

Interview with: Ed Barrett
Occupation: Fisherman
Port Community: Plymouth, Massachusetts
Interviewer: Samantha Sperry
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Oral Histories Project – NOAA Social Sciences
Logger/Transcriber: Samantha Sperry
INDEX [minutes: seconds]
Ed Barrett's Boat Brewer, Maine

Interview

SS: For the record, my name is Samantha Sperry. It is February 17th. We are on Ed's boat, *Sirius* at Brewer, Marine and can you please state that you read, agreed to and signed the release forms?

EB: I did.

SS: And to begin, can you please start out by stating your residential address, your homeport, vessel name, if you are in the sector or the common pool and how old you are?

EB: I am Edward Barrett. I live at 67 Marginal Street, Green Harbor, Mass. I own the fishing vessel *Sirius*, and the fishing vessel *Phoenix*, and I...what were the other questions?

SS: Are, you?

EB: Sector 10, actually I am the President of sector 10, and I am 56 years old.

SS: Can you just tell me a little bit about yourself, your family, where your from, how long you have been here, a little bit about your educational background?

EB: Lets see, I grew up in Marshfield, I have been there 55 years. I was born in Boston, but we moved to Marshfield in 1956 I believe, just grew up in a coastal community, went to the University of Pennsylvania, graduated there in 1977 and went to the University of Rhode Island for a half a semester.

SS: So can you tell me a little bit about how you got into it and about your family, if you have kids, I know your brother fished with you for a while.

EB: Yeah, let's see, I started fishing when I was still in high school. We used to have a small amount of lobster pots and we used to see more back then, and then going through college we used to get a little more serious back then, and then [after] graduation from college, I basically started fishing full-time. I bought my first fishing boat in 1979, but it took me a while to get the whole thing going so I didn't start working full-time at it until 1982. Since then I have done a lot

of different types of fishing. I have been lobstering, I have been longlining, tub trawling, sea clamming, tuna fishing, dragging, and primarily that's what I have been going for the past 15 years or so, just primarily being a mobile gear fisherman.

[3:26]

SS: Inshore?

EB: Inshore.

SS: Would you say that you or your family members roles have changed in the fisheries since sectors began?

EB: Oh yeah, since sectors, you know under Days at Sea we had... a lot of people have disappeared from the waterfront and it used to be a very busy fishing port. But over the years, the amount of vessels started to decline but we settled into at least a half a dozen boats that toward the end of Days at Sea were still viable. And people were doing alright they were managing to survive even through all of the restrictions, but honestly once sectors have come in, I honestly don't know even if there will be a vessel here two years from now that will be fishing under a federal permit. I have been able to hang in there a little bit, I have two permits, but I still don't have a lot of allocation. But at the expense of all this and looking at the future as far as allocations, as far as stock and what we are given for ACE (Annual Catch Entitlement), I really can't say for sure that I will even be doing this two years from now.

SS: So what do you think happens to the people that wind up leaving the fishery?

EB: I mean, we still have a few state fisheries that we still work at, state managed fisheries, but I mean people just leave. They have to find something else to do and they might hold on to a permit or two, but the problem around here is there is very heavy pressure for waterfront real estate. The competition for it gets very intense and once you lose it you're never going to get it back, and I think that we are on the verge of losing it here in Plymouth. We have a pier that is condemned the other half of the pier is very, very densely used; there's whale watch boats, there's party charter boats, there's restaurants. It gets very busy and I don't really know, I think it's a matter of losing the working waterfront in one of the United States oldest ports.

[6:17]

SS: How many crewmembers are on the boat, and where does the crew come from?

EB: I usually fish with one other person, at times we have all gone by ourselves. Again, with trip limits the only way to make any money is to eliminate the crew person, and on a mobile gear boat, like we have here, I think you are starting to cut into the safety aspect of fishing. And at that point, when you are just the single person on a dragger, but under Days at Sea we were all fishing together, you know if there was a day there would be three or four of us fishing with

each other in the same area so we were at least able to keep an eye on each other to make sure everyone got back, left in time, checked on them on occasion make sure everyone was still reasonably safe. But that certainly has changed under sectors. Under sectors there are times that I am the only person out there, and, actually, most of the time I am the only boat within miles and it really, really has made it a lot less safe.

SS: Can you tell me a little bit about your neighborhood, would you describe it as a fishing community and why did you decide to live here, and how do you think fishing is viewed by the community?

EB: We live in a town, Green Harbor, was started as a fishing settlement in 1623 by a man by the name of William Green. My community has extensive roots in the fishing industry as any community in the United States and I think. I do fish out of Plymouth, but the community that I live in is Marshfield, and Marshfield has its own fishing community that fishes out of Green Harbor, which is a port that I fished out of for a long time myself. The community is very involved in supporting its fishing industry again; there are heavy real estate pressures in this area of the state. The communities tend to be fairly wealthy communities. There is always competition for other uses. The fishing industry isn't always seen as a compatible use, but over all I think that people value the ability to have a seafood source that's fresh and local and I think that we are a valued part of that community, the fishing industry that is. Again, I think that it's a crime that we are in jeopardy of losing all of that, especially in sector 10. The way they figure allocations, we have got almost everyone in this area of the state [that] had their allocations impacted by the regulations that went before them and I am very pessimistic about the ability for our sector to continue and the fishing industry in this part of the state to continue.

[10:15]

SS: So do you think that the future of fisheries is bright or less bright as a result of sectors?

EB: Definitely less bright. There is no doubt in my mind that sectors are a disaster for our communities down here. Amendment 16 was meant to be redone and they knew that there were flaws in it and that's what Amendment 17 was supposed to correct. Amendment 16 came out because they had already had an interim role for a year and they had already delayed it for a year. They were under pressure to get this thing out the door as a catch share program. There weren't adequate safeguards in it and a year into it the people who won in this derby do not want to change it, but unfortunately there's a lot of us who have lost and a lot of communities that have lost and sectors are quite frankly to blame for it. Under Days at Sea... Days at Sea weren't perfect but we were all still surviving. There was a core group of people that were still making money and were still able to make their living as fishermen, and under Days at Sea we have really seen that turn around to the negative.

SS: Do you hang out with or socialize with other fishermen and their families?

EB: Yup, absolutely, probably the only people that I hang out with. You know we are a very coarse community, but I have to say that even under sectors, with the infrequency of people going fishing, people that I saw daily for hours a day, I don't see for weeks now. It's really splintered the community and that's mainly because of the infrequency of the time that I spend fishing now. Under Days at Sea we had a daily trip limit and basically fished every day that it was open that the weather allowed. I actually haven't fished, I have fished a couple of half small days in two months and mainly on those days I was either running up along a choke species or the discards were too high and I had to come in and those weren't really trips those were basically brokers. The fishing community is basically, it's a close group but it has also been negatively affected by sectors.

[13:29]

SS: These guys, the fishermen that you usually hang out with, are they usually ground fishermen?

EB: No, I think that in these towns we have a lot of lobster fishermen. There's a lot of charter boat activity. The community that has survived in the last 15 or 20 years in this area of town where there are small boat, day boat, inshore fishermen, the people who have not, they didn't necessarily do one thing, so they weren't necessarily a just a groundfish person and they weren't necessarily just a groundfish person. So I think there's a lot of cross pollination, if you will, of people and how they hang out and how they interact and how they interact politically, especially in the fish politics end of things.

SS: Have you or your family changed any long-term life plans over the past two years as a result of sectors?

EB: Yup, definitely. I have been in this business 34 years and once again I am just about to put my permit up for sale and I am still trying to figure out the consequences of that. I just can't, right now. I think it has gotten too expensive to think about investing long-term in this. I am 56 years old, why am I going to take a half million dollar mortgage out at this point in my life with the uncertainty that the science and the allocations and the ACE. Plus, there's not a bank that would lend you any money on any of this, especially in this economic climate. I always thought that after the gains that we had seen in groundfish populations from the middle of the 90's, from '95 to 2009, we had seen big jumps in fish populations. In fact, that's why I bought a second vessel and now I'm totally discouraged about any future in this and really wondering when I am going to get out of it.

[16:18]

SS: Do you think that new regulations and sectors have affected the way that you view the resource, the fishery?

EB: Yeah, absolutely, you know because catch shares weren't a well thought out management plan and because they didn't put any input controls on anything. Now you have an offshore fleet that's fishing where the inshore fleet used to [fish] primarily because it's more profitable for them to do so. There's nothing to stop the amount of pressure that a big boat fishing around the clock can put on the grounds verses what we're doing under small trip limits. There's a huge difference there and our catch per unit of effort has dropped significantly. And at the end of 2009 we were making one 20 minute tow and making our cod limit and now you could tow all day and not have it. There's nothing good that I can say about catch shares and the sector management.

SS: In your opinion, what years were the best for the fishing industry?

EB: Well, I think you can go back to the '80s and think about the '80s but I think '99. Once they put in Days at Sea and made permits [with] limited access, and the dogfish population, I think once the dogfish population have been reduced in the mid-90s we saw tremendous gains in fish populations and the economy was good, fish prices were good so I would say the late '99, 2000, 2001.

I think that all changed with the CLF (Conservation Law Foundation) lawsuit. I think the lawsuit changed the positive direction that fisheries was going toward. The lawsuit that Sonia Fordham won over the dogfish issue was a complete mistake. They rebuilt a population, at that point they were forced to rebuild a population that had been basically feeding upon the stocks that we were trying to rebuild and then the CLF lawsuit back in 2001, both of which did huge damage to fishermen and fishing communities.

[19:40]

SS: How has the industry changed since sectors started two years ago?

EB: People are going out of business. We have lost a lot of people. People are just giving up psychologically. I think I have never seen people so discouraged or distressed about their occupations. It's just we are losing infrastructure, we are losing trucking, people who sold fuel to our boats are way off in their numbers, the whole thing is caving in for us. And I think there are winners of this, but I think winners are going to find out some day that they are losers too. Because, I think, once you start to commodify this resource, this public resource, the sky is the limit for what someone might pay for this. And I don't think that anyone in the fishing industry, including the people like Jimmy Orland and Carlos Rafael, who think they are winners now, I don't think they have a chance of competing against the really big money on this planet which will certainly come in because this is one of the world's best fishing grounds, its closest to one of the best markets.

So I think we haven't even begun to see the consolidation, and I think this thing was designed anyway just to force the small boat fleet out of business. And I think it's going to force a lot of the big fleet boats out of business. And I think that it's just where it seems Jane Lubchenco

wants it to go, which is owned by a bunch of huge corporations like Wal-Mart, or Tyson or AMD or any of the big food conglomerates in the world could buy this. I mean its chump change for them. If they could buy this right now and why wouldn't they? If there's not restrictions on it, why wouldn't they, why wouldn't you? It's a product that people want and there's nothing in the regulations that will keep them from pushing us aside.

SS: Would you say that your quality of life is better or worse since sector management began?

EB: My quality of life is much worse.

SS: What advice would you give someone starting out today?

[22: 27]

EB: I see no... unless they are coming from a family with a trust fund, forget about it. I say this all the time to people, that when I started it cost less than \$100,000 to own my life and what I mean by that is I had a pickup truck, I had a boat, I had a house, and all of the permits I needed and made it work. That number right now in my community is probably close to a million dollars. What kid right now, what young person is going to invest a million dollars with the uncertainties that exist in fisheries management? He would be crazy. First of all, there would be no way you could ever get that kind of money, certainly not from banks, which is something I was always able to take advantage of, I was able to get loans, I was able to have a relationship with local bankers.

The way things are now, mostly the big multi-national banks, they are not lending to this community and the small banks have become medium sized banks and they are not going to lend to this community, so unless you have that kind of cash, and if you did have that kind of cash why would you waste it in this business? As far as there being any young people, I don't see any young people, my brother who is 46 is one of the youngest people, Jimmy Keding who is a little younger than him, I believe that he is 42, but other than that there's hardly anyone in this business, so again what is at risk is 400 year old fishing communities and their ability to exist in the future.

SS: So do you fish on a day boat, or do you go out, multiday?

EB: I fish on a day boat. Back before there were trip limits, there were times that we would fish a night and a day, but mainly with the trip limits it's just under Days at Sea was like that even still under sectors. I had four days in November where I averaged about over 3,000 lbs of codfish a day and I was still only making one 20 minute tow, so that's basically what I have been [doing], if I were to go, there's high CPUs (Catch Per Unit) on that cod stock but once those fish go by and its really hard to scrape anything else out.

[25:34]

SS: Can you tell me a little bit about your sector, how many members there are, your position how many boats, the total sector allocation and your allocation?

EB: There's about 28 boats in our sector, I think our ACE originally is about a million pounds. I think our cod, government cod ACE is about 580,000 pounds, which compared to other sectors is the lowest active per vessel pound amount of ACE for Gulf of Maine Cod, which 92% of my revenue last year was from Gulf of Maine Cod. A lot of our members are finding they don't want to fish under these rules. They are finding they can't make money under these rules. We originally started off with about 28 active vessels, and that number is going down. I think that there were only 10 active vessels that made more than 5 trips last year out of sector 10, I'll have to check, but I think that's close to the number, so people are making less trips, people are giving up - they are leasing out their quota. We have been able to harvest most of the quota that we have in it, that hasn't really been our problem but it still, overall, it's been a very negative experience for members of sector 10. I believe the state of MA (Massachusetts) did a study saying that over half our boats are on the verge of economic disaster, so once again I have nothing really good to say about catch shares.

SS: Can you tell me a little bit about your involvement in the sector, when why and how did you join, and how was the process? Was it pretty straightforward?

[28:02]

EB: I was on the board of directors for the North East Seafood Coalition. I think that we were forced into embracing sectors, in fact, I can remember the very day that I spoke to Jackie O'Dell about it. And it was basically because the Associated Fisheries of Maine were going and people were worried about them striking a private deal for their own quota. I think that the fact that we even let the Cape Cod Hook Association go down the sector road was a huge mistake. I don't see why one group gets to get managed one way and then are able to design their own baseline basically. There was no good choice... there was... NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service) had pretended to entertain different ideas on how to manage differently from Days at Sea, but in the end they clearly wanted to go to a catch share system and we were forced into it.

The big selling point was that we were going to get a lot more cod and that cod was recovering and that our allocation and ability to catch would be 3 times as much. A year and a half into it we are looking at a reduction that will probably not even accommodate a discard fishery for cod. I personally feel that the whole thing has been a lie from the very get go. I think it's a clumsy system. It certainly wasn't designed by someone who has run for-profit businesses, unless they have run huge corporations. There is no way that our fleet, or any inshore fleet with the allocation that it has is ever going to be able to afford monitoring on their own. I don't see how they are going to be able to afford sector managers on their own. You have added all of these costs onto an industry that was barely making money, what do you think would happen? It doesn't take a graduate of the Wharton's School of Business to figure out that those

businesses are going to collapse and that's exactly what's happening and I personally believe that that was the design right from the start from National Marine Fisheries Services.

SS: Do you think other fishermen feel the same way about it?

EB: I know the fishermen in my sector feel that way. Like I said, there are winners, there certainly are winners. Cape Cod Hook Association, the fixed gear sector, ended up with 2.6 million pounds of cod allocation, western George's cod allocation, basically they are a group of the same size boats as us, same sort of demographic as us yet they were able to custom design their own baseline, and they clearly became the winners. And during the Amendment process we lost another 10% to the party charter fleet. Traditionally, they were at 26 percent, that's what NMFS thought they were catching. As part of the political tradeoff deal that happened with Amendment 16, they ended up with 38 percent and that was so the party charter people would vote for the chairman's at the time plan to have the Hook Association have their own private baseline, which I don't see why there isn't an Inspector's General criminal investigation over that - that was complete thievery. Again, the whole thing is a disaster.

[32:13]

SS: So do you think that other sectors are more successful or are operating better or worse than your sector?

EB: It's all about your allocation; clearly if you have allocation you probably like this. Clearly people like [Orlin?] and Carlos Rafael are clearly successful with this but when you basically cheat people out of a fair allocation and then expect them to become winners or be successful, it's near impossible. I think our manager is better than most, mainly because we have the least to manage so we really have to be on top of everything that we have in order to have any kind of success at all. Again, the whole thing revolves around ACE, if you have it, then you are a happy camper if you don't, then you're SOL.

SS: Do you think that there has been a concentration of quota ownership by state, region, and different communities?

EB: I don't think that we have seen it completely yet; we are only a year and a half into it. I think that people do have consolidated permits under Days at Sea, but I think that is coming. I think that that is something that will happen, again, if you have got the currency then you can play the monopoly game, but if you don't then you are going to be at a disadvantage, and again it's a game of winners and losers. This is a public resource, it shouldn't become privatized as it has. I think Days at Sea, although they were limited access, I don't think that they privatized the resource; you still had to go out and catch them. A Day at Sea didn't guarantee you that you owned a pound of fish and if you did use that Day at Sea, then you didn't get that pound of fish, so the fish went to those that utilized the Day at Sea to go fishing, and not a group that utilized a pound of fish as an investment tool.

And I think that's what you are going to see, and I think that there are people that are willing to make that investment but they are looking to see.... Again, it's a year and a half into this and in another year or so when we are into the Gulf of Maine cod cuts, and people really are in financial trouble, I think people that will be willing to invest in this are waiting because they know that the price for this stuff, that people will be having financial problems and they will be more willing to sell and take less money. The whole thing is a scam.

SS: Do you think that there are certain communities, geographic regions that have been included or excluded under sectors?

[36:20]

EB: I think that, well, I don't think that it's a big boat or small boat issue, I think that there are plenty of big boats that did not get enough allocation and I don't even know how that happened. I have seen permits come up for big boats that have only had 30, 40, 50 thousand pounds of allocation and that [is] what, one trip? How did a vessel that was making trips year round wind up with that small of an allocation? I don't think the problem of allocation and ACE is strictly a small boat issue, but again in our area, we had the rolling closures that basically in 10 years came up to 37 months of rolling closures out of 120 months, 37 months we were closed. So our 10 year allocation period was only 7 years of allocation period.

Being a small boat, we couldn't transit [to] another area to go and fish so I think that's what impacted us the hardest. I think as you look forward on this, you are going to see both big boats and small boats go out of business. It will be about boats not able to have enough allocation to fish where they should be fishing and I don't think it's going to be easy for anybody. There are people that got more or are more well funded or who have money behind them. Let's face it, there are people that could be independent operators right now but have money from a corporation or have money from a food broker whatever behind them. Again it's a public resource that is now up for sale and that never should have happened.

SS: What do you think that [the] pros and cons are of being in the sectors or of being in the common pool?

EB: The common pool basically hasn't worked. The common pool was designed to fail. Especially in our area, where we are so Gulf of Maine codfish-dependent and the low limits on yellowtails, the people that tried to be in the common pool quickly found the cod limit slashed to 100 pounds and with 2:1 differential Days at Sea counting. It made no economic sense at all to go fishing. Again, the whole thing was designed so that everyone would be in this catch share program in the long run. The common pool was never given any... everyone clearly saw the common pool as not a viable option. NMFS designed it to be a disaster, and it is.

[40:22]

SS: So what motivates you to stay in the sector?

EB: The only thing that [motivates], for me; I wouldn't have had enough days, [with] the common pool. Again where Gulf of Maine cod are orientated, I got enough allocation for maybe a break-even point, but basically, I make out better in the sectors, but I'm not happy about being in the sectors. And I'll just say one more thing too, the sectors are designed so that along the line it's going to be the consumer that pays for all of this. And I don't even think that the consumer realizes this; that when fresh codfish goes for \$13.00 a pound in local stores, when in some places there's not even availability of local fish, it's all because of how we have managed this in sectors. We have made it prohibitively expensive for small boats fleets to do business and the results are happening now.

SS: So does your sector ever help you out with anything?

EB: I mean the sector does what it can, but we have a sector manager, but why do we need a sector manager? Why do we need all of this? We didn't need him before; we didn't need an intermediary before. Why do we need it now? We need it now because of catch shares and tracking quota, and monitoring, and all of the work that goes into a catch share program, but we didn't need it before. Why do I need to be paying the Coalition 4 cents? Why do I need to be paying for a sector manager?

I didn't need a sector manager before, that was NMFS' job, it was their job to manage fish. My job was to catch fish, now I am forced into being a manger, a monitor, and a fishermen, and it all comes out of my pocket and its just part of the bloated bureaucracy that National Marine Fisheries has become. I truly believe this; they never have designed this thing with profitability of small businesses in mind. They don't run their agency like that; they run their agency as a government agency that had an endless amount of money and can constantly put more restrictions on us that cost us money. And there's only one thing that happens, when you increase costs, and you decrease profits, there's only one thing that happens: people go out of business.

[43:52]

SS: Can you tell me what your typical day looks like, what time you start and end your day?

EB: Again, the typical days at sea, depending on where I am going to go target the one allocation that I have. If I have to go to Stellwagen to access that [allocation], it's a 3 hour steam, so I'll probably leave at 3:00am. My CPU (Catch Per Unit) has been very high on that, and so it doesn't take me much fishing time to get as much as I can handle in a day and then it's pretty much the steam in and unloading. Generally, I am done, boats tied back up by the afternoon. There have been days this year that there has been scarcity of codfish on Stellwagen in the spring, so some of those days were a little longer than others.

I haven't even bothered to go and try and catch my flounders, flatfish. Gulf of Maine winter flounder was a choke stock to begin with, so $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year we are dealing with a choke stock

that would allow us to access the yellowtails and then once those things migrated away from our local fishing grounds, we got more allocation for winter flounder, but it was too late to have it make any good. It's two years into this and I still haven't really figured out how to access everything I have [been allocated] and I don't think that it's really possible because at some point everything becomes a choke stock. Especially when you have low allocations, so everything becomes a choke stock, so no matter how much you modify your gear, or change fishing locations, you are always up against a wall with something when you have a small amount of ACE.

SS: Have you changed how you fish since sectors?

EB: Yeah, again fish aren't inventory, they aren't like things that sit on a shelf in Wal-mart, you can't just go and pick them out like you can at the supermarket - I'll take a loaf of bread here and quart of milk there - things mix. You have 17 stocks you are worrying about discard rates that are counted against your allocation. The ocean and fishing are places that change constantly and to hold them to some hard and fast rules like what happens under catch shares is not to have an understanding of the ocean at all and I think that's what you have.

What you have basically done is taken an industry and let the environmental NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations) drive it into some sort of hard-line, hard-tack, hard-rebuilding schedule type of business that doesn't exist in any other business in the United States. There are no other businesses that are held to that kind of control and certainly fishing is not one of those businesses. There's no room for error, it's not even error, there's no room for flexibility and that flexibility is what makes catch shares in the Northeast.

You're dealing with 17 different species in the Northeast. You aren't just dealing with one, you're not just targeting pollock, you're not just targeting something, you're dealing with 17 different species. There's a big mix trying to have rebuilding schedules and pretending that there is actual science out there that can actually count how much fish [are present]. This is high-resolution fisheries management that doesn't have high-resolution science behind it and that's another problem.

[48:51]

SS: Do you have health insurance, boat insurance and how has this changed for you and your family since sectors began?

EB: I have health insurance through my wife that I am separated from. I have no boat insurance. We gave up having that a long time ago. That was one of the expenses we gave up in order to survive. If I had to pay for either one of those, certainly it would be very difficult.

SS: Do you think that being in a sector has influenced your friendships or interactions with other fishermen, whether it be positive or negative?

EB: Yeah, I think that this has divided the whole industry. I think that sections in the past that might have been able to work together now see each other as adversaries. And I think that especially since there is nothing that stops a big boat from coming in and leasing a stock that previously they didn't fish on because geographically it wasn't profitable for them to do that. But now they can lease enough that they can just come in so everyone sees each other as an adversary now, and I think that it has really caused people within the industry.... I think that there is a big deterioration of relationships between people within the industry, and it has really caused a trench warfare mentality in the industry. I think that's really evident right now.

SS: How often do you interact with other sector members? Do you work together in projects or in any other ways?

EB: Again, I hardly ever even see anybody. There's not much research money out there and if there is I think that most research money is a waste of time. Again, I think what sectors have done is really spilt the communities and I don't think that people interact that much with each other any more.

SS: Would you consider other sector members as friends and were they friends before sectors?

EB: In our sector, I think we have a group of people that are all going through similar... almost every one of us in our sector are going through similar difficulties and challenges. In our sector, we still have good relationships with each other, and I think that we have been able to have reasonable relationships with each other but I know that my relationships and other people's relationships with people in other sectors have deteriorated under sectors.

SS: Would you say that your relationships and friendships have been enhanced or detracted from since you joined sectors?

EB: Overall, I would say that it has detracted. I had interacted with a lot of people all over New England previously and I don't see that, and by my own experience I think that the challenges, when you give someone something and don't give someone else something, that causes hardship. It's not the basis for a healthy relationship and I think that people's relationships within industry have deteriorated overall.

SS: Do you think that sectors have changed the dynamics in port? Do you think that sector members and common pool fishermen view each other differently?

EB: We don't really have... my brother was the one common pool fisherman that I knew, and other than that I didn't know any one else that was in the common pool. Again, our part of the state has pretty much consolidated and those of us who are there under Days at Sea are pretty much who makes up our sector so, outside of the people who have already dropped out, we don't have that kind of conflict.

[54:55]

SS: Based on your experiences in sectors, would you recommend other fishermen to join a sector?

EB: Sectors are a disaster, but they are the only way you can [operate]. I don't see how you can operate outside of a sector. I think that we are all forced to be in a sector. The idea that there is a choice out there is foolish, it's a complete mirage, there's no choice. If you are going to make any kind of money in this business there's only one place you can be and that's in a sector and that's all there is to it.

SS: Are you involved in the fishing community at all? Do you attend fundraisers or meetings at all?

EB: Well I am the president of the Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership, president of Sector 10, president of South Shore Fishing Preservation Fund Permit Bank, so I was the Mobile Gear Advisor to the Stellwagon Bank National Marine Sanctuary for about 10 years, so I have been very involved.

SS: How about in a wider community like school boards, town council?

EB: No, [I] don't have any time for that. This pretty much sucks the time out of you as it is, so I really don't have much time for anything else.

SS: How do you get paid?

EB: I get paid by the fish I catch, and that's the only money I receive, so any of the other stuff that I already said is all on a voluntary basis. So, my only revenue is the fish that I catch.

SS: Has your income increased or decreased since sectors?

EB: My groundfish has decreased, the only thing that has increased is the state managed fisheries that I participate in which curiously are also managed under a hard TAC (Total Allowable Catch), but they are managed with a trip limit and they have been fairly successful. So my income has gone up because of my fluke and those landings, but went down under sectors.

SS: How are earnings distributed, what percentage do you contribute?

EB: Being the owner operator and pretty much the only person, I am a sole proprietorship so whatever the net is [is] what I get to keep. On occasion, I do have crewmembers and at that point they get a percentage after trip expenses.

SS: Can you tell me a little bit about leasing, if you have needed to lease additional quota?

EB: Leasing, I haven't. What I have done is basically catch my quota and then I haven't fished after that. Last year the market prices, quite frankly, I did not think were good enough to warrant leasing, and I think that was pretty much what industry went through. I think they found that people that leased fish didn't actually make any money on them. That's part of the problem: the lease price doesn't necessarily reflect the market value. The lease price a lot of times represents the problem: that there are a lot of fish that are choke species, so a lot of people are spending money, higher money, so the lease market gets inflated not because someone is able to bring them to market for a certain... but needing them to go fish for something else. That's why the lease market is not as this thing is organized, is a very high risk. You are putting out a lot of money and you aren't guaranteed a return at all.

SS: Has your general outlook on life and well being changed for better or worse since sectors started?

EB: Well, I will say that I refuse to let sectors negatively impact me, but I will say that not so much sectors, but the catch share program and the process that we went through has really diminished my respect for the federal government and how it treats its citizens. I can't say that... again, catch shares has been a very negative experience for me.

[1:01:06]

SS: Has participation in decision-making or management changed in your community? Do you think that people are less involved in meetings and councils and things that relate to the fishery?

EB: I think that the Council process that has been designed over the past couple of years has been designed to keep people out of the process, so I think that was a trend that started a long time ago but I think that trend is being perpetuated under catch shares. People, fishermen, don't feel comfortable at these meetings. I hear it all the time. I hear from other fishermen, and I go to a meeting and I don't even know what they are talking about, they are talking in acronyms which sounds like a foreign language to me now, and I think you see that in participation in any management meeting that you see or that you go to. I think it's all part of the design.

SS: How have they responded to your concern over sectors, or do you feel that you have a voice in the process?

EB: If we are talking about the federal process, no I don't believe so. We have a democratic administration forcing catch shares on us and we have largely democratic representation and no matter how much they protest, nothing changes. So I don't think that my protest changes anything much. I think this is what Jane Lubchenco as boss of NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) wanted, and evidently this is also what the Obama Administration wants, because to me they are refusing to hear the concerns of the people in my community so that's just how it is. Nothing has changed, clearly we have been economically impacted, clearly

there is a need for financial assistance, and none has been forthcoming, I haven't even heard of any.

We had a dog and pony show of people coming by a year ago, people from the federal government coming by to hear our concerns and it's a year later and there's still nothing. We were talking about this being an economic disaster a year before it happened, so that was three years ago, so three years later this is still an economic disaster, there's still no relief from Washington, so that only leads me to one conclusion. This is exactly what NOAA fisheries and the Obama Administration wants, and how do you fight that?

SS: Do you think that regulations are becoming easier or harder to understand?

[1:04:23]

EB: They are definitely becoming harder, again that's a trend that has happened over the years, certainly Days at Sea by the end was extremely complex. This is extremely complex. The problem with this is they are pretending to have science that backs it up which they don't have, so we are hinging these things on riding time lines, ridged rebuilding schedules, we are hinging these things on the illusion that we can actually count how many fish there are to the poundage, we get called for being... I think discards get counted to the ten decimal points yet in the cod stock assessment in the last year they were up 48 million pounds, that's what they admitted. They think they made a mistake of 48 million pounds, they think they underestimated it by 48 million pounds. Gee, that's an awfully big mistake. I am not allowed to make a five-pound mistake, why are they allowed to make a 48 million pound mistake? You know? It's ridiculous.

SS: Have you or anyone you know experienced any health issues that can be attributed to sector based management, anxiety, stress, worry, relationship problems?

EB: I see it, I see every single person in this, every single person I know is suffering some sort of depression, anxiety. If you get my sector in a room I think you see classic symptoms of abuse. I know for a fact, if it's not diagnosed it's certainly being self-medicated and it's just ramped. This has clearly affected everybody.

SS: Have you experienced any life changes that you can attribute to sectors?

EB: You know, I don't know. I think I pretty clearly talked about that before, certainly re-evaluating my participation in the fishing industry. Anytime you change someone's career after 34 years, it has its effect, and these have all been negative.

SS: If you could go back in time and remove sector management as a management tool would you do it and what would you replace it with?

[1:07:34]

EB: I would definitely. Again, it's catch shares that's the problem not necessarily sector management. National Marine Fisheries Service basically gave up on Days at Sea a long time ago. When we had the running clock, the big criticism of Days at Sea was discards but that was a fabrication of NOAA. They were the ones that created the discards because they took away the running clock. The running clock accommodated discards. When we had the running clock we weren't having a discard problem, but what they said was that we were targeting codfish with it. Well, they ended up over the years designing something that forced us into targeting codfish. So they forced us into something that through Amendment 14 and Framework 42, they forced us into a direct codfishery, without the ability to control our discards and then said that Days at Sea didn't work because we were discarding. Well, Days at Sea didn't work because we were discarding, because of what they designed, you know, so every day when I fish under catch shares, I think of the things that Days at Sea did that weren't necessarily obvious to us at the time that were actually very beneficial.

For instance, someone who lived in downeast Maine didn't end up with a bunch of Cape Cod yellowtails that he had no use of and then needed to go through this whole mechanism of trading and leasing, and you ended up with access to what your local fishery caught. If you were a southern New England fishery and you had Days at Sea and you went out and caught... that's what you accessed, you didn't wind up with someone owning something that you used to fish for. It's what makes this catch shares completely clumsy, people own things they don't need and then have to trade and there's really no need for it. It's just not efficient.

SS: Have you considered returning to the common pool?

EB: No.

SS: Is there something else about sectors that I have not asked you that you would like to add to the record?

EB: No, I think I pretty much covered it.

SS: And to conclude is there something that you would like people to know about your career in fisheries you views or even a story to share for those in future generations?

EB: Well, I have enjoyed fishing and I have enjoyed my career. I like what I do. I like what I do for my community. I have pride in what I do. I think almost all of the people that I have fished with over the years have that same pride and have that same love, and would love to be able to see it continue. You know, I think that the idea that people would have that access... you know it comes down to these communities won't survive [which] really depresses me because I really enjoy what I have done and I have to say that I have had a good life. I have enjoyed my life and unfortunately, I don't see anyone else being able to. I don't know how that is going to work in the future.

SS: Anything else?

EB: That's it!

[1:11:48]