the cost of a boat was less than what it is today but you're making less. So, you know, the cost of living has gone up, cause the price of the boats have gone up, but you're making more.

RES: You didn't have to pay for a permit at that point.

INT: You didn't have to pay for a permit no. All you needed was a boat.

RES: What kind of investment was that like at that point? Was that a difficult thing to do? Was it hard to find loans, or was it...I mean it's always difficult to buy something that valuable but...

INT: Well I bought my, I only had one boat, I bought that in 1979, started building it in 78.

RES: What was she called?

INT: It was called the XXXX, and I sold that up to New Bedford, and they changed the name.

RES: So when you decided to buy the XXXX, like what did that mean to you financially? Was that a difficult thing to manage or...

INT: No, no it was ok. You know, all you need was the money to get started, and you borrow the rest. And that's what we did.

RES: And how difficult was it to learn the grounds down here?

INT: Oh I knew the grounds.

RES: From having been in New Bedford?

INT: Yeah, I had fished these grounds before, so I knew the grounds.

RES: So what kind of gear were you using back then?

INT: Same gear they do now.

RES: It's not much different?

INT: No.

RES: What's changed technologically speaking in the period that you were on the XXXX?

INT: Well, most of the boats now have a little more hp. The rings are bigger; at that time it was 3-inch rings, and now you have to have 4.

RES: By regulation?

INT: Yeah by regulation, yeah.

RES: How did that affect you?

INT: Well, the ring size really didn't...no I wouldn't say it affected....I think it's a good idea to put a bigger ring.

RES: Sit out the smaller one?

INT: Yeah.

[]

RES: [] When you started, what kind of crew system did you have? I know you told me about the 4 how they were spread out, but was it a share system, or how did it work?

INT: Same thing it is now.

RES: Same as it was...some for the boat and ...

INT: Some for the boat, some for the crew...the crew pays operating expenses with all of the consumables fuel, if you've got a shot full of oil, all of that, ice. That's the crew's. The boat pays for the repairs and equipment, although that varies. But it was basically the same.

RES: That was a standard deal for ...

INT: Yeah, and some of the % may have changed. Different owner takes different %'s, but I don't know what everybody else does.

RES: What was it like working on one of those boats? Did you get along; did everybody get along for the most part?

INT: For the most part. There were some frictions especially with 11 men. Sometimes you would have friction. You put 11 people together, you're going to get a little.

RES: Yeah, everybody's working hard trawl (?) (285) and everything. Where were the major grounds for you at that point?

INT: The major grounds, they were offshore here from NJ.

RES: How far?

INT: We would range down as far as the Virginia Capes, and up as high as Montauk. That was our...

RES: And how far offshore are you going?

INT: From land, depending on where you're at, you know you go 30,40,50 miles depending on how...sometimes the slope gets farther away from the coast, you know. As you get farther north, the slope goes out.

RES: What kind of depth range are you in?

INT: We were mainly from 120 feet to 250.

RES: Feet?

INT: Yeah.

RES: Have your grounds changed over time? Do you remember any spatial regulations or needing to move around, or I mean I know you have to find the scallops...

INT: At that time, you could go anywhere you wanted to. Now they have closed areas that they set aside to...that there are a lot of young scallops. The federal government set those aside; you cannot go in there. The idea being to let them go...

RES: How do they do that? Is that year by year, or how do they let you know?

INT: Yeah, they set different areas. I'm not sure exactly because I'm not following it, but they have like 2 or 3 different areas down here that they'll close off. They'll set boundaries, and you're not allowed inside those areas. And they keep track of your movement with boat tracks, so if they do find you inside, there's major complications.

RES: So that's a big problem?

INT: Big problem.

RES: did they have closed areas when you were doing it?

INT: No.

RES: That's new?

INT: That's new.

RES: What about your catch; where was that marketed and distributed at that time in the 70's?

INT: Well we sold it right here in Cape May. At that time I was working on the Cold Spring. After I came back from Alaska, I sold at A&J's. And the last few years I sold my product right here. I wasn't on the boat then. And beyond that, I didn't get into that end of it with the...

RES: What they did with the...

INT: Yeah, we wholesaled it, so it could have gone...

RES: All the way to the local docks and here...

INT: Whatever their market was. I mean, we didn't get involved in that, so I have no idea where it ended up.

RES: What can you say about the your perception of the resource health and abundance over time? I mean I know you described earlier quite well about populations naturally going up and down and ...

INT: There always has been periods of high and low abundance, and you know I've been at this 50 years. Now there seems to be a period of high abundance.

RES: And how long does that...I mean when you talk about a period of high abundance, are you talking about a year, or you talking about 5 years or...

INT: No, this is more than 5 years, this is probably...

RES: Ok like a 10 year kind of thing.

INT: Yeah this has probably been maybe 6 years, and I'm not sure what they're attributed to. It could be the days at sea, because there's less pressure on the grounds now. If you only got a 120 days, that takes a lot of days out of your year. Cause historically, we would fish in excess of 200. I have records when I fished out of New Bedford, we fished for 260 days in one year that we were in the ocean. So the bottom is getting a chance to recover. Being left alone – less pressure on it. So there's probably a combination of factors that attribute to this period of abundance lasting this long.

RES: Natural cycle, possibly some regulations...

INT: Yeah, I think it's a combination of both is my thinking. Is it going to crash again? I don't know. Historically it does, but, you know, it may not. Like, you know, I don't know.

RES: Going back to the regulations, it sounded like there's some positive aspect in your mind to regulations that perhaps it has something to do with resource abundance coming back up. And earlier, you were saying that there's a ...that was largely...part of the reason that it was unattractive for you to be in the fisheries is how overregulated. Can you comment about that?

INT: Well at the time that I got out of it, and I felt that it was a period of low abundance, we were not allowed to spend the amount of time in the ocean that we needed to generate enough revenue to pay our bills.

RES: Basically being forced, you're telling us, you're being forced out of business?

INT: Yeah that's right by regulation. Now, you know, they got 120 or whatever days at sea and they're doing very well with it. And I never thought that I would see the day where you could make a living in 6 months, which is what they're doing. So, I've been wrong before...

RES: Yeah, well who knows; it's hard to predict.

INT: Yeah, I don't have a crystal ball. I, you know, can [] without seeing, and yeah.

RES: What are the major problems you have with regulations now?

INT: The biggest problem I see with regulations right now is these closed areas. They have some on George's Bank, some down here.

RES: I know there's these rotating areas, is that what you're talking about?

INT: They are rotating; the problem is for political reasons, they are allowing overfishing in the areas down here, because it's politically [expedient] to do this.

RES: What do you mean?

INT: ahh...

RES: Cause there's a closed area up off of...

INT: Well there's 3 areas on George's Bank that are used for closed areas, and the problem is, it is in NJ....

RES: (Looking at map) oh this is the southern one. Yeah alright, this one works. Anyways off of George's Bank...

INT: There's three areas that they draw boundaries around, and they, you know, do open from time to time - there was openings this summer. But the biggest problem I see now with all of that is the environmental groups that, I'm not sure how I can phrase this, are putting pressure on the government to shut down these areas because of habitat. Habitat is the big driver here. And George's Bank has more areas that are habitat sensitive, for lack of a better description....

RES: That the environmentalists are worried about for whatever....

INT: Wherever the bottom's [] all the creatures and little things, they crawl around or what have you. And so, they're sue happy up there. I think what the federal government is doing is opening up these areas down here that are less environmentally vulnerable for...

RES: For [] selectively environmentalists eyes.

INT: Good. And what that does is they over-fish these areas. They did it this summer; they did it the last year. They put too much pressure on these areas. That sends the boats down here; they take them off of George's Bank, so out of sight out of mind. Is it good management? No, it's not. They need to rotate all of the areas. I think mainly for political reasons, they're not doing this.

RES: So you think, just to make sure I understand you, you think the idea of the closed areas is...

INT: Oh, it's a wonderful idea, yeah.

RES: that they have these areas. How many are there in []?

INT: I think there's three down here and, or maybe there's two, and there's three on George's Bank.

RES: And they're closed for small scallop?

INT: They close them not necessarily for small scallops, it's for other reasons- for ground fish, nursery areas what have you. Some times of the year fish go in there to spawn; they've got to protect them.

RES: But they're closed to scalloping for...

INT: For that period of time.

RES: For that period, and you think that's a good idea that they exist?

INT: That they exist. I don't think that they're allowing enough effort in these areas, and they're shifting effort down to these areas, which...

RES: You don't think they're allowing enough effort in the George's Bank area?

INT: Right. And they're shifting it down here; there's too much down here, and they can't sustain that kind of fishing. So...

RES: That kind of scalloping?

INT: Right. So out of sight out of mind.

RES: Do you think that these closed areas are created in part to protect fish species and other, you know, critters in the benthic and the bottom environment. Do you think it's helping the scallops that they're closed? The scallop stock?

INT: It is. It gives them a chance to grow up. You know I don't have any problem with them closing it for certain periods of time, you know, if there are small scallops in there – give them a chance to grow. Economically, it's a great idea. The larger scallops bring more money. Same effort. A scallop that's 4 years old in eight years will be four times as big, so yeah it's a wonderful idea. It's the way they're doing it that I think is wrong. And I just think that's...

RES: It's a question of equity really or...

INT: It's politically motivated, the whole process, and I think that's where it goes wrong. And it's mainly from pressure from the environmental communities. You have your ocean's and I mean there's probably 5 or 6 groups in there that have lawyers on staff, and willing to sue, and have lots of money, contributions, PEW...

RES: Yeah they got some money.

INT: Yeah, so it's enough of the money. So that's the biggest stumbling block to effective fisheries management, what I see of it. Not everybody would agree with me, you know, but that's my limited view.

RES: And the days at sea that you were talking about earlier right now doesn't appear to be a problem, because people are able to make a good living off of [], but at times of hard times, that wasn't enough.

INT: No, and if it goes back to that, there's going to be severe repercussions.

RES: Back to a low abundance?

INT: Yeah.

RES: What would you change other than those things? I mean do you think fishermen should be more involved or less involved, or do you think the way that the councils are set up is good, or any of that kind of question?

INT: The councils are fine. I think the councils should be left alone to manage it.

RES: Left alone by politicians or pressure groups or whatever?

INT: Yeah.

RES: But you think they're listening to...

INT: Yeah, yeah any of that.

RES: Ok, well those are the main questions on the questionnaire. I'll let you get back to your day.

INT: Yeah I want to have lunch pretty soon, because I got that meeting.

RES: You got a ¼ pounder on the way.

INT: Yeah, then I go home and I got to get back up to where you saw me the other day.

RES: Galloway?

INT: Galloway Township. You're just a mile short of where we were. There's a...

RES: Oh really, that's where you're meeting today at?

INT: Yeah, that library complex near the police station there and that's where I got to go today.

RES: Two questions we usually ask at the end are whether or not there's anything I missed that I should really know about the history here, or the regulations that I just didn't ask about, or you know something that if I'm writing a report on cumulative effects, what do I need to take into account that I didn't ask you about?

INT: I can't think of anything off hand really.

RES: We covered the major ways it's regulated, and some of your perceptions about of what the pluses and minuses are...

INT: No.

RES: Ok, and the other question is if you can recommend any other people to talk to.

INT: Well who have you talked to here in Cape May? You said you had a list...

RES: Well we do both commercial and rec guys, but in Cape May I've talked to XXXX

INT: XXXX is good.

RES: XXXX for the gill net, for the angle, XXXX talked to him yes...I'm meeting with mike XXXX this afternoon, XXXX this afternoon. Tomorrow, I'm going to meet with XXXX

INT: He's my age, so he's been around for a while now.

RES: Yeah, that's great. I love these interviews where people can go back farther because, you know. So that's the list of commercial guys.

INT: Have you talked to any of the docks themselves?

RES: Wel, we have the names to the XXXX over....

INT: Yeah he's out of town, so is XXXX They're both out of town.

RES: Yeah they're actually probably going to be the next round. We'll do the commercial fishermen and sort of get their perspective and then talk to the, you know, the []

INT: You have XXXX from Cold Spring who has been on both ends. I mean he fished, and then he went into the [] managing business, and now he's the whole thing.

RES: I'm sorry what's his name?

INT: His name is XXXX

RES: XXXX

INT: Yeah, and he owns the lobster house and everything you see – everything around there is his, but he started his career as a fishermen. And I think he owns 3 boats now. The number over there is XXXX

RES: So there's no fleet separation policy here right? That's a new...Canada there's a law you couldn't be a processor and a boat owner.

INT: Well here right now, this is another trend, the processor is owning the boats. For one, he gets a guaranteed profit. You've got to come to his dock. And with the cost of acquiring a boat, he's probably the only one that's got the money to do it and the financial ability to but these boats.

RES: So there's fewer independent owner operators now than there were?

INT: Yeah, yeah. I'm gone. And most of these boats that we have here came from independent operators that have been bought up by a bigger operation, and the same thing with Lund's. They're buying boats, Cold Spring has 3 or 4, so and if you go to New Bedford you find the same thing. I have a friend in N. Bedford that owns 21 boats.

RES: Wow, what do you think about that?

INT: I'm not too crazy about the idea, but that's the way it is. That's the way it went with the farmers, you know, everything became corporate, and that's what you have now.

RES: I forget who said it, but somebody said down here that fishing is feeling more like a business now than it use to.

INT: Yeah. At one time it use to be individuals, you know, you work your butt off, you got enough money and a little bit of luck, you bought a boat. And that's what everybody did. The docks didn't own any boats. Little by little the docks started getting into the boats, so they had the income from the boats, they had the income from selling the product, so they had more of an opportunity to grow. And how that evolved, they got bigger and they individual boat owners little by little are disappearing as they get older and want to sell out or for whatever reason. It's changed.

RES: Did that start to happen more when you were here in Cape May or had that already begun when you were still up in Mass?

INT: That's probably something that really started 30 years ago here. Now of course down on the Gulf in the shrimp industry and then, you know, it goes much farther back than that. But for this part of the coast Cape May or New England, less so, but now I think the rate is increasing because we keep adding boats here. They've got to come from somebody. So that's something that's evolved over the years, but 30 years ago...

RES: Docks didn't own that many here?

INT: No, this dock only had one boat; Cold Spring had one.

RES: How many does this place have now?

INT:" 16/17. I lost count; they keep adding. I lost count, but its probably somewhere, you know, 16/17.

RES: Yeah, well that's a pretty big change.

INT: But I mean it's to the point now that the individual really can't afford to buy a boat.

RES: What would it cost for say an 88 foot vessel to get into if you were just starting off?

INT: A scalloper with a permit?

RES: A scalloper with a permit – or just without the permit?

INT: Well without the permit it doesn't have any value really; you've got to have a permit. The value is the permit.

RES: Well with the permit. What would it be with the permit?

INT: I don't know \$1.5 million.

RES: And that would get you a boat?

INT: Yeah and a permit. I'm thinking that's what it would cost.

RES: Yeah I mean both.

INT: I mean the permit alone is probably close to 1 million \$.

RES: So then another .5 another 500,000\$?

INT: Yeah. The boat by itself is not that expensive, but the boat by itself there's...it's not going to earn anything. The permit is what earns the money.

RES: And that would be for a full time permit?

INT: Yeah.

RES: When did they start that business – the full-time part-time occasional? Was that in existence when you ...

INT: No. Let me see, I think I was still fishing then. I'm thinking that, when did I stop, late 80's. It's hard for me to put a time line on this because just don't remember. I going to say late 80's that this started, and then...

RES: So you must have gotten a full-time one?

INT: Yeah. Well I could prove that...at that time you had to prove...

RES: It's all based on history?

INT: History yeah, and depending on your history there was three different types of permit: there was the full time; there was a part time, which got lesser time [] than the full-time; and then there was an occasional, which probably got a third of what the part-time got. So those were the 3 permits that were out there. That's how it was broken down.

RES: Did you think that was fair that system?

INT: I don't know. It was the best they had. And then, you know, if you didn't get the full-time, there was an appeal process. A lot of people appealed and they did get their full time. They didn't have to pay for [] the federal government just didn't have that. I had all of mine, so there was no problem for me to get it. But there were some owners here that, you know, really had to jump through some hoops to get their full time permits.

RES: Ok, I should let you go. What time is it?

INT: It's about 8 minutes to 12 so...they'll call me when, you know.

RES: So the primary regulations, let me make sure I got this straight, you've got days at sea...is there still a count - is this count on or?

INT: No.

RES: Days at sea, there's essentially limited entry. You need to have a permit?

INT: Oh very, very; you've got to have the permit. For...[] there's also a general category permit out there with all these little boats. If you look across...

RES: The day scallopers?

INT: The day scallopers, which has really gone out of sight and needs to be controlled, because they are allowing unlimited access into a limited fishery – a limited access fishery which is what scalloping...

RES: [] for you guys?

INT: Yeah, ad there's no limit on the time they can spend at sea. The only limit they have is that they can only bring in 400 pounds a day, which they could pursue 7 days a week if they wanted. They got the weather. But this started, the history of this, was the boats in Maine. They have boats in Maine, they lobster, they, you know, they do different things during different times of the year depending on what's there. So the argument was, lets give these guys 400 pounds, so they can go south and when they can't go lobstering or whatever else they were doing the rest of the year. And at that time they were probably getting 2\$ a pound or whatever it was, I don't remember, but a lot cheaper than they are now. So it wasn't lucrative, but it was an outlet; it was fill-ins. So you add them all together, and at the end of the year you had an income. Nobody could foresee what was coming down the road. At that time, prices/abundance, so the price and abundance came together, and people are investing in this business. It was, you know, it was like a bycatch fishery. You know now, it is a targeted fishery, and I have no idea how many boats are doing it. It's a lot. So, there needs...I'm not saying these people shouldn't be allowed to make a living; there needs to be some control, and it's out of control. So what they're going to do, I have no idea.

RES: Is it creating conflict?

INT: Yeah. Sure it is.

RES: Between the day scallopers and the fulltime or part time guys?

INT: Yeah. It's a problem that needs to be addressed, but I don't know what they're going to do. I have no idea. I'm not really involved in it. It's kind of ...I follow it a little bit, but I'm out of it so you lose interest.

RES: Yeah. Well you're down on the docks every day and then...

INT: Yeah well this is how I get, you know...I read the paper and talk to people and all of that, so, you know, you get some feel for it. And talking to the captains, they're directly involved, but you know I don't have any financial interest in it, so I don't spent a lot of time worrying about it.

RES: What so you see for the future down here for scallop fishing? What do you think it's going to be like in 10 years?

INT: That all depends on the abundance. If for whatever reasons it gets down to a real real abundance like it was probably back in the early 90's, I see problems.

RES: Too many fishermen not enough fish?

INT: Well I mean the high priced boats, you know. A 1\$mil boat or a 1.5\$mil boat, I mean you've got to generate a lot of revenue before you see your first dollar. And as the revenue goes down, the first thing you cut back on is maintenance. That's the only thing you control. You've got to buy insurance, you've got to pay your crew, you've got to have fuel, all of this has got to be paid for. The only option you have is maintenance, so that's the first thing that's going to crash.

RES: Which is a problem for safety and for the equity in the boat?

INT: Right, everything.

RES: But if abundance stays high than no problems?

INT: No, no.

RES: I'm going to turn you off and unwire you....