

Participant: Mr. Justin Yager
Researcher: Ms. Deanna Caracciolo
Date: 7/27/16
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[low moan of boat equipment in background]

DC: So it is July 27th, we are here in Newport. Could you please state your name for the recording?

JY: Justin Yager

DC: Alright, so I kinda just wanted to start off our conversation kinda open to you. So you can discuss anything. If you have a really cool fishing story, or how you got into fishing. Anything you want people to know.

JY: I got into fishing about 20 years ago when I was 21, just out of college, for about 2 and a half years. And then I started working on a boat. And the old guy was getting tired and not wanting to fish a lot, and he said "If you want to work this hard, as hard as you want to work then you have got to buy this boat." So I bought the boat from him and started fishing. Had the boat in the shop working on it for several months, and then I got it to where I wanted it and went fishing. And basically fished a lot. And the was in the mid 90's. Fished a lot, fished black cod, fished crab, fished salmon, fished tuna, [unsure] long line for all different kinds of fish. And basically the fisheries were changing, and I was trying to move forward in business and compete in the different fisheries, especially in the crab fishery. So then I bought this boat. This was the second boat I bought in '99, 2000 I believe I bought it. And it was a terrible crab season for the first year we had the boat and things were really rough, and we didn't really know how to shrimp so we would try to learn how to shrimp. Crab fishing wasn't that good that winter, and then followed by a shrimp season that wasn't that great. Things were fairly tough for several years financially distraining. And then in 2003, 2004 crab season we fished in Northern...we fished in Washington, we fished Northern Oregon, and then we fished in Southern Oregon, and it had a really good crab season. We had like 5 or 6 crab seasons in a row that were just super awesome. Just good crab seasons. And then shrimp kinda turned around. We powered the boat. The shrimp markets started coming back, and we started fishing shrimp. And that has worked out really well since then. So our timing was pretty good with the different fisheries, as far as our timing of when we got into them and when we were able to work at them. A few years ago we bought a second boat. Sometime between there I sold the smaller boat because without being on there and running the boat, it really wasn't making enough money off of the boat to warrant keeping it with the risk and the liability of insurance so...that was kinda how I got into fishing and that kinda where I'm at now is with 2 boats. Crab fishing and shrimping is out main stay. We do have other capabilities to do other fisheries if one of those fisheries is going to fail. So that's kinda where we are at. The times have been good in the fisheries, especially in the last 6 or 7 years. We have done, you know, things have been really good. The prices of seafood have been really good, shrimp and crab, and things have worked out well for us. It was, I guess our success was attributed a lot to timing and hard work. Things were a lot different back 20 years ago, or 15 years ago. Things have changed a lot since then. The cost has changed a lot as far as entry cost into these fisheries, and permit values, part of that is due to the price of seafood, the value of the product, that they have raised the value of these permits and the boats, and just inflation, and the cost of building boats has gone up so much. They can build a boat [deep breath] in the late 90's, early 2000's they could build a bout for like a million dollars like this, and now it costs 3 or 4. So the costs of operation to build a new boat in this class has...or the cost to building, the construction cost is much higher than it used to be. Insurance rates are much higher. Those are some of the big costs and changes. Our fuel really hasn't changed that drastically. And the permit values has changed drastically.

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You can't buy a crab permit for 300,000 dollars for a boat this size. It wouldn't...I started when the IU [?] was 100,000 dollars for the crab permit. A lot of the values have changed and that has made it a little bit harder to buy into the fisheries. But I think the revenue that the boats are generating is also higher than it was in those years too. I don't know how much it's really changed as far as difficulty of getting into the fisheries, but it seems to be more difficult to buy in. Just because it's bigger numbers and you have to be a little bit more of a business person to wrap your mind around the kinda the...dealing with those kind of figures and making it all work out.

DC: What do you think is driving this change? Like the increase in costs and the permits and everything?

JY: Well, in my perspective might be a little bit skewed. We have a little bit better equipment then we used to have. So a lot more technology. We have a lot better boats really. They are equipped a lot better. The gears a lot better. So it's more expensive. And insurance...we carry more insurance to try and eliminate risk, you know. Being able to, if say a crew member gets injured, be able to carry enough insurance so they are okay for the rest of their life even if they can't ever work again. You have to carry a lot on each person that works on a boat. So that has changed. We are carrying more insurance, more insurance on the boats, so it costs more for insurance. I think that the value of the seas food has changed a lot. So it's just a lot bigger figures. I mean I guess, you know, really 300,000 dollars in '99 might not be that much different than a million and a half now, but I don't think there's been quite that much inflation. So I bet our cost have gone up in the values in the boats have gone up. So there's more money kinda being exchanged in the fishing industry then there was in those year I think. Certainly seems to be more...you have to generate more revenue and you have bigger bills to pay kinda to make it all work out.

DC: So what are your personal motivations for being in the fishing industry?

JY: My main motivation is freedom; it always has been. And to be able to raise a family, take care of my family, and have the freedom to do what I want to do with my life. Obviously since we don't have a retirement program we have to make more money then what you would have to make if you had a pension plan or a retirement plan coming in. SO we have to make our own retirement so we have to be able to either have, maintain control of the corporation as you get older, and have income from it, or else have enough money set aside to retire. Because we don't have retirement. So motivation, to answer your question, the main motivation is to have freedom. I mean when you are in business for yourself it's awesome right? You don't really have to answer to anybody. You can pretty much do kinda what you want. Even though you're also a prisoner of your own prison that you have created because now you have a business that you have to keep working. You know, you have to make it work somehow or else you lose everything. And, um, but it's a good thing and it's just that maybe we do it because we don't fit into the rest of society perfectly so we have to figure out how to make it work for us differently. You know, where we can do it kinda our way. there's a lot of fishermen that, we are all a little bit different. We all how our own way of doing it. We all have different business plans and different models in our head about how we think things should work, or how we are going to make it work. That fits into wanting to be independent, but business is...independent personal business in tough. It just is. It's like you start out and it seems like you have to be good at it and then you have to just persevere, persevere, preserver, and eventually you start to see success. But it takes, it seems like, for me it took a lot of time just to see where I was actually maybe getting ahead of where I actually felt comfortable where I was at and what I was trying to accomplish, where I was at in the fishery, how well I was doing

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to where I wasn't concerned about next month's bills or whatever. On to where I felt okay about where things were going, this is working as planned. But it took a lot of time. You thing, you have a false conception in the fishing industry that you are getting rich sometimes when your turning a lot of dollars, but you're not really making much money. But I guess that's just business, but it takes time [chuckles] to kinda absorb that I guess. I didn't start out as good of a business person. I kinda had to learn it. I was just a hard working fishermen but I kinda had to learn the business side of it. It's a... the original motivation was probably freedom and being out on the ocean. It's awesome, it's a feel good job. Where you go out and you do the best you can, and you bring a product in and hopefully you are involved in a fishery that you enjoy being involved in. Something that your worried about sustainability and everything else, and just you feel good about it right? It's a fishery that you feel good about. You're going out and harvesting a product that you don't feel like your decimating the fishery, you're not hurting much else, you're just catching a product and your feeding people. And that's...it's like very basic pleasure. That's something that we have always done as humans, is provide for the tribe or other people or whatever. So you do have that. It is real and you do feel good about it. When you are catching a product and you are delivering it to a processing company that is distributing it to people that want to eat seafood. That part of it is really good. Plus, the solitude of being out on the ocean, and the comradery of working with a bunch of guys that you really care about, that you really like. It isn't always people you really like, a lot of people come and go kinda in the fisheries, but usually you have some guys on the boat that you really have a real team effort going and it makes it great. It's like your own little universe where you're out on the ocean, you're working, your running crab pots, whatever you're doing, but you're just doing the best you can and your also networked with other boats and working with other people, but that part of it is really a feel good thing. When you have got a team effort to go out and do a good job and make a good living for everyone on the boat.

DC: So do you have a favorite fishery?

JY: I do, yeah. Crab fishing. It's always been my favorite fishery. It's the first fishery I really saw any success in and it's my favorite fishery by far. I don't always...I've done really well in the crab fishery at times, and then I've done not so well sometimes. So I kinda have my ups and downs as far as how I do [chuckles] but I love it. It's challenging. Every year I'm challenged. It's one of those fisheries that you don't really have a good grasp on how well you're going to do until it's all over and done. And I guess a lot of fishers get that but there's a lot of fisheries that you have a pretty good idea of how you're going to do going into it. Crabbing really not that way. It's...I say it's definitely a risky fishery, but you...it's an all-out effort. Try and do the best you can, and it's a real team effort. It's physical labor to the max, and so everybody on the boat in your team, in your ability, determines how well you do. Not one of those fisheries where you can do it on your own [chuckles] that's for sure. Or you can do it...some fisheries you can do almost as well with a couple guys that really don't know much because it mostly depends on how much product you bring up, but [unsure] or whatever. Crabbing not that way. You have got too much physical labor to do every day. An it's all piece work. SO it depends on a lot of people.

DC: Do you have a least favorite fishery?

JY: Uhm...I don't participate in a least favorite fishery. I mostly just crab and shrimp. The last few years' shrimp has been good enough and the overlap of time is barely enough to do repair and maintenance on the boats. So we don't really have any excess down time to where we could get involved in any fisheries that we don't want to do. I don't have a least favorite fishery. If I did it would probably be slime eeling or something like that. These fisheries that I don't ever want to be involved in [chuckles]

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Fisheries where...there's some fisheries, and not to say anything about the guys that do those fisheries, I just don't want to do them. And I guess if I had to I probably wouldn't [chuckles] I'd probably do something else then fishing at that point. [chuckles] I don't have a least favorite fishery. They're both pretty clean fisheries right now. They both really are. I mean, crabbing and shrimping both are doing better all the time to try and make fisheries better we are constantly working on gear modifications for the shrimp fishery. Like LED lights that we put on the front end of the net to eliminate bycatch, it's so much better than it was 10 years ago, 5 years ago. We've had some great work by different people like Bob Hannah and Steve Johnson just retired from the fishery. They worked really hard that the industry was kinda protected and moving forward and developing different things to help protect the fishery from being shut down from issues like...there was canary rock fish, the eulachon smelt and different species that we have some bycatch in that fishery. But we have reduced it so much. It's gotten cleaner and cleaner and we are only trying to do better. We are trying to reduce bottom impact, least amount of bycatch, and then the least amount of time wasted in the fishery. Just towing up bottom where you're not catching shrimp. We are trying to be as efficient as we can with the knowledge that we have.

DC: So you mentioned your family, what is your family's role in all of this?

JY: My family's role is...well my father in law is a fisherman like me. He has boats, his own, and he has been in fishing since he was a little kid, forever, as long as he has been alive pretty much. His dad was a fisherman, he's a fisherman, he's been working on deck since he was a little guy. So he has been fishing a lot longer than I have and his daughter that I'm married to, she worked on the boats and she used to come and work with me crabbing as the relief skipper and work on the boat. And now I have a little boy and she does the accounting for the boats and the book keeping, and watches over the little guy. But she's busy. We always have little things come up with the boat and then there's payroll, the little parts and pieces. If I'm fishing she will bring stuff down to me. Uhm, little things always come up cause it's the way it is. I often think she's like, she has the ability to work another job and if she did our lives would be so hectic. They are hectic enough as it is right? So our business is big enough with 2 boats and 2-year round operations that fish year round, it's big enough and it's intense enough that there really isn't any extra time for us if we want to get away and all. SO we try to make vacation time in the summer time and get away and go to the mountains. We are pretty outdoor oriented people. What we do when we get free time is we have horses and stuff and we go to the mountains and we go camping, and go rail riding, or we go hunting, or we go fly-fishing. We did get a chance to go in July and we went fly fishing on the Locksaw River in Idaho and spent a couple weeks over there just kicking it over there. It was awesome. That's kinda how our lives work. We are pretty busy and then when we try to get away we try to get away.

DC: SO when you're not fishing here your fly-fishing up there? [chuckles]

JY: Yeah, I fly-fish, I hunt a lot, I hike a lot. I tried to...I don't know...that's just being out in the mountains. It's always a big source of happiness for me. That how I grew up, in the mountains. Always outside and that's just where I go to feel good about things. Take my boy out there. teach him how to fish and stuff like that.

DC: How old is your son?

JY: He's only 2! He goes like this for over line...had a fishing pole and he like "FISH!" we are down the river and he's heading down there with my fishing pole. He's just to where I can bring the fish in and he

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can bring it up and look at it and stuff. But he's already learning and kinda into it. And he is, for 2, he is ridiculous. For how much he gets around and how robust he is it's amazing. I'm like man, this kid is something else! The other day he did something, he didn't want me to do. I picked him up and he goes [swings arm] he hits me [chuckles] I'm like, I can't believe it. I looked at him and was like "are you serious?!" and he looks at me [makes a face]. Man this kid has got a will I'm telling you. We have got our hands full! It's crazy, but anyway...

DC: SO do you see yourself encouraging your son to go into fishing?

JY: Uhm...you know there will be opportunity for him. I'm not exactly sure how I'll approach it. I want him to do what he wants to do, and that's the biggest thing about any business or...I guess that would be the one thing that I could take away from my life's experiences; that if you don't love what you're doing, whatever it may be, especially if you're a business, if you are trying to run a business for yourself, if you don't love what you're doing then you're wasting your time because you may be successful but it's really hard to be, and you certainly won't be happy unless you love what you're doing. So if he wants to be a fisherman, he will have that opportunity. Am I going to encourage him? I mean...I guess. He will be around it, but I'm not going to say to him that he should be a fisherman or even suggest that really. I think he needs to figure that out if he wants to be a fisherman. He'll know there's opportunity there. I mean, he'll have a heck of a lot more than I did as far as starting out in the fishing industry if he wants to he can be it. He could do whatever he wanted. What he'll choose is hard to know. He seems like it. He's freaken energetic, and he's kinda loves boats, and he's super energetic little guys. So I'm hopeful, but he's going to have to figure it out on his own. It's kinda a personal thing.

DC: Yeah, because you didn't come from a fishing background correct?

JY: I didn't. My wife did. Yeah. I kinda started in on my own. I'm one of the few...well it wasn't always easy, I could tell you there. There was a lot of nights that I stayed out where I probably shouldn't have. A lot of storms I stayed out in and I would be like "what am I doing here?!" Getting pumpled. And I still do that stupid stuff [chuckles] So I don't know if I'm a very good learner [chuckles]

DC: Your wife will be so thrilled to hear this.

JY: Yeah [chuckles] but anyway...

DC: So what's the most challenging aspect of being a fisherman?... I know, loaded question.

JY: Wow...most challenging...the biggest challenge...the reason that it's so challenging is because you have so many duties, you know? You have to be an engineer. You have to be a navigator. You have to make good decisions when stuff starts going south. So not everybody can do that right? You have to be, kinda be able to keep everybody safe, and that means you have to be kinda a good engineer in the engine room and you cannot panic when stuff starts going sideways. That's generally one man's job. But you have gotta do that, and at the same time you have to catch product, and you have to keep crew happy, you know? SO you kinda dealt a lot of tasks as a skipper of a boat. It's not just 1 but you have several tasks that you have to do well. So that's fairly challenging to do a good job on a bunch of different jobs at the same time.

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DC: Could you give me an example? Like do you have a cool story of when you have had to do all of this?

JY: Most of my cool stories are about horrible mistakes [laughs]

DC: That's fine too [chuckles]

JY: No I guess not too horrible. I mean I've never had anything really bad happen. I've been fortunate. I've never had anybody severely hurt on my boats. So I am pretty cautious by nature as far as keeping the crew safe and sometimes when the weather just gets too bad we just call it. We try to have a really good back up plan all the time for mechanics and stuff. And being able to if something goes bad here what am I going to do here? So I haven't had any real catastrophes. I've been fortunate in that manner so knock on wood I have been lucky. As far as cool stories...I can tell you stories about bad weather and staying out when I probably shouldn't have. I mean, I remember one time we were fishing off of northern Washington, and this was years ago, and it was before Allwy 200 [?] came in and we could fish in Washington. SO we were up there fishing crabs and listen to the forecast and the forecast was horrible, but we were way up here. We were way up in Northern Washington so what were we going to do? We were going to have to go all the way back to Oregon to deliver. We can't go into Westport because we don't have a Washington permit. So I asked the guys, I said...I had this guy on the boat and he was a supper hardcore crab fishermen. We might have had 20,000 pounds of crab on the boat, and I go "hey guys the weather is going to get really bad tonight do you guys wanna go in?" I was unsure of it; you know? I was like "do you guys wanna go in or do you want to stay out?" and Kevin this guy that worked for me goes "I'D RATHER DIE IN THE STORM THAN UNLOAD 20,000 POUNDS OF CRAB!" and I was like "alright!" [laughing] I think we will just hangout and stay out. We stayed out and it got fricken horrible. I remember looking out the windows of this boat, you can imagine, I was looking like this [points out the window] and looking up at these waves crashing by the boat, and we are going with it you know? So we are going with the sea, and the waves are just crashing by and just big white water breaks and we are way up off just south of the Canadian border just getting thrashed. And I'm just idling with it and I'm thinking "what am I doing here?" And it was just knarly weather all night long. We would idle up there and turn around and jog into it going south. Daylight came and the weather was kinda subsiding. It was still blowing like 35 or 40 knots and we are on some gear and we are going to try and go to work because we are here and we are all way up there and didn't just wanna jog around all day so we were going to try and get something done. We start pulling gear and it starts hailing, and just like the crew is back there just getting pumpled. I was looking at it and I was just like - man...So we didn't die in this storm but we should have, now here we are [laughing] Yeah, there's been a lot of nights like that, just bad weather and trying to work through it. Sometimes the ocean can get really bad and it's like you never really know how bad it can get because there's really no limit to how bad the ocean can really get depending upon currents and the weather you're in. SO you never really know, but when it gets severe like that you get...yeah...you want to have a really good boat in those conditions because it's really unsure what's...what the weather...how bad it's going to develop into.

DC: SO were you scared? [chuckles]

JY: I'm sure I was, a part of me, not scared, but just grumpy scared [chuckles]

DC: [laughs] "I don't even wanna be here!" [chuckles]

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JY: Yeah! [chuckles] I don't know; you know? I don't know. I'm not going to say I've never been scared, cause I have been. I just try not to let it get the better of me. That's kinda...yeah...you just gotta kinda do the best you can. You may not like it but you have to do the best you can to just get through it. I haven't had too much horrible, horrible weather in the last few years really. Last winter was a lot of bad weather, but it was never super bad, it was just never nice. It was just miserable weather yeah. We had lots of it during crab season. It was just storm after storm after storm off of Southern Oregon. And it was just like, the fronts were super close together so it wasn't super severe but they would just pumple us. You'd get like a 5-hour break and then you go back to shitty weather again. Kinda like wears on a guy for sure.

DC: So changing direction [chuckling] that's terrifying, my hears racing, so what would you say attracts people to the business now, oppose to say when you started? Has there been any change in that?

JY: ...uhm...I don't know. You know I think one of the things...okay...I gotta answer that question, but I was thinking about it, like there is probably less new entries into the fishery then there used to be. So like, if you're talking about that, I will say that the industry is getting older as far as it's established. Like its quota is either rationalized, or there's limited entry permits, you know? Not that many years ago there wasn't any limited entry. SO you could just go buy a boat and a permit. Like all the fishermen that are say...getting older now, when they started they didn't, you didn't have to have a permit to go mid-water fishing, or you didn't have to have a permit to go black cod fishing. You didn't have to have a permit to go crabbing. You just went. And that's changed. So now there is a limited number of permits, and plus the fisheries are rationalized, or a lot of them. So they know there's a quota system, and they know what they are going to get. The value of that quota system is really high. So you can't buy into those fisheries easily. So that would make it pass down, you know, to families and sold. But it's only sold to somebody with a lot of money. Not somebody who new entry into the fishery who is just trying to get started like say I was, could never afford to buy quota share or black cod permits or build a boat to fish in the mid-water fishery, or even crab fish hardly, that's expensive as well. So I guess that is one of the biggest things that has changed if you talk about aging of the fleet, but there's a lot of families that are incorporating their children into the fisheries, you know? Family run businesses and people...like my brother in law running boats and getting into the fishery and working toward running boats, and families like the Rutherford family where they own 3 boats and the kids all run the boats. So as far as the fleet, aging of the fleet...I'm not sure if your answering your question right cause of what you asked me, but I guess it's kind of...the industry is a little bit more established then it used to be. So it kinda is was it is, and it has to be that way. Otherwise, if we had open access where anybody could get in and go fishing like it used to be, we wouldn't have a fishery because everything would be overfished. So ... uhm...so the fishing industry is getting older, you know? Established. But I think it's doing well, and I think there's a lot of young people in it still; running boats and working on boats. The crew isn't getting older really. Most of our crew is pretty young. But a lot of the stuff was bought up a long time ago and it's been held in hands and passed down or whatever. So the owners might be getting older and there's no way to prevent that really. there's no easy solution to that because there's so much money invested in it to keep the industry standing, you know. It's the same with the processing side. You have to, now in days, to keep up with all of the certifications and everything for fisheries, processing and everything they have to invest a lot of money in processing capability to meet the quality standards. So...it takes a ton of money to do that so these companies have to invest the money to do it. Same with the fishing industry. We have to invest a lot of money in these boats to make sure we have a safe program and opportunity for the crew. The entry level boats, you know the smaller boats, you know the smaller boats that people are buying, say if you wanted to just start out like I did I guess you

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would just have to do it the same way I did it. And I ... man I know and I think about it and I know quite a few young people that have bought boats in the last few years, that have worked their way to being successful in the fisheries. You know? So is the fleet ageing really? I'm not sure. I think, I mean, there isn't the opportunity like before when everything was open access, but there's still a lot of young people working their way up through it. I think if the fleet was aging, you know, then it creates more opportunity for somebody who's young and hard working to work their way up through it right? Because these people aren't may be able to work as hard, or they have to hire somebody. Often times the best fishermen are owners or family of owners [unsure] if you have to hire then just hire somebody to run both a lot of times. Although that's not always true either. Some of the guys are just hot shot fishermen that just wanna run boats, and that's just what they want to do so I don't know. I don't know. I guess I don't know at all about the aging of the fleet, if it's getting older or not. I know there's some successful ones coming up though. I know that for sure.

DC: So what's the average age of the crew, crewmen in the fleet?

JY: I don't know, but that might be around 28, 30. Sometimes there older on...I don't like having guys too old. Not that I fire them when they get too old or whatever but [chuckles] I just don't want to work somebody beyond what their...because it's pretty rigorous work. Our crews have always been pretty young. They have a, I had some older guys that used to fill in or work part time and stuff and it works out good, or they work 1 season and then they don't want to work the next one, you know, so they get time off. But not real old. If you just want to be a crewman on a boat it's a great opportunity, but you can't stay on the deck of a boat. That's not like a career that you want to stay on. If you want to be a crewmen and make money and then get into the fishery where you work your way into the wheel house and run boats or whatever, that's great. but you don't want to ever be a career crewman. It's a great opportunity to make money and use that money to go do something else. Or move up to where your running boats, because it's just, there's guys that do it. there's quite a few guys that do it. But when you're working on the deck when your 50 or 60, I don't know, that's kind of tough. That's kinda a tough environment. It doesn't bother you when you're young, but things like that bother you when you're older. Getting beat up bothers you when you're getting older and older [chuckles] I noticed that.

DC: So then what about owners? What's the average age of owners around?

JY: Uhm, boy, I mean I'm sure a lot of people like NOAA and stuff have a lot more information on that. I don't know. I'm probably one of the younger owners, but there's owners that are younger than me. Maybe I'm just...that's an illusion, I used to be young, now I'm old [chuckles] Often times I catch myself like that and I still think I'm young. I'm not.

DC: Do you mind if I ask? How old are you?

JY: I'm 41

DC: Your still young! Oh my goodness

JY: [chuckles] No, but I always used to be the youngest guy on the boat, now I'm no longer but...I guess at 41 I'm one of the younger owners, but there's some that are younger than me. A good friend of mine is younger then I am and he owns a boat.

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DC: SO then if there was graying, how would it...you said it would impact the fleet in a way there would just be more spots for people to fill. Is that what you meant?

JY: Well I'm just saying it would be an opportunity for somebody that's willing to work hard, you know? If...it depends upon what level your talking about on, you know? If you talking about as far as running boats, yes. If you're talking about as far as owners that have young people running boats, then no. So...I think it just goes back to what I said is it's just like, the industry is getting a little older. It is. That's all there is to it. It's older and it's more established. We are kinda understanding how things work better. We are understanding fisheries better. We are mapping the ocean better. We have better technology. We know how to catch these fish. Catching them is no longer a problem. There is not wilderness out there. We know what it looks like pretty much. We map the bottom of the ocean at 1000 fathoms. We know, we know what our grounds are like. Like we have it mapped in our heads, on our computers, I mean we know. We know what it looks like. there's not big mystery. We aren't just going out into the ocean and going...We don't always know where the fish are or where the shrimp are because they move around, but we have the technology to see them now. We never had 20 years ago. So we have a huge advantage over these animals that we didn't just have. That's why it's important to have good regulation to keep us from over capitalizing the fisheries and overfishing things. That's kinda how the industries went. We understand it better, there's more...you know the regulations are more set in stone. We are doing better with management of fisheries, you know? And the industry is getting older because it just is.

DC: It's good to hear how optimistic you are.

JY: there's not a bad thing I don't think.

DC: Talking to a lot of people I have gotten a bit depressed, but it's good to hear you being optimistic [chuckles] It's nice

JY: Yeah, well I think, I guess...It's kind of a deep note, but I feel like humans have the ability, you know, to pretty much destroy everything. So we can pretty much ruin everything on the face of the earth if we go unchecked or whatever. So with fisheries it's kinda of the same thing. The advantage we have though is that we are able to see ahead and try and do better. So that's a big advantage. that's the only real advantage we have because we are still such an aggressive species. but having that ability to see ahead and trying to learn how to do better with management is really our only hope, and do better with everything. As we become more and more efficient, we are also becoming...as long as we are managing ourselves correctly, we are becoming better...doing a better job. The least amount of time that it takes for us to catch, say 100,000 pounds of shrimp, the least amount of time we spend out there burning fuel and towing nets around, the least amount of time we spend doing that, the better it is ecologically. You know? The least amount of fuel burned and then your feeding people. The best thing about wild seafood is if it's properly managed, it's probably one of the best ways to feed people. it's like...I don't know what it's like. It's like organic farming but it's not...it's even...I mean you can't create food; we have to eat something right? So no matter what you end up having to take something to feed people. No matter what it is, you're doing. there's no other way. So as long as it's sustainable and you're doing a good job with it and you're not depleting the resource, it's as good as you can do. That parts good. I'm optimistic about the future in that. I think we are getting smarter. I gotta believe we are, if we're not we're in trouble that's all I can tell you [laughing] And the sad part is if we're not smart enough we are going to be the ones that pay the most for it. because natures not going to lose out in the end.

Participant: Mr. Justin Yager
Researcher: Ms. Deanna Caracciolo
Date: 7/27/16

DC: So for Newport itself. last couple questions, for Newport itself, I like, i mean I personally it looks like a fishing community to me, would you say it's a fishing community?

JY: I think it's a big part of the economy here. It's like really the backbone of Newport I'd say because it's so consistent here. I mean, we also have the distant waters fleet here that they fish in the Alaska and stuff and generates a lot of revenue. They come down here and their boats ship yard down here, and work down here you know. It's the backbone. You know there's a lot of tourism here too. And then I guess like neither community it has those other things. Newport, the fishing part of it really strengthens this community. So if it wasn't like...as effective as other communities when you know...or during tougher times. Newport kinda just takes everything in stride that way because it has quite a lot going on. As far as industry it's creating real product and new money. So that's kind of, I mean, it's a pretty robust economy because of that. it does need to have fisheries the support that obviously. These fishermen out of Newport, they reach out and fish in Washington, California, all over and come back to Newport and bring product back here. This boat just delivered shrimp from Washington yesterday. It's leaving to go back up to Washington tomorrow morning.

DC: So what would happen, what would the impacts to Newport be if you took away the fishing? If any...

JY: oh there would be severe impacts. The port would be; it would be just like Florence. It would be a weak tourist town with really no economy. Uhm, there's probably more tourism here then Florence, but I've seen that town just go to shit with no opportunity for people and no real working, no jobs. The thing is these guys that work on these boats, they actually do have pretty good jobs. They make pretty good money. You know? And they make enough money to buy a house, to support a family, to make a mortgage payment, to have a life here. That's important. If you have a boat like this where your supporting 4 families, that's important to the community right? With all these different boats it's the same thing. The processing plants, it's all part of revenue that's being generated by the fisheries. SO without that, yeah, Newport would be a shadow of what it is now. It's kinda a pretty important part. And I wouldn't live here if it wasn't for the fishing industry and we would have to go somewhere else. there's just not enough opportunity to keep us here other than that. But because that's kinda where we're at. And I think it's a big part of the economy, for sure. The spend a lot of money on everything. Even like Fred Meyer here is an example, it's one of their top stores, and they tell us that because of the fishing industry here. People buy a lot of groceries from Fred Meyer here so it's one of the top producing stores supported by the fishing industry here. SO everything, even all the little businesses and stuff, get business from the fishing industry. A lot of it is from the fishing industry. SO it definitely keeps the industry gong here and without it I don't think it would be much. It would still have the tourism industry in the summer time, but they don't really...the tourism industry gets really slow here in the winter time.

DC: Yeah, it makes sense [chuckles]

JY: Yeah, it's pretty nasty [chuckles]

DC: So would you say there's a tipping point? Do you think Newport would ever get to that point where it would tip away from fishing?

Participant: Mr. Justin Yager

Researcher: Ms. Deanna Caracciolo

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JY: I don't think so. No, not as long as their fisheries. I don't think so. We are kinda in the heart of some pretty good fish habitat here. Probably, we are in the center of the Dungeness Crab range, you know. So the Dungeness crab range through Alaska, but they also range through central California, and this is kinda like their prime habitat here. It's probably, it's as good a habitat as there is anywhere for Dungeness Crab. Pretty much. Washington, here, California at times, great crab habitat. We're not at the southern end or the northern end, we are kinda in the middle. So even if there was a shift one way or the other, there's still going to probably be crabs here. And I just don't see there being a tipping point where there is no fisheries. I can't even imagine that. It's such a big...perhaps...but that's kinda the end of days I think. If there's no fisheries and no fish to catch we are in serious trouble. Way beyond anything I hope to ever see. I'm hoping we are a little smarter than that. You know, we deal with all kinds of problems, but...thoughtless problems like ocean acidifications and [unsure] meetings to make sure we are monitoring this stuff, but it is doughtless because it is coming from all over the world, it's not just here. But...I don't see fisheries going away from Newport anytime soon. I hope not. I'm kinda invested in it [chuckles]

DC: Just a little bit? [chuckles]

JY: Yeah [continued laughing]

DC: Well that's my last formal question, but I want to make sure that I'm not missing anything that you want to say. So do you think there is anything I am missing in this whole thing that I should know?

JY: I don't really think so. I guess I would just emphasize that there's a certain portion of the fishing industry that's always looking back and saying "oh well it isn't what it was 50 years ago" or whatever. Probably that's some association with the aging of the fleet. Well what worked 50 years ago doesn't work 50 years from now. So I feel that the fishing industry here in Newport is doing well and families are doing well in the fishing industry. Now maybe not all, you know? But I do think that change is good and we are doing better. We are trying to do better with the management of these fisheries, and a better job with our fishing. Becoming more conscious of what we are doing and we are learning more. And I think that [unsure] the fisheries where the fisheries in the future, if there's more collaboration between fishermen that really care about the resource and the fisheries working with scientists and managers to try to do better, that's big. Because fishermen do know a lot. they do know a lot because they are out there a lot and they see a lot, you know? From all the years and they have to retain that information because that's what determines how well you do. So you learn a lot about animal habitats, habits, you know, and estimates of how many fish and crabs there are in the ocean. You kinda have to learn to get a feel for that to do well. So I think there's a trend towards that direction and ya know I think there's a lot of room for optimism in the fisheries. I do. I think the futures going to be okay. there's a lot of concern. My main concern is always climate change and pollution in the ocean, ocean acidification or whatever. Those are the main concerns. Those are going to be the end of us possibly if we don't do something, but you know...We...I hope we can turn it around. I mean there might be a trend toward that in the future, I mean there needs to be. That's it. Fishermen tend to look back to much. I look forward and say "Hey we can do better." Fishermen are afraid of change and sometimes that what happens is if your too afraid of change you don't adapt and you go away.

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