

*Interviewer:* What is your name?

*Rich Malinowski:* Rich Malinowski.

*Interviewer:* How would you describe what you do for a living?

*Rich Malinowski:* I am a fishery biologist for National Marine Fisheries Service. I have been doing that for six years here in South Florida. Prior to that, I was in Washington State working with salmon for five or six years up there. Prior to that, I was in New Jersey with oysters. Prior to that, I was in Colorado, in high mountain streams and lakes.

*Interviewer:* How was that?

*Rich Malinowski:* That was fun. That was a good job. It was my first job out of college. It was very remote. We would take horses up and backpacks. We would go up into the mountains and survey streams and do fish population surveys. That's what really got me interested in fisheries.

*Interviewer:* How did you get started in your career?

*Rich Malinowski:* I was going to Arizona State, and I didn't have good enough grades to get into veterinarian school, and so I wound up being a fish biologist.

*Interviewer:* What do you like about what you do?

*Rich Malinowski:* What do I like about what I do? I am helping future generations sustain fishing and food supplies. I work with nice people. Most fish biologists, we don't make a lot of money, and so we've got to be nice. We travel a lot. There are a lot of different aspects in fisheries science.

*Interviewer:* What do you dislike about your job?

*Rich Malinowski:* I don't have too many dislikes about it. I wish I could be out of the office more, out in the field doing stuff like this. I used to do a lot of habitat management, and so I was always out in the field with the engineers looking at stuff. Now I'm a little older, and so I moved inside and sit behind a desk and write regulations. That's one thing I don't like, is sitting behind a desk too much.

*Interviewer:* What would you say is most rewarding about your job?

*Rich Malinowski:* Seeing a young kid catch a fish and smile and take pictures. When I see happy people, it's good.

*Interviewer:* How much time do you take off of your job right now?

*Rich Malinowski:* I take three or four weeks a year of vacation.

*Interviewer:* What would you like people to know about your job?

*Rich Malinowski:* That we're here for service. We're the federal government, and people can call us for questions and look to us for solutions for things. We listen to the public and hear their issues, but in a professional manner. Just don't scream at us and say you're doing this wrong. Give us options and solutions instead of just problems. If you've got a problem, I will ask them, what's your solution?

*Interviewer:* Do you have any dreams or goals?

*Rich Malinowski:* Yes, to be rich and travel around the world. No, but some day I would like to catch a big marlin or maybe a tarpon, in terms of fishing aspects. Other dreams, I'm getting married soon, and so that should be fun. I guess just to have fun is a dream.

*Interviewer:* Do you need any skills for this job or education?

*Rich Malinowski:* I have got a college degree, yes. I have had all kinds of training, in terms of forty-hour OSHA training when I went out on the oil spill. I've had chemical safety training. I've had NEPA training, which is National Environmental Policy Act training. I've had communications training of how to deal with people on the phone, and so there is quite a bit of training on it. I have a bachelor's degree in fisheries science.

*Interviewer:* How long did it take you?

*Rich Malinowski:* The degree is four years in college, and the training is every year or whenever you need to update.

*Interviewer:* How old were you when you started fishing?

*Rich Malinowski:* How old was I when I started fishing? Probably eight years old. I was living in New Jersey, and we used to go down to

the local lake and get a cantaloupe or a watermelon out of farmer's field and head down there and fish for some sunnies and bass and bluegill and stuff. I continued that throughout my life.

*Interviewer:* What was the biggest fish you ever caught?

*Rich Malinowski:* The biggest fish I ever caught, and I was thinking about that the other day, and it was probably a forty-five-inch striped bass out of the Delaware River. It was migrating up for spawning. It was a good-sized fish.

*Interviewer:* Where were you born?

*Rich Malinowski:* I was born in Canton, New Jersey, just outside of Philadelphia.

*Interviewer:* How old are you?

*Rich Malinowski:* How old am I? I am fifty years old.

*Interviewer:* So you have traveled a lot?

*Rich Malinowski:* I have traveled a lot and lived in a lot of places, but now I'm here in Florida, and I like it. It's nice, and I'm going to settle down for a little while.

*Interviewer:* What is one of your greatest experiences fishing?

*Rich Malinowski:* Greatest experiences fishing, that's probably we were fishing off of Cape May, New Jersey, out of Cape May, and we caught a couple of big sharks, probably eight-foot or ten-foot sharks. They were tiger sharks, I believe.

Then we were trolling on a thirty-five-foot vessel and, halfway through the troll, we had to put in thirty gallons more of diesel fuel. We had this drum on the boat, and we were pumping it out. Anyway, we caught these beautiful dolphin, mahi-mahi. We caught the male first. It was a state record at the time. I don't know how long it was, but it was pretty big. Then the captain said just keep the lures in the water, because the female will follow him. The next thing you know, we got the female. She was a little smaller fish, and that was a great experience. It was a good time.

*Interviewer:* Has anything bad happened to you while you were out

fishing?

*Rich Malinowski:*

No, and, actually, I have been on a Korean stern trawler up in the Bering Sea and crashing through ice, and nothing happened there. That was probably the scariest I've been. It was very cold. That was in the wintertime up there.

In terms of here, probably just breaking down. My fuel filter dissolved, and I was lucky I was close to the dock. I had to get out and swim. I had to put the life jacket on and swim over with a rope to pull the boat to the dock. That was pretty scary, but that's probably about it.

*Interviewer:*

What type of fish do you catch most often?

*Rich Malinowski:*

In the bay, I am fishing for seatrout and some gag grouper when we fish in the channel. We also catch cobia once in a while. We get some small snappers down around the bridge. Offshore, we're fishing for some bonitos and some smaller tunas and jacks and grouper and snapper. If you go out on a headboat out here, you usually catch red grouper and a lot of grunts.

*Interviewer:*

What is the average amount of fish you catch every time you go fishing?

*Rich Malinowski:*

Not enough. It's never enough. Lately, not much at all. The last time I went out, we didn't have any keepers. We could have kept a bonnethead shark, but I threw that back. We caught a couple of Key West snappers, or white grunts. We caught a couple of them. They were pretty good sized, and so we took them home. It was enough for a meal, but generally we catch a couple of grouper and a couple of snapper and a couple of grunts, enough to have dinner.

*Interviewer:*

Since you're a fishery biologist, do you think pollution has affected most of the fish?

*Rich Malinowski:*

Pollution in the bay has definitely taken its toll on the industry, in terms of nitrates and phosphates from all the fertilizers, especially here in Tampa Bay, where they have a lot of phosphate mining. If you look at some of the old pictures of fishermen in Tampa Bay, they were catching some big fish.

Siltation is another issue. It has covered up the seagrass

beds and created issues with that. As a result, when you get siltation, you've got to go dredge. When you dredge, you're messing up the natural environment. You've got to put those spoils somewhere. Sometimes those spoils are contaminated.

That silt, while they're dredging, covers up the oyster beds or the mussel beds, which fish live off of, and they don't move around, and so they wind up getting silted over. The crabs and stuff can move around. It doesn't affect the fish too much, but the amount of clarity in the water doesn't allow the grass to grow, which doesn't allow the little organisms, and so it affects the whole food chain.

*Interviewer:* What do you love most about fishing?

*Rich Malinowski:* Being on the water. It's very soothing and relaxing. Fishing costs a lot of money though. When you go out, you've got to pay for your fuel and you've got to buy your bait. That's probably the thing that I like least about it, but being out on the water and catching the fish is exciting. It gets your heart going. You never know what it's going to be.

*Interviewer:* Have you ever earned money off of fishing?

*Rich Malinowski:* I had a little aquaculture farm in New Jersey. I didn't actually fish, but I sold fish. I raised fish in a 5,000-gallon tank and a 3,000-gallon tank in my barn, but, no, not directly. It's illegal to sell fish recreationally.

*Interviewer:* What do you love most often whenever you're fishing?

*Rich Malinowski:* Just keep the line in the water. Keep as many lines in the water as you can and see what you can get. Drift fishing, and I think anchoring-up sometimes destroys the environment a little bit. If you're not in a hot spot, you're wasting a lot of time with the anchor, and so I traditionally like to drift and figure out the tides and which way the wind is going to blow you and just drift across the areas you want to be at. If you don't get a hit, you keep moving and circle back. That's usually how I fish.

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