

Wilson Acosta

“I was 14 years old when I was a deck hand. I was a little child, a little boy. My dad was a fisherman, all my brothers – still fishing. Yeah, I got two of them now over 70 years old – still fishing.

“I’m the boss. See, that’s the difference. You know, I’m my own boss, and I never work under people; people work under me. I wanted to get a steady job, and I chose shrimping. And I said, “Well if I can fish for somebody else, I can just as well build my boat and fish for myself.” And I been doing that for 40 years for myself. I had a welding job but it didn’t last but a week. I been shrimping all my life.

“It wasn’t enough for me, and right now the shrimp is getting like that. We’re just barely holding on. The fuel is so high right now, and it’s taking so much of our profit, you know, the fuel. You got three to four thousand dollars’ worth of expenses to go out and you make five thousand or three thousand – you’re not making too much, you see. And for profit, I mean you’re not making profit now. You’re just breaking out even.

“People don’t want to pay for shrimp; they want you give it to them just like sugar cane. They want you to cut the sugar cane and give them all the sugar for free. So, we’re in a bind just like the rest of the people. It hurts, you know, but we’re surviving. You just got to penny pinch.

“We’re getting ready to get out of it. It’s just too so much hassle with the shrimping industry, you know. I just had enough of it. I’ll probably fish for another couple of years and then retire.”