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Gerrior, Patricia ~ Oral History Interview

Madeleine Hall-Arber

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Voices from the Fisheries
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543

Interview with Patricia Gerrior by Madeleine Hall-Arber

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Gerrior, Patricia

Interviewer
Hall-Arber, Madeleine

Date
July 18, 2016

Place
Falmouth, MA

ID Number
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Biographical Note
Patricia Gerrior was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts and grew up in Weymouth, Massachusetts where she would spend time on the water with her father which led to her interest in marine science. She studied Biology at Colby College in Waterville, Maine and began her 40 year career during her junior year in college with the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries which became NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service.

Scope and Content Note
Interview contains discussions of: Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, plankton, board agent, New Bedford, fish auction, strike, haddock, cod, yellowtail flounder, underutilized species, mackerel, observer program, right whales, aerial surveys, Marine Mammal Protection Act, climate change.

Patricia Gerrior describes her 40 year career with the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, now NOAA NMFS. During her career, she would work as a librarian at the BCF library; as a board agent in New Bedford; worked with promoting underutilized species; managed the observer program; and was the stranding coordinator. At the end of her career, she oversaw the aerial surveys and outreach to commercial shipping vessels in order to protect right whales in the shipping lanes from ship strikes.

Indexed Names
McGrory, Brian
McGrory, Mary

Rathjen, Warren
Rosenberg, Andy
Scott, Allen

Transcript--- PG__001

Madeleine-Hall Arbor: Okay, so this an interview for Voices from the Fisheries as part of the Voices from the Science Center project funded by NOAA's Office of Science and Technology. I'm Madeleine Hall-Arber and today I'm speaking with Pat Gerrior in Falmouth. The time is 2:25 almost. So Pat, could you introduce yourself so I could check the sound.

Patricia Gerrior: Okay. Hi, I'm Pat Gerrior and I worked for the Fisheries Service for just about 40 years and have been retired now for just over 10 or so. I don't like to say it but um. When I started out it was not the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, it was the old Bureau of Commercial Fisheries--

MHA: Oh, I didn't realize that.

PG:-- under the Department of Interior so we were a different department, different name. Everybody knew us as BCF. The industry was very attuned to calling us people from BCF so.

MHA: So where-- I'll just get a little few background questions uh-- where were you born and when?

PG: I was born in Cambridge, Mass, it was quite a few years ago. Madeleine, I don't believe you're asking me year, it was 1948. Oh my God!

MHA: [laughing] Okay and so did you grow up in Cambridge?

PG: I did not, I spent just under a year in Arlington but I really grew up in Weymouth, Mass.

MHA: And what drew you to marine science?

PG: Um, I think probably the fact that my father built a boat and we used to go fishing and I loved it even though I wasn't very good at it and I lived on the shore, took swimming lessons-- loved that also so I spent a lot of time down at the water and really enjoyed it and said I will be a marine scientist.

MHA: So did you-- so is that what you did when you went to college? You went straight into marine science?

PG: Well I-- the school I went to didn't have marine science program per se. I studied biology and tried to lean towards any marine oriented courses if I could.

MHA: Where'd you go to school?

PG: I went to Colby College in Waterville, Maine. And we did have one program that was down in Bermuda for one of our spring breaks where we did a one-- I think it was a one or two credit course-- where we were down there for a couple of weeks. Pretty intense but also a lot of fun and very interesting.

MHA: Who was your advisor or lead-- if you remember?

PG: Oh, it would be-- I'm just going to throw a name out... Dr. Scott, Dr. Allen Scott who also had some connections with the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole. He used to come down here every summer with his wife and do research.

MHA: So when did you start at NMFS-- oh uh, not NMFS uh-- the Bureau…

PG: BCF so to speak, yeah um, I actually started in my junior year because Colby has a program of independent study. Every January is independent study and I did two of my independent studies at the lab in Woods Hole. I did the first one my junior year so--

MHA: At the Biological Lab?

PG: No, I did it at the Fisheries.

MHA: Oh, the Fisheries.

PG: Yeah, I did it at the Fisheries and-- actually while I was there, they said are you interested in a summer job and of course you had to apply and hope that you would get selected and I did get a summer job between my junior and senior year. And that was great.

MHA: What were you doing?

PG: Oh gee, I think that year I was doing plankton sampling and plankton processing which is basically plankton plucking. You know, separating all the plankton samples out into species. But I also came back again to do my independent study in January in my senior year and then came back for my summer job after my senior year and was lucky enough to get a full time job, not doing exactly what I had hoped to do but it was a permanent job which was a big deal. It's even bigger a deal right now.

MHA: Yeah. So what had you hoped to do and what did you end up actually doing?

PG: Um, what I hoped to do in the field of marine science? I don't think I was probably that focused to say I wanted to work on cod fish or I wanted to work on haddock or anything like that

or I wanted to work on invertebrates but I was thrilled to be exposed to all of these issues and opportunities when I was doing my independent studies and my summers. But what I started doing in a permanent basis was I was taking care-- I was the librarian for their scientific library and they called me the seagoing librarian because I told them if I took the job I wanted to be able to go out to sea also [laughter] which most librarians don't do.

MHA: And so how long did you end up doing that?

PG: Um, you know I can't remember exactly how long I did it, um, before I got a permanent job doing something else. Gosh, you're going to ask me that, maybe a couple years. I might have done it a couple years.

MHA: and how did you end up moving out of that into--?

PG: I think I must have applied-- I think I applied for another position and now you're going to ask me what position that is--

MHA: [chuckling]

PG: --Um... I think I applied for something and got selected, that's what it was and I believe it was probably the position working over New Bedford as one of the board agents ... because I worked there for seven or eight years in New Bedford.

MHA: So you got to know all the fishermen then?

PG: Oh yes! I definitely did, yeah. I did. I would go to the auctions every day, primarily I went to the fish auction because I'm not a morning person exactly and the scallop auction was always earlier than the fish auction and there weren't quite as many boats necessarily coming in [to the scallop auction]. Yeah, scalloping was kind of cyclical at that time but I would go to the fish auction every morning to interview the captains and then ultimately after we processed the data and put out the reports that would say this is how much of each species was landed and these are the prices on a tape that people could call then I would go down and usually sample the catch off the different boats if we felt that we had gotten good data to be able to sample the catch.

MHA: Were there any challenges with doing that?

PG: Oh, of course. Of course there were.

MHA: [laughter]

PG: Because some of the people down there really did not like to see a female down on the docks and they would say you know, “What does your husband say about you doing this job?" " It's a man's job" "What does your boyfriend say?" and you know my standard answer used to be

he don't say much because there wasn't a husband, [laughing] there wasn't a boyfriend at the time. So yeah, there were a lot of challenges and you know the fishermen-- the fishermen basically were more open and receptive [to her working in the fish houses] than most of the dock workers. And you know, there were a lot of lessons for all to be learned down there including me when I saw them doing the some of the things that they do down there. Because it's not always the most honest business, unfortunately.

MHA: And are you talking about the dock workers or the fishermen?

PG: Uh, primarily the dock workers. It was sort of standard operating procedure that they would sometimes spirit away some of the fish to sell for themselves. And you know most of the fishermen knew about it but it still didn't sit well with me when I knew how hard those guys worked for everything they got there you know, it was troubling. But it was sort of a, a standard operating procedure, I guess. So, when one of them told me to keep my mouth shut and just pretend I didn't see it, I was like okay-- one of the fishermen that is.

MHA: Hm, interesting. Did you ever run into Fish Mary?

PG: I think I heard about her but I don't think I ran into her.

MHA: She may have been gone by the time you were there.

PG: Yeah, I think I heard about her.

MHA: She was a lumper but mostly on scallop boats.

PG: Yeah, I mean, I did sample the scallopers but primarily what we do is we get down and we would ask them [the scallopers] to put aside scallop shells that we could take and we could actually sample at any time. So we get down [to the boat], grab the shells knowing what boat they came from and then work on them at our leisure. When you try to sample fish coming off of a boat and you want to look for particularly grey sole, it's like you need to really be on your toes because the fish comes out and it comes out fast and you're not exactly sure when the species you're looking for to sample is going to necessarily come out. We would spend more time with the groundfish guys than we did with the scallop guys and the scallopers were off loaded first and it was pretty quick to get them in and out, so.

MHA: Were they landing them whole at that time?

PG: The scallops? Oh no no no. No, they were coming in shucked in the 40lb bags. Yep. And they would have some fish that they would [sell for what they called "shack"]. They didn't have a tremendous amount but they did have some from time to time. But that [the fish off scallopers] wasn't anything we typically would sample. It was the scallops we were focused on from them

anyway. I didn't meet Fish Mary but I think I heard lots of stories because fishermen and lumpers also loved to tell stories. Lots of stories [laughter]

MHA: Did you keep any anecdotes in mind? Do you recall any?

PG: Oh, the stories? No, I won't be able to recall them but they would come fast and furiously depending on the situation. And I made trips out on some of the boats so I would hear even more stories out there.

MHA: So did you go out to Georges Bank and-- were these day trips?

PG: No, no, no, I went out-- I went out on a dragger for, I think, it was six days and it was actually one of the high liners in the fleet at that time and I think we came in with something like I want to say-- this is memory, of course, scary, but, um, maybe 95,000 lbs or 100,000 lbs in a very short period of time but again he was a high liner. I also made a trip on a scalloper and we were out probably... 12 days or so. But we also had a big trip, but New Bedford was on strike at the time so instead of coming into New Bedford, we went into Boston and off loaded the catch which is not very common. Boston doesn't usually get scallopers coming in there. So, no, these weren't day trips, these were full-blown commercial trips. The dragger trip I did on my vacation because I wanted to see what it was like to be out there [and see how] these fishermen work and despite all the fact that all the captains would tell me 'oh yeah I'll take you out' it came down to one captain who ultimately said he would do it and he followed through. Because the wives weren't exactly thrilled [laughing] when they heard a woman might be out on the vessel. The other trip [scalloping], though, I went out to do sampling and it was directed, I think, for someone here at the center I believe so... hard work.

MHA: So, you mentioned strike, so-- were-- was it-- I know the strike was fairly long, right?

PG: As I recalled it was pretty long. I mean and I think everybody hoped that when we were on our way, thinking about ending the trip and coming in, that it would be over but it wasn't. Because I think in their minds, they felt that they probably wouldn't get the price that they would have gotten had they off loaded in New Bedford. But I don't recall exactly what we did get paid for that trip.

MHA: Did you-- did the strike itself affect your work at all other than that?

PG: No, no other than-- it sort of added almost a day to the trip because once they off loaded in Boston then we had to turn around and make their way back to New Bedford. No, when I say we paid, I didn't get paid anything, I mean, what the fishermen got paid, the scallopers--

Both: [laughing]

PG: I also went out on a tuna boat, I forgot about that. But that was ... next part of my career when [I was working on]-- that was part of the observer program so that's another story.

MHA: We'll get to that.

PG: Yeah.

MHA: [laughing] Okay, alright so, where did you live when you first started working?

PG: When I working in New Bedford? I think I commuted initially perhaps for a while until I found a place. I commuted from Falmouth but then I moved out over to Marion which was pretty handy... and 195 is a pretty easy road to commute in and out to work so… and we were in the Custom House, which was a pretty good location, pretty handy to the auction hall at that time so I-- and I don't even know where the auction is now.

MHA: It's not too far but it's a ways from the Custom House. Was the auction at the Wharfinger Building at that time?

PG: It was down on the Pier 3. Yeah. And I think--

MHA: Little brick building?

PG: Yeah and I think-- don't they still have it set up as a-- you can go in and see the board and the vessel names and the amounts and the prices and stuff?

MHA: Yeah--

PG: Yup. It was a tiny little room but, you knew the captains and the mates typically were going out be there when the auction was going on. And that's why we went there, one to get the data [on the catches to prices paid] but two to interview them [the captains] as to where they fished and how long they spent in the different areas.

MHA: And did you feel that you were getting honest answers?

PG: Some of the time. I can't say all of the time. But you know, you tried to work with these guys, maybe not in the auction room but otherwise, and explain to them that if you give the wrong location, ultimately it's going to come back and bite you so it just helps us to be able to know where you fished, how long you fished there, and what you caught there because with sampling and we're saying that we're basing it on what you've told us and if you've told us the wrong thing, it may hurt you in the long run. Some of them, I think, understood that. Some of them ... no. But, you had a sense when people weren't telling you the truth but there wasn't a lot you could do about it. I think I actually called one captain on it and he was not very happy when

I did that [laughing] I said come on, you said something, you said two conflicting things to me here, something is not right.

MHA: What-- when you joined before it was NMFS so what was the focus of the agency at that time?

PG: It was the same focus really. I mean, I don't think that the focus has changed other than I think people that worked for the old Bureau of Commercial Fisheries thought it was a little ... I don't know incongruous for us to step into the Department of Commerce because we never were commerce driven or related. Um, Interior seemed to be a better fit from our perspective but I don't think the focus really changed. I mean it was management conservation of the species and the outer continental shelf there. What wasn't part of the big picture at that time was-- and you'll find this a little bit interesting was-- the socio-economic aspect, the legal aspect, and the marine mammal aspect. Those are three things I can think of right off the top of my head that were not a big part of the BCF's picture. And so as time went on, the lawyers became almost more numerous, we felt, than some of the scientists and then-- so-- then it also became the economists and social scientists and so some people became, "hm what's going on here?" and then the marine mammals and, you know, that whole aspect of it was added subsequent to those two things. So one of the, I think, directors for ... I don't-- I think it was NOAA or the Fisheries in headquarters used to be a lawyer ... had no-- to our knowledge-- had no ... fisheries background whatsoever. So that was kind of interesting.

MHA: Yeah. Surprising.

PG: Well, it's nothing surprising sometimes.

Both: [laughter]

MHA: So ... maybe you could talk a little bit about the state of the science at that time and what were, sort of, the dominant ideas.

PG: Well, it-- I'm not going to be probably as articulate about that as some other people perhaps but ... because I was, of course, was in the library and like I said I was the seagoing librarian but, you know, at that time, haddock was one of the big focuses because haddock was at exceedingly low levels and people were very concerned and, of course, cod fish were everywhere to speak of and it seems like now we've kind of flipped the picture completely so that was one thing I do recall. I can't say that yellowtail was ... I mean it was being studied obviously. I mean all these species were-- the assessments were done on all these species just like they are now. Scallops, I think, I could see over my career, some periods where they went down in resource level, at least catch level for sure, and then up and down so you saw a few of those ups and downs here. And we had people working on scallops too, lobsters but again the whole marine mammal and the social economic aspect of it wasn't a huge part of it. I mean because I was there before the Magnuson Act was passed. Because I was in New Bedford when it was passed and I can

remember talking to the fishermen and they'd say "we don't like this, bring the foreigners back" and I said “you can't have it both ways, you wanted the 200 mile limit, you got it. And now this is what's going to happen" [laughing]

MHA: So why did they want them back?

PG: I can't remember now exactly why they would say bring them back, bring them back and I'm like "no, you guys told me they depleted all the species you were interested in. I mean they're gone now so now you have to deal with the regulations that have come to accompany the 200 mile limit but you can't have it both ways." You asked for it, you got it. So I would have a lot of these type of conversations with them and [questions] like "why are you doing the same thing over and over again? Why are you taking scales off these fish? Don't you know how old they are when you're look-- yes we do. Why are you taking those little ear bones out? Why do you keep doing these things? Why do you keep asking us these questions? And why do you send that boat [the *Albatross]* to places where we know there aren't any fish?" You know that question--that's still being asked today. And you try, I mean, we were kind of on the front line, to try to be able to try to work with these people and try to get them to better understand.

MHA: Did you ever feel like you learned something from the fishermen?

PG: Oh absolutely. Oh yeah, a lot more-- they had a lot more common sense then we'll probably ever have.

Both: [laughing]

PG: But yes, absolutely. I mean they were telling you about this is the way you do this, this is the way you do that and then when you'd see them out there mending the nets, you'd be just like wow. You know, I wish I could sew like that. And they'd say this is why we do this, you see these birds, you see those clouds. So yeah, there was lots, there was lots to learn from them. I mean, I always had a great deal of respect for them and I hoped that as I interacted with them, they had respect for me, too, to understand that we weren't just doing this to annoy them or damage their fish, sometimes they'd say you're damaging those fish. Some of them. Not most of them, but some of them would say that. No, there's plenty to learn from them.

MHA: So why don't you tell me a little bit about how you got involved in the marine mammals?

PG: Well, there was actually, there was actually a step in between that. While I was working with the industry actually there was an opportunity-- this is kind of interesting also funny-- maybe not funny but ironic-- to work on underutilized species. So I worked in the underutilized species program for several years and that's when I moved from New Bedford up to Gloucester and at that time we were looking at mackerel, herring, squid, and I don't think we have any underutilized species now... but it-- that was probably as hard a sell to the industry in most cases as it was trying to explain to them as why we do some of the things we do, sampling the catch

and asking them questions. So yeah I did do that, I worked with a guy named Warren Rathjen up in Gloucester.

MHA: Did you work with the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives at all?

PG: Um, not a lot. We were, because I'm not so sure at that time Gloucester was really opening their arms to some of this. You know, we were looking at the squid, and a lot of that was not going to be done out of Gloucester. We were looking at the herring. I think there was some activity starting to occur there and then the mackerel-- the mackerel was a really tough sell. A real tough sell.

MHA: Interesting now because the price is much higher for mackerel, I think, than herring and the boats would really like it.

PG: Yeah and then, of course, I had the opportunity to go out on a Polish and a Russian vessel that we were doing cooperative research with and the mackerel that we caught was just mind blowing. I mean, because I can remember on that Polish vessel, they brought that net back in on deck and, I mean, a guy would stand on top of it and he was dwarfed by that size of that net and what it was filled with, there was just that much mackerel. So, we were doing sampling on there also, tons of mackerel and if we had any herring, you know, mixed in there sometimes but it was pretty clean catch. So that was another situation where the industry was a little reluctant to jump into it but you know all of this then lead to my next job which was running the observer program.

MHA: Before you jump to that, can I just ask you a little bit more about being on the--

PG: On the Polish and the Russian boats yeah.

MHA: What-- were you there for a trip or did you just go on to sample?

PG: Oh, we were on for trips so, let's see-- I'm trying to remember the trips had varied in length but-- we were on there probably somewhere between two weeks and 20 days on the boat.

MHA: And we? Who else was --?

PG: Usually there was a-- a group of scientists on board and we were-- we stood watch and we would you know spell each other and do some sampling. The Russian boat was interesting. This is one little anecdote that occurred and that was-- we were out there. We finished all the work we had to do and basically we should have gone back into port. But the captain was very reluctant to come back in and tie up in Woods Hole because he was concerned that his crew would run astray and be bad. Literally. And so he stayed out there and we were like "well, what are we doing out here?" Because we had finished-- we had finished our work and so a couple of us would be, like, what are we doing? what are we doing?... and so at one point, I know we all went up to the bridge and we looked around and we saw sounding paper all over the bridge. So what they were

doing was, they were running transects and sounding to get all this depth [information] that God knows what they were going to do with. But it wasn't the fisheries work that we intended to do but again he did not want to bring all those crew members in and let them loose because, remember, there were commissars on those boats and the commissar couldn't be everywhere with all the people when they took off from the vessel. They would never let them go alone off the boat. They had to be in pairs at a minimum. So that was kind of a--

MHA: Do you remember approximately what year that was?

PG: Well, Madeleine...

MHA: I'm sorry to ask you this [laughter] I have the same trouble with remembering dates

PG: No, well, let's put it this way, I could remember when we were either on the Polish or the Russian [boat], when we were out there fishing, you'd sort of look on the horizon so it'd have to be pre 1977 because you'd look on the horizon and you'd look 360 degrees and there were foreign vessels all around you so, yeah it had to be prior-- probably mid-70s. Yeah.

MHA: So did you, did they have their own scientists on board?

PG: They did. Yeah, they did.

MHA: And were you able to interact with them?

PG: Oh yes. Yep. We worked very well, they would put some of their scientists on our research vessels also. So yup. They-- like I said-- they were-- there was a commissar on at least one, on the Russian and I believe there was also a counterpart on the Polish boat because again this was before …Solidarity.

PG: Mhm, that's what they would talk about in whispered tones. So yeah, it was pretty interesting.

MHA: Now how about the science itself. Was there any disagreement between the two, the scientists of--

PG: When we were working together on the boats? No. No.

MHA: I'm really not talking about the interpersonal--

PG: But how we would sample?

MHA: Yeah, and what you would see in--

PG: No. I don't think so. No, I wasn't aware of any of that. I mean, I think that everything was agreed to beforehand and I don't think, with the exception of this, the work is finished and we're going to sound the bottom for four or five days. I don't think there was anything. I don't think they tried to bias the samples while we were out there which I think we were all pretty attuned to that. But the mackerel would you know-- when those mackerel were coming down the chute, I mean, it was just there was a lot of consistency…in size because they were schooling so. It was a lot.

MHA: Did you ever see any of those people again in scientific meetings or anything like that?

PG: Well, I wasn't lucky enough to be able to travel to all of those [meetings] but my, I know-- my colleagues and my husband would see them and some of those same people came back as we did cooperative research with them and they came back year after year so, yes we did. In fact, I keep in touch with a couple of them. Yeah, they are now pretty close to retirement, I would say.

Both: [laughing]

MHA: Okay, so um, maybe you'd can start to talk now-- you were starting to move into the marine mammal--

PG: Oh, well, no we're not jumping right into marine mammals because before I got into doing the work I did at the end of my career, I actually applied for-- must have been a weak moment-- for running the observer program.

MHA: Oh right.

PG: And I did that for like 15, I think, I did that for like 15 years or so but at that time we were working initially strictly with the foreigners um. We were not putting observers on domestic vessels. So it was strictly-- we were observing as much of the foreign fishing activity as we could possibly do, so that would be squid, it would be mackerel um... they could not keep herring. It was the Japanese tuna longline fishery. It was a host of nations, I mean, it was Spain, it was Portugal, it was Italy, it was East Germany... and of course Japan and the tuna longline fishery. I'm trying to remember who else was out there-- Poland, yeah. But there's more, I can't remember them all. So we would put observers on those vessels. The foreigners paid for that entire program including my salary and all of my staff's salaries and all the equipment supplies, travel etcetera. Were they happy? No, but I guess they just looked upon it as a price of doing business. So, as the 200 mile limit changed things with initially there would be foreign fishing, it would be tied into time zones and species and then the next step would probably be the joint ventures where the foreigners could do some fishing but they would also take U.S. catch over the side, the last step being-- well, not the last step, the next to last step being where the foreigners would sit and receive all the U.S. caught fish over the side and the fourth step being that there would be no foreigners left so we went through all that. Towards the latter part of that, that's when we also started to look at putting people on the domestic boats. And that was, you know, sort of, I guess

I [would] describe it [done] in baby steps. We, sort of, got initially into it and started to do a few trips here and there and of course, ultimately when the foreigners departed the zone, it was all domestic. And we did it primarily in house until someone had the idea that we should look to contractors to provide us the observers. But that was a bit of a, I don't know, a difficult situation nto the fact that while these people weren't doing, they were doing sort of pseudo --I guess we could call it-- compliance on the foreign boats meaning they were probably the only person on that boat that could walk up to the captain of the boat and say "captain this is not an area you're allowed to fish in. I need to make you aware of that if you're not aware of it and then I need to document that fact" so they had, they had some power on those foreign vessels unto the fact that they could speak to the captain whereas no one else could say anything. But when they [the observers] got on the domestic boats, you know, there was none of that with the exception of the fact that they were out there and one of their duties was to sample a marine mammal or turtle bycatch. So, they became a bit of a rub there in some of the fisheries.

MHA: You mentioned that the foreign fleets were not allowed to take herring. Why was that?

PG: Well, they were a prohibited species [to the foreign fleet] and sea herring, I believe, was one of them. I'm trying to think what else, I mean pretty much anything that they thought we would be utilizing ... they weren't allowed to keep. I mean--

MHA: So that was--

PG: -- No groundfish

MHA: --towards the end of the time that they were?

PG: Nope, that was from once the 200 mile limit went into place, there were-- there were rules and regulations that the foreigners had to abide by and they had very defined areas where they could operate in, very defined times and only X number of species that they could retain. So if they caught sea herring, it had to go overboard. I'm trying to remember what else, I mean, obviously things like cod, haddock, yellowtail should they have caught any of those things-- were not allowed. But they were focused -- again, this is my recollection here which is getting a little difficult-- but they were focused on the squids, loligo, and the mackerel. So a lot of those are more off bottom species.

MHA: Were they using the water trawls mainly?

PG: Uh, yes. Trawls that were off bottom, yes. And they had requirements on how they set the gear up, too, so they were pretty regulated. Again, when I think back to those guys in New Bedford saying, you know, bring them back, bring them back and I'm saying look how regulated they are when they're here now and look how regulated you might potentially be down the line but you know. It's always someone else [laughing] that's causing the problems until that something else is gone and then it's like uh-oh.

Both: [laughing]

PG: And so they had some real serious requirements to stick by those prohibited species and that's one of the reasons the observers were on there, to make sure they didn't-- and of course then, ultimately, the bycatch situation of protected species became an issue too because they didn't get bycatch in some of those fisheries.

MHA: Well, they use pretty big nets right?

PG: Yeah but that's-- big nets and the fact that they were longer in length and stuff like that but the mesh was graduated. Some of those, you know, in order to keep things like squid so I mean it might be big at the opening, and it would taper, it would reduce in sizes they work back through the net but yeah, I took some picture of some of those catches and they're pretty amazing.

MHA: So then what?

PG: What after the observer program?

MHA: Mhm.

PG: And then, then um ... I started to work on the right whale situation specifically because the regional director realized at that time that there was a major problem with not only entanglement in fishing gear for these species, but also in the case of right whales and to a lesser degree that we knew about at the time, right whales were the ship strike focus and that's where I jump in and that's where I spent the last, I don't know, it might have been ten years actually working on. And that was interesting because-- I think we approached that [situation] in a bit of a unique way for the agency in that we went in and did --actually-- we went in before anything really happened and started doing educational efforts with the fishing indus-- not the fishing industry, excuse me, but the shipping industry. And we went to them and we said "this is the problem" and initially they said "what problem? What whales?" And then we said to them "this is it and this is the problem now you've got to tell us how do we keep you from doing this, how do you suggest we resolve this?" and they came back with some of the same stuff we had been thinking and so initially we went to the whole shipping industry and said "here's some voluntary guidelines that we want to operate under so that we can try to reduce the number of ship strikes and deaths with these right whales because we're required to deal with it based on the Marine Mammal Protection Act and because we want to keep that species." And ... well, those were in effect for probably a couple years and the industry came to us and said-- some of them-- "voluntary is not going to work. It has to be regulated." So they came to us which is probably different than anything we have ever done with this agency [National Marine Fisheries Service] so I think that the initial upfront outreach and education that we tried to do did help when it came time to do the regulations. Did we have some players that were less receptive? Of course but basically I think that they said okay, and we knew that ultimately because we did bring in the economists and had

them look at it before we had put the regulations into effect and they told us "this is likely what it's going to cost your Heineken that's being brought in via a ship that's going to go from x to x or x to y but ultimately the consumer will pay"... but will the consumer ever truly notice what these regulations are costing? So yeah, it was an entirely different thing but it was very interesting because we were reaching out not to just the typical shipping industry that you think of, maybe the tugs and the tows-- we were reaching out to the cruise ships to the vessels transporting all the vehicles that come in and are off loaded and, you know, it was an education for us also as we get into this whole thing because little did we realize that probably some incredible number, I want to say is more than 80% of what we consume comes in via the sea to us. So, I found it very interesting. I really liked working with these people, and I think... they did listen to us. They might not always like the message but they did listen to us. And then the other thing I did while we were doing all this was I had to set up the aircraft surveys that we did to make them aware of the fact that we were seeing right whales and this is where we saw them so please avoid this area. And then we would distribute that information as rapidly as we got it so it would go out almost immediately. As soon as the plane landed, the info came to me typically and then I would distribute it and I continued to work on getting the distribution as broad as possible. And I don't know how much you know about the shipping industry but it's very multi-layered. No one typically knows who owns most of these vessels. Well, I mean they know but to get back through it the captain is usually brought on under a charter. The captain and the crew and the cargos come in under another auspices so it's really a confounding situation in some respects.

MHA: So how did you work through all of that? How did you--

PG: Well, in most cases, we didn't have to but, I mean, I would try to deal, if I could, with the captains but that's not always the case. Sometimes you work through the shipping agents and sometimes you work through the companies themselves. So these guys have to file what they call a Voyage Plan and that's kind of a key component. It says we will go from A to B and we will be at A1, A2, A3, A4 at such and such a time under such and such a course, um, so we tried to get them to understand sometimes you're going to have a voyage plan and deviate around these areas so they've got to have some flexibility in what you do and do we see all the whales when we're out there surveying? No. So we're getting a snapshot but we'll tell you where we do see them so that you can at least avoid them. Unfortunately, right whales and some of the species at certain times of the year like to set themselves up feeding right proximal to or in the shipping lines. So, that's part of the problem. And when they're feeding, in many cases they're oblivious to all that's around them.

MHA: So, did you go on some of the flights?

PG: Oh yes. Yeah, I didn't make all of them but yes, I did. And you know, we would take out people from the media and we wanted them to be exposed to what we were doing so that we would get some additional distribution and people would read about it and things like that. We did. We actually took out-- this is kind of interesting-- we took out Brian McGrory whose, his mother was, I mean his aunt was Mary McGrory who used to write for the Washington... the

Washington Post, I think. She was a columnist but anyway he came out with us and he's now with the Boston Globe but then he came out I tried to explain to him ahead of time that this is not going to be like any typical flight you've ever been on so you need to dress warmly, you need to be comfortable with we're going to be doing a lot of dipping and circling around and he's like no big deal, I've flown a lot. He was so sick, we had to bring the plane in. [Laughing] I had to help him write the article. I mean, he was really sick, really sick. Because he was sitting behind me so I could hear him being sick, because I was doing all the data recording on the flight, you know. So yes, I would go because it's, um-- you know I've been at sea a fair amount, certainly nothing compared to fishermen but, I never got sea sick but there were a couple times up there where we were doing this circling for 45 minutes to an hour over whales that I felt uncomfortable and I just got sick and then I moved on, you know, type of thing but I didn't get sick typically at sea. So the motion was, I guess, it can be disturbing for some people. And you can't see the horizon which is one of the criteria that they usually tell you to shoot for when you're on a boat because when you're tipped like this, the horizon is kind of lost. Yep, I did make some of the flights but I basically was sort of running the program and setting it up.

MHA: So when-- it uh-- did the program start right when the Marine Mammal Protection Act was passed?

PG: No. No, it started in the um, probably almost 20 years or so years later. Initially they started-- they set up an aerial survey program for the right whales down off the southeast but basically they just go down there for a fairly [concentrated] period of time in the winter for the calving season they don't all go but then they come and they're along the whole coast and/or they're off in the Great South Channel, Georges Bank, up in the Bay of Fundy, the Gulf of Maine, they spend more time up in this area. But no, we were kind of-- a little bit behind on that whole thing, I think, until this problem became very lucid that we were having a problem with ship strikes in addition to entanglement... that's when the regional director said we got to do a program, and Pat, you do it [laughter].

MHA: Who was the regional director?

PG: It was Andy Rosenberg.

MHA: Oh, okay.

PG: Yeah, so I -- at the time, though, actually I was doing another full time job which was I had just taken over as stranding coordinator for the [Northeast] region. So that meant I was doing that and then I was also doing the, setting this program up and it got to the point where I had, really I had two full-time jobs and I couldn't do both of them so, stranding coordinator moved to somebody else and I took this on. So, it was setting up the program to do the surveys, to get cooperation with other agencies such as the Center for Coastal Studies, New England Aquarium, and then working to get introduced and to educate as best we could the shipping industry which is like I said so multi-faceted. So I would attend port meetings in the different locations routinely

and give them updates and I know initially people would just look at me like "what is this person talking about? What whales? And why do we care about them?" So it took, it took quite a while, a lot of leg work there to try to talk to people and get them to understand what the story was. But it was interesting. I liked it, big challenge.

MHA: Do you think people-- well, obviously people are more aware now because of the--

PG: Oh yeah.

MHA: -- publicity

PG: Definitely, I mean because the LNGs, the liquefied natural gas ships that come into Boston now, in order to do one of the, I don't know if it was the offshore location that they wanted to, I don't know which one it was or whether they were coming into the dock. They had mitigation measures which now include passive acoustic buoys that are in part of the shipping channel coming into Boston and those operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and so they're getting almost immediate feedback as to where and when we're seeing whales in that particular area that the passive acoustic buoys can pick up. But you know that was another whole thing the passive acoustic buoys were developed with the likes of International Fund for Animal Welfare and Cornell University. So there was a lot of people working on the whole right whale problem. A lot of people have come together to try to do everything they can to help the species and we just had a ship strike within the last month of a right whale. Because they did the necropsy and they don't usually make any pronouncements until they do the necropsy and work the animal up but the, I mean the animal apparently had lots of propeller gashes on it so it was a definite ship strike and they had seen it in Cape Cod Bay but I think they found it floating off the outside the Cape so where it got hit? I don't know.

MHA: So do you think, well, you didn't have any choice bec- you meaning the agency didn't have any choice, they had to do something because of the marine protection but... does it make sense in terms of the agency's budget and the needs of the agency to focus on something like right whales?

PG: Oh I think so. Yeah but it-- and remember this is not just NOAA Fisheries doing this. The Coast Guard has a big role in this also. So the Coast Guard may be the primary enforcement eyes out there. So, again it was a cooperative effort. It wasn't just NOAA Fisheries, the State is involved very heavily and the Coast Guard and NOAA Fisheries but I mean to lose one species really is... is not a good thing. I mean, it ultimately impacts the rest of the whole dynamic out there one way or another, I mean, it's-- to some people, it's like who cares if we lose one species, well... it does matter. I worked on [right whale education]-- after I retired, I worked on a marine educational boat out of Woods Hole and one of the units that we did on there was about horseshoe crabs and-- I learned a lot when I had to go talk to people about it because I didn't realize just how important horseshoe crabs are to all of us. Because the blood they take out of them and process into this what they call LAL is what they use to test all medical equipment and

a lot of medicines before they ever leave and get to hospitals and doctors. They're tested for gram negative bacteria [with the horseshoe crab blood extract]. But they couldn't do it without that horseshoe crab blood. Most people look at horseshoe crabs as something to be scared of. Oh, you know, that spine, it's probably going to stick me or I'm going to walk on it or something. So yeah, if we lose horseshoe crabs, and there is some indication that the population is definitely decreasing, we'll all probably impacted by that because they haven't been able to reproduce it synthetically.

MHA: So do you think that there's more education needed of the public, for example?

PG: Oh, I don't think it could hurt no, I really don't. You know people-- a lot of people look at the license plate with the whale's tail on it in Massachusetts and I guess a lot of them don't realize that that's a very endangered species and I think there's also a little-- I think there's also a tern or something on there, too, which is probably another protected species but you'd explain to them "hey, this is the whale, this is why of such big concern, some of the money you put into that license plate that costs everybody more money goes into the research efforts that we do". So, yeah, I don't think it could hurt. I mean, it's like, do we want to lose cod fish? Look what happened to Newfoundland. We visited there nine years ago and we could still see how impacted that whole country is based on the fact that they lost their cod fish fishery. And it's-- no one would ever believe that we would be apparently as depleted as we are cod fish-wise here.

MHA: So do you think that that is due from overfishing or movement of cod because of climate change or?

PG: I don't think it's one thing but I think we became very efficient with our fishing machines out there. And yes, I think we are starting to see some of the impact of climate changing and without the cod fish, all those other species are either expanding or contracting but I don't think it's just one thing. We became efficient, we know things are changing water temperature-wise for sure, especially in the Gulf of Maine. That's probably one of the most impacted areas as I understand it.

MHA: So when you retired, did you still keep up with what's going on in the science?

PG: Um, I did with a lot of the right whale issues because I was so invested in all of that at the end there and I still do. They have an annual meeting every year in New Bedford. Actually at the Whaling Museum-- it didn't always used to be there but it is now and it's two days of people presenting the most recent research they've been working on and things to look at. And I also did-- I did a small amount of contract work on right whales after I-- primarily educational efforts-- after I retired. And I would love to keep working on it but I think the funding is probably not too available.

MHA: So is that what you miss most about working, is that work on the right whale?

PG: Well, I mean, it's probably because it was what I was last working on and like I said I was so invested in it at the end there and I felt like we had made a lot of probably positive progress there and we did get regulations in place after I had retired. It's not that I wouldn't want to work with the fishing industry again because I would but I feel a bit overwhelmed now because I've been out of it for so long and when they start talking to me about all the regulations, I find them completely overwhelming and I wonder how they can stay on top of everything because it's just-- I've looked at some of the maps and-- this is closed-- that's all been-- it's just-- it's amazing. It's amazing so it's not that I wouldn't want to work with them again because I would but, like I said, that was what I was doing at the end.

MHA: So, when you look back on your career, what do you think is... what was the most interesting to you over the whole length and what were your favorite accomplishments, I guess?

PG: Well, I think the most interesting were the people in the two industries I worked with-- the fishing and the shipping industry --and that's a real short answer I guess but the-- probably the most-- probably the biggest accomplishment was the-- what I did on the right whale work and all the -- the fact that we ultimately got regulations in place and it was done in cooperation with the industry and with a lot of their input into it…when I worked with the observer program I did a lot of work with the industry being it-- being foreign people and the domestic industry so. There were a lot of good things, I mean, I did-- I had a pretty varied background and I did get into the assessment and did things like so many people in Woods Hole but much of that I was doing when I was working for the regional office and I was actually down here in Woods Hole for-- for a lot of it, but not all of it. But that was good, because I think the more cross fertilization you had between those two groups [regional office and science center] is helpful.

MHA: So did you see any, anything about changes over the years in the administration of NMFS, for example that... you didn't particularly care for or you thought was a good thing?

PG: Well, I think, one of things that I mentioned to you was the fact that it changed from being a bunch of those bug hunting scientists to where we started to look into the economic, the social, and the legal aspects of some of the things that we were going to be doing and of course, remember when I came into the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, there was no 200 mile limit. So that was-- that was a big change but it didn't happen overnight. In some cases, it felt like it did sometimes but I think we took a bigger and broader perspective with-- but at the same token, I think that we became more and more bogged down with some of the bureaucracy that we had to go through which, sometimes precludes some of the things you'd like to get done from happening, I think, because we've got so many rules, regulations, environmental assessement, this assessment, that assessment, and you know some of it really, after a while it's like... we got a job to do, can we weed through all this sometimes and get it done in a timely manner? And we've got permitting issues, too, that sometimes-- permitting issues for us to even do some of the work that we're "permitting" ourselves to do which is, like, wow. But I guess we've got to be held to the same standards so. So yeah, it was a big change and then I think the change like I said going in from the Interior to Commerce... most people you're going to talk to would say "I don't know

anything about the whole thing." But we fit nicely in Interior... and we were, I think, a valuable part of it but it was one of those things where I think we got a new President and often times when these people would come in, they wanted to change up stuff and that was one of the big changes that occurred so.

MHA: Were you affected at all by the changes and things like the mathematical models and statistical models and things like that?

PG: Not me. Not me. No, because I was doing more of the, I guess we'd call it management aspect of things so no.

MHA: So since you were in management, sort of administration--

PG: Low level.

Both: [laughing]

MHA: Did you, did you see any changes in the office setting, office atmosphere or... things of that nature?

PG: Well, remember I was not, I was under the regional office but interestingly enough I was in, it seemed like all these little satellite locations like when I worked on underutilized species... I was literally in an old department store, so the rest of the people were in two or three other locations when they built the first of what -two or three different locations they were up in Gloucester. I was never in that location, I was also in the basement at the post office. So all these things and then they built, I think, the first building they went to and I designed the location for our program [observer] to go in there and that was the observer program at that time and we never moved in there because they then transferred the program from the regional office down to the center so then I came under the center for a while. So in mid-stream that sort of happened so... I never really was "in" the regional office per se, physically, it was very weird. [Laughing] It was very weird. It wasn't by design but it just sort of happened. And I was also at one point, I was in a trailer. The program was in the-- observer program was in a trailer... behind the Gloucester tech lab. So again, satellite off-site away from the rest of the group so whoever I worked for, my supervisor was never on site with me it seemed like. So that might have been on purpose, I don't know.

Both: [Laughing]

MHA: Has-- the-- you've been out of it ten years already is that what you said?

PG: Yeah, it might be longer than that, I'm not going to say.

MHA: Hard to believe--

PG: I know, it is hard to believe.

MHA: So, how do-- kind of-- what do you see as the future both of NMFS and yourself?

PG: Well, my future right now, I guess I could see that I would like to do you know the volunteering and now I've taken a little bit different tact here. I've looked into volunteering here at the Whaling Museum and I'm actually working on whaling captain logs and letters from... the wife of one of the captains who sailed with him for about, I don't know, eleven or twelve years and all the letters she wrote while she was doing all these travels. So that's sort of gone off in another direction here but there's other things that I might be doing volunteer-wise. For the agency? You know I've been away from it so long now that it's hard for me to say much about it. I mean, I would hope that, that we could... bring some of these resources back... without totally wiping out the whole industry. I mean, I see what I see from being way outside now, is that now the industry is sort of a shell of its' former self. I mean because New Bedford is-- I guess still is because of scallop-- the top producing port but there used to be an incredibly robust groundfish fishery there. I... those guys if they want to keep on fishing, I'd love to be able to see them do it but we have to have the resources there for them to be able to do it.

MHA: I forgot when you were talking about that... the-- at that time, wasn't there a large Portuguese fleet?

PG: Well, you know, in New Bedford when I was there it was-- I think it was the Newfoundland wave had occurred and the Norwegian wave had occurred and the Portuguese wave was occurring. So yes, there were a lot of Portuguese and I think those other two factions, maybe the Newfoundland and the Norwegians are a much smaller percentage now of the whole industry over there. I assume it's primarily Portuguese.

MHA: For the groundfish, yeah.

PG: Yeah.

MHA: The Norwegians moved-- mostly just scalloping.

PG: Well, some of them did, yeah, and some of them have passed away unfortunately. Yeah, so I could see the waves. I mean, some of them had already occurred before I got there and like I said the-- the Portuguese wave was there but not what it is now, I'm sure.

MHA: Did you have any issues with communication because of that?

PG: No, not usually. Not usually. And if we did, you know we tried to find someone that could interpret or whatever [laughing] no-- well, I mean, sometimes you'd talk to some of the Norwegian guys and you'd be saying "what the heck are they saying? Because I'd be like what!?"

And it would be like you'd have to turn the words around and you'd be like oh, okay now I know what you're saying. I won't tell some of the things that they said to me and I'd be like what!? Because it took me a while to figure out what they were saying but um... that was another little challenge but no, that wasn't a big problem and if it was sometimes you-- you were unsure whether they were using language to try to get you off their case. Because I think some of them understood more than they let on. I think if I had said to them "oh my God! I see a twenty dollar bill over there on the dock" they probably would have broken my arm to get to it [laughing]. But, yeah no. No, I enjoyed working with those guys over there even though I would get that question-- I invariably got that question what does your husband think of you doing this job or what does your boyfriend think of you doing this job-- you're doing a man's job, no, you shouldn't be down here and I'd be like... I got that, I must have gotten that at least one or twice every week I worked there. It was just amazing. They wouldn't let up on that.

MHA: And how long um-- just to go back a little bit to whole issue of the strike. You mentioned it didn't really affect your work per se but did you-- were you aware of how challenging that was for the people engaged in?

PG: Yeah and I wish I could tell you how-- I mean, do you recall how long it was because I don't.

MHA: No, I just know that it was pretty--

PG: Impacted.

MHA: Yeah, it broke the unions actually-- at least the '80-- I think it was 2 years I think it's like '84 to '86 or something.

PG: Well, see, I wasn't there then so that might have been another strike.

MHA: Oh, okay.

PG: Because I wasn't there so I would have been there primarily in the '70s so I don't think this strike lasted to the duration of the one you are thinking of...

MHA: Well, the one-- probably not because the one I'm thinking of... the auction actually closed at that time.

PG: Well, I mean, it must have closed when we came in because we could not go there to sell a catch. I mean, they knew that they had to divert to go to Boston and they didn't go to Boston out of choice by any matter because it just wasn't a scallop port. And they didn't have a scallop auction there like they did in New Bedford but I don't think this is the one that was quite so impacting because, I mean, yes, it would have, it would have impacted us from the standpoint that if there was no catch coming in, we weren't able to do any of the sampling that we wanted to

do. Because it was going elsewhere probably. But, no, other than that I mean we had plenty of work to keep us busy obviously but we weren't getting the samples that we really needed to get. I mean, that was kind of the lifeblood that we could provide for the people here who were doing all the assessments and the aging.

MHA: What I have heard about with the strike-- the strike in the '80s um... that the year-- well before the strike, I guess really, is that the unions kept the boats to a certain schedule. They had to be tied up for a certain amount of time when they came in and they could only go out for a certain amount of time so some fishermen talk about when the unions were strong, there was a conservation result-- it wasn't a conservation ethic-- it wasn't done for conservation--

PG: No, no.

MHA: --but the result was. So I don't know whether you saw that at all.

PG: No, I'm trying to think. I mean, when you said that I was kind of like I don't recall that. I mean, there was sort of some, you know, I hope I'm not telling you this out of school here because maybe I've-- my memory but I thought it was basically you came in, you off loaded and you had a good idea, not necessarily because the unions rules but because of the way it's always been done, that you would be going out say if you come in Thursday, you'd be going out Monday unless there was a weather situation. If you came in on a Friday you might be going out on Monday but I don't think... I don't recall that being so much union rule driven because there were unions but I don't recall a-- I mean everybody sort of knew how it would sort of go I think. Unless they lost crew members or the captain was sick or like I said it was weather. Weather was probably the biggest component. Yeah, so that's interesting that you're saying that. Because the industry pointed that out as, see we did have some inadvertent or we did have some conservation measure in place but I think that was primarily-- well, I shouldn't say this but -- it was very possibly driven by the fact that they had to have some time ashore to have some down time, to have some time with their families.

MHA: Well, that was the point. That was also the point where a lot of people were saying that after the unions were broken, they had no time at home and they had no predictability. So the boats would come in, they'd land and they'd turn around and go back out.

PG: Yeah, and some of that-- the rapid turnaround might have been driven by quotas and things like that whereas, you know, you got to get out there if the quotas is only so much and you know the other guys leaving the dock. Well, gosh, you got to run out there and get out there too, get your share. Yeah, I could sort of understand that but I bet some of the regulations might have some impact on them too there. But, yeah I don't remember that.

MHA: Okay, I think I've gone through all of the questions that I had intended to ask you. Are there-- is there anything that I haven't asked that you can think of that you-- that I should have?

PG: We talked about a lot here.

MHA: Yeah, you had a great, fascinating career.

PG: Yeah, I know, it's-- you know, multi-pronged here, I mean who would have thought? Who would have thought I would have started out as a plankton plucker and a librarian--a sea-going librarian, whatever, all these things in the air, on the sea, you know type of thing. It's exciting [laughing]. No I think, I think we covered a lot of it. I'm sure there are plenty of other stories, Madeleine, I don't know if I could drag them all out here today.