

Male Interviewer: Okay so what we are trying to do is just have you talk a little bit about what is your name, where you are from and what is the type of fishing that you do.

Dave Zalewski: Okay sure it is Captain Dave Zalewski. I run the Charter boat Lucky Too Charter out of Madeira Beach and I have been charting for probably close to 35 years all in this area right here. I do primarily offshore fishing and you know offshore fishing consists of at times trawling within 100 yards at the beach but the majority of my fishing is offshore. Because of economic factors I limit myself to about 30 miles offshore.

Male Interviewer: Okay and what we would like to do is because we are trying to focus on red tide is have you think about the different red tide events that you have experienced.

Dave Zalewski: Sure. Okay.

Male Interviewer: And what we try to do with this map is have you kind of draw out where you have seen red tides occurring and things like that. So if you go back, what was the first red tide that you can really remember experiencing and then talk a little bit about how it might affect...?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah I have been experiencing red tide off and my whole history of charter boating in this area. I mean we have had mild blooms. We have had major blooms. You know the one that comes to mind I think was about five or six years ago and that one was almost as severe as this one here... the one we have right now. As far as devastation.

Male Interviewer: There are the 2005 and the 2006.

Dave Zalewski: Probably right around there you know. It was a while back anyway you know.

Male Interviewer: Is that the first one that you remember?

Dave Zalewski: That was the first major one. I have experienced fish kills through the years you know and small red tide outbreaks through the years. A lot of times you do not even notice it and media does not even cover it you know. They are gradually becoming more aware of them and so the media covers them and it has its impact anyway. But the last one just historically if you want this is... you know I love to scuba diving and I didn't have much chance to [00:02:00] do it last year. Business was so good that I only got in the water one time. But the last major one was the year '05 or '06 one. I dove on South County Artificial Reef about two weeks before it really had a big impact, you know, so goliath grouper and mangrove snapper and all kinds of bait fish on the [Indiscernible] [00:02:18] wreck and I dove on it after the red tide... the impact of the red tide and I went through a layer of black water. There is no other way to describe it. It was just weird you know. And I got down to the bottom and I saw two mangrove snappers, that's all there was there. Everything else was gone and you know that's had an impact mentally. I keep thinking about it going back to it and I would assume this last red tide was just as severe in that area as it was before.

Female Interviewer: Can you show us generally where that area was?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah let's see if I can find it. Well it is near John's Pass anyway.

Female Interviewer: John's Pass is...

Dave Zalewski: John's Pass we will find here.

Female Interviewer: That's the tracing paper. Down here is John's Pass.

Dave Zalewski: Oh I am sorry.

Female Interviewer: Sorry... just to make sure you are awake. *[Chuckle]*

Dave Zalewski: This is probably... I don't know far this is. This is what... 20 fathoms here?

Female Interviewer: These are in feet sorry.

Dave Zalewski: Feet? Okay so that was probably this area right here.

Female Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: Yeah this would be the artificial shore. I wanted to talk about the artificial offshore reef anyway.

Female Interviewer: You can just draw in it and just... yeah.

Dave Zalewski: Just do it right here?

Female Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Dave Zalewski: That was it okay. If this is the South County artificial reef that's where it was anyway.

Female Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: Yeah and I do fish at artificial reefs you know fairly often.

Male Interviewer: How far? What is your range in fishing in this area?

Dave Zalewski: Okay I fish from Clearwater South to off of Anna Maria.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: And it is very restrictive anyway maybe off of Sarasota because they don't interfere in our trip anyway. So that would be from... let's see here... Clearwater is up here. That would be from here down to about here. [00:04:00]

Male Interviewer: About there? Okay.

Female Interviewer: And can you... that was in the 2005 event?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah, yeah.

Female Interviewer: Can you show generally where you think the red tide occurred in 2005? I understand if it goes beyond... yeah.

Dave Zalewski: It was probably about the same as here okay in this reef up here.

Female Interviewer: Can you draw that out for us here?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah and from what I experienced this was from the shipping channel which is here all the way up to Clearwater... okay south of Clearwater but eight miles offshore.

Female Interviewer: Okay so...

Male Interviewer: You don't have to be absolutely precise, just kind of draw an outline for us.

Dave Zalewski: Here to the shipping channel which is down here okay.

Female Interviewer: Okay great!

Dave Zalewski: Yeah.

Female Interviewer: And eight miles out?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah and the reason I know eight miles... you know a little bit further away... I wear contacts and my throat was affected. I had been absolutely blessed with business you know and I would go almost every day and so as I would run through it you know... my contacts were daily wears and I could feel the effects on my contacts and also in my throat you know so running eight miles through it and then in the evening eight miles back you know I would be literally... you know my throat was affected and my speech was affected so. And that's why and this was day after day after day.

Male Interviewer: Right. How did it affect your fishing, your business in that sense?

Dave Zalewski: Okay here is the thing that nobody likes to hear. My business was great.

Female Interviewer: *[Laughter]*

Dave Zalewski: I have 80% repeats and referrals and I don't depend on walkups, very, very often I get a walkup which is my type of business I have been running through the years. And so people would call. Every call you know during this time period would ask me about red tide and as soon as I explained to them that you know we are going past the red tide, they were fishing in deeper waters where the red tide had no effect I would book my trips up. You know I had a great year last year.

Male Interviewer: So were you going out further than you usually do or you just...?

Dave Zalewski: No I went out further [00:06:00] for whale fishing you know and as far as trawling goes the trawling during the red tide period was nonexistent in that area you know. And the other thing we had an impact was that it started out south of here down Sarasota okay. The migratory fish were able to run away from it and our macro fishing was superb, our macro very good *[indiscernible]* [00:06:22] fishing was superb, but once the red tide reached here it went down.

Male Interviewer: And that was... are we still talking about the 2005...?

Dave Zalewski: No I am sorry. I am back. I am sorry.

Female Interviewer: No, no that's okay.

Dave Zalewski: I jumped all over the place.

Female Interviewer: Its okay we'll just join it.

Dave Zalewski: We are back *[Indiscernible]* [00:06:38].

Female Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: 2005 I can't remember exactly what type of fishing I was doing. I remember the red tide was so devastating and you know this year I do not see as many Goliath Groupers falling. But in 2005 what we saw in the last, they were all over the shore.

Male Interviewer: So on a scale of one to ten how... the 2005 red tide where would you place that with ten being the worst and one being...?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah this would be a ten the one in 2005 and this one here nine and a half.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: Yeah.

Female Interviewer: Okay so you score a ten for the 2005 and then this past year 9.5?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah this one was bad and again I can't remember...

Female Interviewer: *[Laughter]*

Male Interviewer: And for the 2005 do you remember anything like specific species or anything like that or any anomaly about that?

Dave Zalewski: It affected... well there's a couple of things that had an effect on it. I think the same thing happened here. Mangrove snappers do not seem to be affected by it you know as much anyway. I am sure it affects some. The other thing was the shrimp were not affected by it okay and because of the fact that the red tide killed off the shrimp predators, pinfish and the *[Indiscernible]* [00:07:53] fish you know inside the bay the shrimping was terrific for those that did it the following year you know. [00:08:00] you know the shrimper already had his trap loaded.

Female Interviewer: So it killed off the predators?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah and so we had really good shrimping and the crabbing was also really good for the people that did it. So you know there is a balance of nature. Everything you know has some positive effect even though there was such a negative effect on the fisheries and the... you know both voyaging fish I think ran away from it. The benthic fish were not smart enough to run. They died you know. One thing that was an absolute surprise was the amount of eels that were affected by the red tide.

Female Interviewer: In... in which year?

Dave Zalewski: Oh it was in this last one. I don't remember the 2005.

Female Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: But this year here you know there was... I didn't realize how many eels we had in this area you know so. Biologists probably know that but I mean it just was you know eel after eel after eel was dead you know. You know in my observation we had seen the dead fish. They didn't die right there. They waited till they sink to the bottom. They decompose out of surface and maybe the eels because of their skin and everything you know tended to be more solid in the *[Indiscernible]* [00:09:12].

Female Interviewer: We actually had that down south too, tons of eels. Yeah it seems to be all the way down the coast.

Dave Zalewski: We don't get it over here. You know I catch maybe one a year so.

Female Interviewer: Yeah that is really interesting.

Male Interviewer: Well so can we well map out this past red tide?

Dave Zalewski: Okay this was the past red tide... the last one.

Female Interviewer: Oh this is the last one?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah.

Female Interviewer: Okay so we'll put that one in a different color. Yes those are in a different color.

Dave Zalewski: Okay. You know as far as the effect on me [*Indiscernible*] [00:09:48] red tide was traveling in all these areas you know. You know I am thinking the signs [00:10:00] you know I put all kinds of traps out there and I would hope that the tide would elevate them to pick them up the next day and after the red tide got out here there was nothing in the traps... I mean zip you know. And we pulled it one time and there was one stone crab shell. It was dead you know and so I knew I had to pull up my traps you know but it never stopped the pinfish. The other thing how that same area is loaded right at this time so they just aren't there. I don't know if they moved out. I don't think they did because we saw the dead ones but somehow you know they did not come back to that area.

Female Interviewer: So how long... sorry you may have said this right at the beginning. How long have you been fishing in this area?

Dave Zalewski: 35 years at least.

Female Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: I have been chartering for 35 years. I have been fishing forever.

Female Interviewer: Okay 35 years and then so before this 2005-06, you don't have any recollection of other major red tide events?

Dave Zalewski: No major, just you know small... you know small blooms and all that. And people weren't really so concerned about it you know. There wasn't that much information but it was always small blooms you know. The 2005 one that was major and then this one here was you know another major one yeah.

Female Interviewer: Okay so really just those two that you remember in the last... ever since you have been fishing?

Dave Zalewski: They were the major yeah.

Female Interviewer: The major? Okay.

Dave Zalewski: I remember small blooms with dead fish you know but nothing major if you go around and all the rest of it you know but this was pretty bad right here.

Female Interviewer: Okay so these small blooms do they affect your fishing and your business or just...?

Dave Zalewski: No they don't. We just fish around them... just... you know if you knew the red tide was down to the south by the shipping channel you up in the north you know.

Female Interviewer: Oh okay.

Dave Zalewski: And it wasn't as prevalent. It was in patchy spots you know before and now this time it was just so widespread you know and so devastating.

Female Interviewer: Yeah okay.

Male Interviewer: And you said that your business wasn't affected. But that [00:12:00] is it because of your clientele?

Dave Zalewski: My client base they were only reasonably affected. If I would have been a normal charter boat in this area you know they were ready. Again there is... you know I just did my business model from way back you know and that's the way it should be. You know it's to manage people you know way for a way up trip and it's a onetime shot for them. They don't realize that they have to build a client base. I assume they come and they go all the time you know so. The in-shore guys really took a beating though you know because the... yeah it smelt so bad you know the bay was so bad they had no place to go. I guess I was fortunate I fished outside of it you know.

Male Interviewer: Were your customers aware of it... the red tide... did they know?

Dave Zalewski: Oh yeah. The majority of the calls I got during this real bad period when the media was all very aware of it they would call and ask you know what about the red tide you know in every single call. You know the callers were very aware of it and they ask every single one of them. I told them we will just go out further and we will still catch fish. The fish are edible? That was the other question that came up you know. Are the fish edible?

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Male Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: Yeah. In my line I would scoop up the ones that were good. I sure know my stuff up there.

Female Interviewer: *[Chuckle]*

Male Interviewer: And most of your clients they'll take fish with them?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah probably... probably pretty close to a hundred percent. And the reason for that is that there are some restaurants here that will cook your catch.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: And so you know I encourage them to. One of the first things I ask them in my introductory speech is you know are you going to take fish you know and if not I'll catch them and release them. You know a lot of people do that. I got a man coming in May and he keeps enough for one meal. He is coming from California, books two days and goes to *[indiscernible]* [00:13:55] so I just... if you are not utilizing them, don't kill them. [00:14:00] that's what it comes down to you know. You know I don't have to put fish back. You ever handle a wire?

Female Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Male Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Dave Zalewski: Here is one of the stories... I do a lot of as you can tell... seven hours probably speaking. I was teaching a fishing class. Whereas in 1987 I taught a class and one of the things that I do when I make a presentation is that you know I tell people... I interview them and I have a chat with them. This is years back and a reporter you know came down here *[indiscernible]* [00:14:30] you know and we weren't affected here either. You know people said viral effect you know I didn't see any fish with three eyes or four tails and all the rest of it. That is just what it came down to. So at the end of the interview the reporter says well okay a picture with Dave's sign will be good for publicity *[indiscernible]* [00:14:48] in the interview you know and the next thing he says where is your nails? And I knew he was talking about you know and I said I don't have them. He said how do you hang your fish up? And my answer back to him was when you buy a big steak, take it home, *[indiscernible]* [00:15:07] hang it up in a hot sun for hours so your neighbors can see it, do you? We take very good care of our fish. You know we clean it. We clean it two or three times in the boxes right there on ice and put them right on ice so there are so many guys, you know, throw on the dock and they do not decompose. People think about that you know. I have ticked off a few boats here in this area because people listen to these presentations and they tell the captain you know keep them in the ice box till you clean them you know. *[Chuckle]*

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: That's a big rant. I am sorry.

Female Interviewer: No that's okay.

Male Interviewer: Did you notice any difference in the catch and release during the red tides? Were the fish surviving as well? Yeah I didn't... you know again we specialize a lot in big tuna fishing and because I was offshore there wasn't any real effect. I didn't see any effect on fish really. We were very careful with our catch and release [00:16:00] and

you know the fish health is strong. And the in-shore fish like in the artificial reefs closer to shore was nonexistent so I just passed them.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Female Interviewer: I am curious... oh I am sorry.

Male Interviewer: No go ahead.

Female Interviewer: I am sorry. I am curious about the patchy red tide events. How and where exactly did the patches occur? Is it in-shore or is it offshore and I am curious to know do you see it in the bay?

Dave Zalewski: Well you know I don't fish in the bay. I [*indiscernible*] [00:16:35] and you know at this time of the year I would see the red tide and you know it was just devastating right there. So you know it sort of can be huge you know. You see the fish. You can see the people scooping them up. I don't know if you are familiar with the contractors out to pick up the fish and all that and it was you know pretty brutal anyway. When they had a patchy red tide it was probably from shore out to you know maybe seven miles or something.

Female Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: Yeah.

Female Interviewer: But in patches?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah.

Female Interviewer: Offshore up to seven miles okay.

Dave Zalewski: And when it relate to this I relate to the artificial reefs which most of them were about five to seven miles offshore. You know I would only see it inside of that.

Female Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: And you know the same way here is that you know a few... to the best of my recollection there was tides where we had red tide up to 10 or 12 miles. And then after that you know nothing. It was just water again you know. Then the dead fish would come up after the fact and you can always tell that when I go through it and see it and smell it and I feel it with my eyes. You know I knew there was going to be a fish kill there and then if there wasn't a whole lot of tidal action there would be dead fish in about three or four days.

Female Interviewer: Okay and those patches lasted for how long? [00:18:00]

Dave Zalewski: Probably in the past you know maybe up to a month but not... You know there is never major accumulation. There will be a patch here and a patch there and maybe some red tide in one area or the other you know.

Female Interviewer: Okay and the patchy red tide has it been consistent through time or has it been increasing or decreasing?

Dave Zalewski: It's random.

Interviewer: It's just random?

Dave Zalewski: It's pretty random. Yeah I wish I can say that you know because the water temperature is this there is red tide. It doesn't happen that way you know.

Female Interviewer: So you don't see any consistent trigger?

Dave Zalewski: No.

Female Interviewer: Yeah okay.

Dave Zalewski: Yeah. You know I you know look at everything regarding my industry. Red tides have been documented in the United States only for so long so you know this is nature's way of taking care of an imbalance. But man has screwed everything up so there is an imbalance anyway. I firmly believe that you know that nature is saying I need to reduce some population so the red tide is going to bloom. But they don't know that the population is already reduced by man. That's how I feel about it yeah.

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: You know it comes and you just deal with it.

Female Interviewer: Yeah okay. Do you notice at all like does it seem to come from a particular direction like from the south or from the north or from offshore?

Dave Zalewski: It moved south to north. You know *[indiscernible]* [00:19:20] the people in Sarasota... the *[indiscernible]* [00:19:25] was so widely affected and like I said you know it stopped like just about here at the ship channel for a long period of time you know and then I have always had extremely good trawling fishing. And then when it moved up here boy it was just like somebody had turned on a switch you know. It stopped completely.

Female Interviewer: Do you have any thoughts on what sort of triggered it? You said it kind of stopped right there for a while and moved north. Do you know was it currents or do you have any...?

Dave Zalewski: No.

Female Interviewer: You don't know?

Dave Zalewski: You know the... I got my own little thought okay and who knows? It's... [00:20:00] if you want you can really dive into this but we had you know beach nourishment you know and the sand came from down here you know and so it was dredged up. It was brought up to the beaches up here you know and I don't know if that brought the organism up or not you know. I would only see the barges going by and I was thinking that they are dredging up the [indiscernible] [00:20:22] they got good sand you know.

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: And it oddly could bring the organism up here. It is blooming. You know even if the organism is present in the water I just don't...

Female Interviewer: Yeah are they... they are dredging from down there.

Dave Zalewski: They are dredging from down here and bringing the sand up by barge up here to be nourished and so are they bringing the red tide organism you know with the water that they dredged up? I mean... you know.

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Make Interviewer: It is possible because an entire organism does stay on the sediments and it is dormant for years at a time.

Dave Zalewski: Yeah I don't know but they all do. They nourish everything that goes along that coast too you know and I would just see the barges going by and thinking if they are bringing water from that area there has got to be some organisms that they are bringing up on the beach.

Female Interviewer: Yeah that's really interesting. Did that happen around the time that you saw it moved last or this was last year? Yeah? That's really interesting.

Dave Zalewski: It was and probably was a direct correlation for sure [indiscernible] [00:21:16] and organisms can last for a really long period of time you know and with the red tide moving south to north and you know this is where they are dredging you know it could have possibly got into the rest of it you know so. I am giving you guys something to talk about. [Chuckle]

Female Interviewer: Yeah for sure. I was just you know trying to find patterns and we are doing this with a hundred od people and so we are just trying to find the patterns from different interviews that helps.

Dave Zalewski: Yeah just you know I couldn't see any... just... when I knew it was down.... It was down south you know and in some of the beaches down there... people [*Indiscernible*] [00:21:50] all of a sudden it's here you know.

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Male Interviewer: When it was patchy in years before do they migrate from south to north [00:22:00] or do they just appear?

Dave Zalewski: They just appear. You know again because it did not have a direct effect on me... actually did see them. I saw a few dead fish and I knew there were organisms in the water but you know I wasn't much concerned. I didn't pay that much attention to it.

Female Interviewer: Okay so this was the 2018 event that we mapped out. Would you be able to map out the 2005 event in extent to that?

Dave Zalewski: Just about the same.

Female Interviewer: Just about the same?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah.

Female Interviewer: Okay and then that's done here.

Dave Zalewski: Again I say that because this is the area I fish.

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: It was in 2005 that it was that widespread.

Male Interviewer: So the 2005 was worse than this past one?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah I think so you know. The only thing the 2005 didn't have contractors picking up dead fish you know so that's... you know I don't know how you can relate to that. But I just thought about it. You know in the future [*indiscernible*] [00:23:00] has got to be available. How many pounds they picked up or whatever they picked up you know.

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: You know for future use if we had another major one like this it can be used for comparison how many pounds are picked up you know by the contractors you know in 2022 as opposed to 2018.

Male Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: Just a thought there because it *[indiscernible]* [00:23:25] you know my wife is really queasy *[indiscernible]* [00:23:28], she really does and while I was coming across apart she *[indiscernible]* [00:23:33] dumpster operation there. And I stopped at the red light and she said, "I understand. Thank you."

Female Interviewer: Oh wow! *[Laughter]* just not that bad yeah.

Dave Zalewski: And they have had a dumpster in John's Pass for a while and it was I mean you come in and I have had a really strong stomach and it would literally almost get me you know for even for upon a weaker stomach and they went to another location because of the... [00:24:00] *[indiscernible]* [00:24:20].

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Male Interviewer: I was going to ask you about 2005, so you had the same it was having very similar impact so did you do the same thing with your business model at that time? Did you really moving out or was there any difference?

Dave Zalewski: I have always fished offshore so I was able to go through it and you know in 2005 I had a very good business but nothing like now.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: I mean so I didn't have you know every day booking in 2005. I did very well and now it's just... it's more under control absolutely. I am just very fortunate you know.

Male Interviewer: And what do you attribute that change to in your business? Is it just that you are a good businessman or is it you think there are other things like is it more people coming down?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah there are several things. One is that you know I got a degree in finance. So I look at you know the business aspect of it you know and I realized there has got to be people business you know. And so to me it is not what we kill. Everybody forgot about the world out there and so many people you know can't hold a regular job for whatever reason they can catch fish so they go into the trawler boat business. I just analyzed it for a few years. In the last 12 to 14 months you know *[indiscernible]* [00:25:17] you know with some people like... you know with me you know encourage ladies and kids to fish with me. You know the divers are the people that do the fishing. My mate has been with me for 12 years. He is the captain and he has been the captain from day one and you know it's a show and I mean it is literally what it is you know. You know I got a planned network of very few people. I have got a network of around 300 captains. I stay in the loop you know and the only way I think I loop from this aspect that you know birds of feather fly together. I want to associate with one of these operations. There are so many operations it is a onetime shot. I see boats in my marina taking [00:26:00] families out with small kids on days that I won't go to a thirty-seven berth. It is a small boat you

know. So you know it is a onetime shot for them. They get paid but their family may never fish again so it is not good for the industry you know. I do all sorts of things by the way. I do burials at sea.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: I do about 40 of them a year with the family present... an undersea cremation of remains and so you know I stay pretty busy you know. You know the red tide did have an effect on the... you know burials at sea because I am required to go you know three miles offshore according to federal regulations and a lot of times that was where there was fish kill. So you know I had to go ahead and look around you know and try to get away from it... you know a large part of the fish kill so they can do a proper memorial service you know. So the red tide had another effect you know which people don't think of anyway but you know when I write the book... it's called "When the Phone Rings" [*indiscernible*] [00:27:00].

Female Interviewer: [*Laughter*] yeah so is your gas expenditure increasing in terms of your business?

Dave Zalewski: Not appreciably.

Female Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: You know I mean it's... you know if I spend enough time then probably five percent probably maybe. That's it. Because you know normally I fish in the same waters and I fish before the red tide and I fish during the red tide which is offshore you know. The inner people charter me if they want to go deep sea fishing. So you know there's days with regulars you know that I can stop and fish 100 yards off the beach for macro but you know normally you know I am doing partly trawling and partly my own fishing and so I got to go offshore so it didn't have much effect on it.

Female Interviewer: Okay. Okay you guys got any more questions?

Male Interviewer: Yeah did you notice any difference in temperature from 2005 to the most recent one [00:28:00] like that was ten on a scale of ten and that one was nine?

Dave Zalewski: You mean water temperature?

Male Interviewer: Yeah is it more warmer/cooler?

Dave Zalewski: No it is about the same you know and it is interesting that you know what people think of cold fronts of water tanks our estimate and I firmly use the length of the days. You know the gulf is just a big engine absorbing energy from the sun. As the days come up you know the water goes up like that and so you know people say oh the cold front is affecting it. It might affect the surface temperature for a few days but not for a period of time. And you know it's actually hit 71 in the past you know in all those patches

in the 60's offshore. But you know 72 or 74 was the natural temperature and then the bait fish show up you the migratory fish will show you know. So I liked to trawl and I don't think there was anyone more excited than me. Everything is made by business a little bit different. I like to do sun trawling and sea bottom fishing and so many people in this area are so geared towards bottom fishing [*indiscernible*] [00:29:04] for a long time they don't know how to trawl. You know it is something that I keep to myself. [*Chuckle*]

Female Interviewer: [*Chuckle*]

Male Interviewer: Is there any general... in general any environmental changes that you have noticed over the years that you have been fishing that would affect the red tide?

Dave Zalewski: No I was just thinking. You things have been pretty constant. You know we have had environmental change with pollution and all the rest of it and again because my fishing is offshore and if you call fishing pressure environmental which you could call because the population is increasing and there are more people you know I watched our fishing, the bottom fishing and our grouper fishing being very good you know go downhill and come back and then go downhill again. That's the only term that I can use. It is because of the commercial fishing more than anything. You know if [00:30:00] I take a second [*indiscernible*] [00:30:02] that the... you know the mortar layers have been outlawed... not more than 40 miles offshore and that's been for a long period of time. And so the [*indiscernible*] [00:30:12] boats you know they used to fish those deeper waters also and then they realized that when their limit got reduced to 18 inches the size of it that they can make a one day trip you know and fish in all these waters inside of 40 miles. And so in a five year period I mean it has just devastated the fishes. I mean it literally has you know. And you know the way grouper fishing is... I have my own limits you know. The bay limit is two per person and my own limit is just one per person that's another thing I have done. You know it is hard for me to catch six fish now. You know there is plenty of other fish. I mean there is... you know the gap in the grouper population has been filled by me with snapper... you know mangrove snapper and all the rest of it. So there has not been a vacuum. They are filled with something else. You have to adjust your fishing you know and that is what has happened. But the environmental thing is that yeah there is a need to harvest fish. You know I mean I am not against... I fish three times a week you know but then I got to harvest them. You have got to harvest them and be responsible you know. And I think we have lost some of our responsibility recently here you know and every one of us needs to address that.

Female Interviewer: So you said that it was good and then went downhill and then there was an uptake and then it went down again?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah.

Female Interviewer: And that uptake what was that? Can you...?

Dave Zalewski: Regulations.

Female Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: Regulations... you know regulations in the fact that commercial fishery was pushed offshore you know and now we have got the new commercial fishery that's gotten wise to the fact that you know I can go and hammer this area without going off for three days. I go off for one day and say you want the rest of it, well now they don't fish in this area anymore because they believe the fish are gone.

Female Interviewer: Okay.

Dave Zalewski: That's just part of life as you probably know.

Female Interviewer: Okay.

Male Interviewer: I don't have any more questions. Is there anything [00:32:00] else that you feel that you would like to tell us about?

Dave Zalewski: I just spilled my guts. That's it. *[Laughter]*

Male Interviewer: *[Laughter]*

Female Interviewer: Do you have any questions for us?

Dave Zalewski: I really can't think of any. You are involved in the biology of the fisheries. Is that correct or...?

Male Interviewer: Well he is a biologist and we are social... Christi and I are social scientists and so we are really combining our expertise to get help from in different ways.

Dave Zalewski: You know they are going to change the recreational reporting and all the rest of it in April. I think you all are aware of that.

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: And I did attend a workshop here initially and they... you know the big thing was they got completely off the subject. It was about the unlicensed... you know the people fishing without federal charter permits and you know this is so prevalent in this area right here. There is just no enforcement you know. And you know years ago they had a... it was an undercover operation you know. These two people came down the dock and told us and this was probably 10 years ago you know and *[indiscernible]* [00:33:03] very careful about you know the regulations and all the rest of it and then he gave me the *[indiscernible]* [00:33:12] and the same thing you know if you have any comments or anything. I said yeah you know there are all these people chartering without federal permits and so how can this be? He said well you know and I said it is very easy to figure this out you know. I said I can get a list of who all have charter permits online. You can go ahead and Google you know charter boats in the John's Pass area and see who is going ahead and

you know offering offshore trips and see if they have a permit. I said you know I know a lot of the ones that are doing it. I said I'll pay for the charter out of my pocket if you are ready and we can go ahead and do this you know, that is what I mean. To me it is a no brainer. If you want to enforce [00:34:00] it you know takes these two incidents right here go ahead straight away you know.

Male Interviewer: But I mean those guys are taking a big risk because if they were boarded I mean I don't know what would happen.

Dave Zalewski: Yeah it was a risk. I mean there is just nobody enforcing right now I mean because of budgetary stuff you know and it is just like you know I wish I was boring every single day coming in. I mean I really would want to see that you know. And now with this fellow reporting let's see, I am going to report the fish that I catch you know so that biologists can go ahead and get the information. But these illicit poachers or charter boats or whatever they are also selling fish to backdoors and restaurants and so those fish are never counted you know. The true commercial industry has to have every fish landed you know through the fish house you know go ahead and prescribe a trip ticket for every fish but nobody takes into consideration you know how many fish are being caught and sold illicitly.

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: It is a big number. You never stop to think that that's not only John's Pass but it is Sarasota, Fort Myers it's the *[indiscernible]* [00:35:05] and all these places.

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: I gave up. I mean it's just... you know we'll see what happens and what route it goes you know. You know I wish they would you know *[indiscernible]* [00:35:16] handle. They have got very, very strong you know local charter people and they did... they put so much pressure you know on nationally on fisheries they made some busts up there and stopped it. But you know that's because they were just under extreme pressure. So this is a side any way you know.

Female Interviewer: Yeah every little bit is useful. You know what I mean? So to clarify these guys are the regional office and I am with the Science Center in Miami so I do work with the stock assessment folks and so we provide those assessments to these councils and SSEs so.

Dave Zalewski: You know it is all good. I mean the more knowledge we learn... the more knowledge we get you know the better we can protect the fishery you know. And this is the future you know.

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Male Dave Zalewski: There are a lot of unanswered questions [00:36:00] out there.

Female Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: Well, you know my big question because you know I have developed *[indiscernible]* [00:36:04] fishing you know catch and release for years now and you know and I don't know where they are going. You know I really and absolutely would want to know. You know there is no study *[indiscernible]* [00:36:17] put a lid on the amount of fish because now there are so many people targeting them and so many people kill them. You know people realize how good they are to eat.

Female Interviewer: *[Chuckle]* they are tasty.

Dave Zalewski: *[indiscernible]* [00:36:35] you know and I have had one person *[indiscernible]* [00:36:40] they go for all things you know. You know we don't keep the big ones. We are not going to kill the big ones anyway for breeding but you know no study has been done you know where they go offshore to the warmer waters in the gulf during the winter. You know the other thing with Barracuda is they show up in April and they won't bite for about two weeks. You know you see them visibly on the reefs and they will not take a bait. And one day bang they start feeding. You know it is a neat fish. I love to fish them you know. They drive us nuts trying to catch them sometimes but you know just where do they go you know?

Female Interviewer: That's interesting. Yeah I remember I heard about them in Belize. I remember the fishermen in there talking about how they migrate to spawn in these channels and their reefs. I don't know if they are migrating or not responding.

Dave Zalewski: Here at these water *[Indiscernible]* [00:37:36] wherever they are going right now. Again you know probably you know April they will show up. I mean that will make everybody feel real good you know.

Male Interviewer: That just reminds me about the red tide and did you notice any change in the behavior of other fish? I know you mentioned that mangrove snappers seemed to not be affected by it but are there other fish that were affected by red tide that you noticed anything different?

Dave Zalewski: Well the biggest thing that was affected was the [00:38:00] bait. You know the bait fish was nonexistent. You know this was not only bens *[indiscernible]* [00:38:05] bait but also the migratory bait *[indiscernible]* [00:38:10] they are gone.

Female Interviewer: This past year?

Dave Zalewski: Yes this past year. I don't know if they were smart enough to get away from it or if they just died.

Male Interviewer: Yeah.

Dave Zalewski: And I also think that you know personally that this is the only fish that never come up to the surface to die. They come apart or a crab punctures them as they decompose on the bottom and I guess they become *[Indiscernible]* [00:38:32] who knows what that is? The positive thing is the pinfish are back.

Female Interviewer: So you think that the fish have recovered then since last year or are they still the same?

Dave Zalewski: Yeah the migratory bait fish are... I have seen a couple of schools of them so far so that's positive you know so you know I am positive that they will recover as long as there is no red tide out here you know. And as far as the bait fish I just don't know you know. They were gone. I mean they were just literally... there was nothing there. It was devoid of any bit of life you know. I mean we would bait them up and our baits would be there you know. You know we would come back a day or two later and the baits would be in the traps untouched. Then you know I put them out all month as a trial and in a month three dozen were trapped you know. And the other thing is they are not large ones you know. They are juveniles or smaller so I don't know if there has been some major swallowing by the pinfish you know. I don't know what their growth rate is you know and these may be breeding fish for all I know. The other thing is the pinfish *[indiscernible]* [00:39:40] respond. You know that's just another sign. You know I have been in 90 feet of water seeing large schools of bait and dropped a *[indiscernible]* [00:39:50] into them and pulled up pinfish and when they are in spawning mode they are absolutely gorgeous. I can't believe the colors you know. They are so different than when they are in shore. [00:40:00] our baits are all lit up out there so it is something else you know. So you know we don't think of them as being a traveling fish. As far as I know they go out there you know sometimes in a year. It is going to be a short summer time you know and then spring. We'll get back. That's all I got. Drop the mic huh?

Male Interviewer: *[Laughter]*

Female Interviewer: *[Laughter]* all right. You were great. Thank you.