

AlDurret

Amanda Scolt: Okay. So, I'm Amanda Scolt [*Phonetics*] speaking with Al Durret. I think we're okay. Okay. So...

Sky: Thank you very much.

Amanda Scolt: Thank you.

Al Durret: Hmm-hmmm.

Amanda Scolt: So, I know you own a fish shop, Marina but I heard you also you, you're a fisherman as well.

Al Durret: I used to be. I'm not so much a fisherman anymore. And when I go fishing, I fish in Costa Rica.

Amanda Scolt: You fish in Costa Rica, got it. And so, one of the things we're interested in doing is kind of mapping the areas the red tide has been.

Al Durret: Okay.

Amanda Scolt: And I know it's definitely affected your Marina. And I'm really interested in what way it has but also, how long have you been in Fort Myers Beach?

Al Durret: Thirty-three years.

Amanda Scolt: And so, what I'm interested and in talking about is, in those 33 years, you know, to think back on all the red tide that has happened in the past. And just go through and just talk about, you know, how long it lasted, how it affected you and everything like that. So, when you think about the red tide, what's the first one that you remember being here, if you can remember kind of [*overlapping conversation*] [00:01:17].

Al Durret: My, I remember red tide 33 years ago, but it was never, it was bad for a few days. And then the wind would either come in and take it out or a different current or wind would carry it back out to sea, to speak of and I don't remember it lasting as long as it has here this year.

Amanda Scolt: So, 33 years ago, there was a red tide here?

Al Durret: Yes.

Amanda Scolt: And was that a, you know, was it a...

Al Durret: It was a yearly thing.

Amanda Scolt: It was a yearly thing?

AlDurret

Al Durret: Yes, it would happen every year. But it was maybe only happened for a few days, a week, maybe two weeks [00:02:00] but that's about it. And it was never reportedly, reported the whole west coast of Florida.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: Of which this year has been a totally different case. I think that, you know, I think it started back in January. I remember hearing about how bad the red tide was in Tampa.

Amanda Scolt: This year?

Al Durret: Uh-huh, this year.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. So, I want to get to those here. Obviously, you know, that's my main...

Al Durret: Which one do you want to talk about previous year?

Amanda Scolt: I want to talk about previous. So, when you think about 33 years ago on the red tide, especially we have this chart. And one of the things I'm interested in is if you could kind of show the area you can control the area where the red tide is. And let me just get this lined up so I know. Okay. So, if you could draw like, here we are at Fort Myers Beach. If you could kind of draw the areas that the red tide affects that you're aware of, that back 33 years ago.

Al Durret: Well, you know, mostly it would start out here on Sanibel.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: And then work its way down to the north end of Fort Myers Beach. And in most years, it might not, my Marina is right here.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. So, go ahead, you can – let's rearrange here. Okay.

Al Durret: That's where Marina is and I don't, you know, I think that it would last, if it was at the north end of Fort Myers Beach, it might not be at the south in the Fort Myers Beach, those years, previous years. And then there'll be some times that – I can only remember maybe [00:04:00] three or four times where the red tide got in the Back Bay in Estero Bay. And what will happen is, I could tell it was there, I sell a shrimp, and then I have a shrimp tank. And I come in in the morning and the shrimp would be dead, all of them from the red tide.

We have a pump that draws the water up into the shrimp tank. And that might happen for four or five days in a row and then it would go away. But we lose all of our shrimp. And we thought that was horrible. And but we didn't lose all the fish in our little Bay, in our

area where the Marina is. So, it was a red tide but it was something that you dealt with once or twice a year. And that was it.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. So, you're saying that red tide in those area happens once or twice a year?

Al Durreet: Once or twice a year...

Amanda Scolt: For how...

Al Durreet: Forever.

Amanda Scolt: Forever?

Al Durreet: Yes.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. Until those resume again?

Al Durreet: Until this year, until this last January. And I can't say that the red tide was, for people that had breathing problems, you know, it would affect them first. And so they just couldn't go to the beach and it wasn't really a big deal. I remember hearing people complain about it but not everybody complained about it if you weren't affected by it.

The four or five times that it was in my area of the Marina, they killed all of my shrimp. I couldn't dip shrimp, I couldn't move back and count the shrimp out, I couldn't breathe. It would take my breath away because you have an aeration system in the tank that mixes the water up and that's what causes I think the [00:06:00] air to go away, the oxygen somehow.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. Yes, it releases the toxins especially when it's, you know, it's I think it's usually worse when it's windy out.

Al Durreet: Yes.

Amanda Scolt: That's when people get the most symptoms.

Al Durreet: Yes. But it was only, you know, and not every year did we get the red tide, it wouldn't make it down as far as Fort Myers Beach. It would go to Captiva, it would go to Sarasota and maybe down to Sanibel. But there's a lot of years, we didn't get the red tide on our beach.

Amanda Scolt: So, overall, it happened every year, every two years?

Al Durreet: I think pretty much every year but there were years where we didn't, the south end of Fort Myers Beach was not affected by it.

AlDurret

Amanda Scolt: Yes. Do you know how often the south end or like how often would you say the south end was affected by it?

Al Durret: Probably 70% of the time.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. So, then let's map that. So, I want to look at it. I wish I had some tape or something.

Sky: Let me get them.

Al Durret: You better get some down there.

Amanda Scolt: Thank you. So, let's map the area where you would say like, very common red tide where it would be. And then when it gets in the south what that looks like and then the Back Bay, you know, how it looks in there.

Al Durret: Okay.

Amanda Scolt: How many times did it get into the Back Bay?

Al Durret: Maybe 30% of the time.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: That's all. It wasn't [indiscernible] [00:07:44] be there. It was a, you know and I think...

Amanda Scolt: You said it starts [00:08:00] up here?

Al Durret: Yes. And it starts up here actually, you know, and it works its way down to Sanibel. Here, if there was red tide near you, it was always on Sanibel. And then there would be sometimes, it wouldn't come any further south than this right here.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. So go ahead, and, you know, feel totally free to draw on this but...

Al Durret: That is 100% if it was in...

Amanda Scolt: It's always, every time you have red tide, it's in that area?

Al Durret: Yes, it's in that area.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: And here's probably, I'm going to say the north in to the beach was that before we did and I'm going to say it's 70% or 75%. And here and here, it was probably 30%. And back here, this area here, can I circle this?

Amanda Scolt: Yes, go ahead. I'd actually would prefer circles you know? So, I want to know like, if you have any idea how far it went out for anything like that.

Al Durret: Well, the red tide generally starts out here.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. So, let's draw that shape.

Al Durret: Right here.

Amanda Scolt: And like let's make it a real shape because I'm going to take this and I'm going to put it, I'm going to digitalize that. So, it's easier for me to digitalize shapes versus lines. So, it comes in and then it's here. And so every time there's a red tide every year, every other year, it's here?

Al Durret: Every year, I mean it's been, I'm going to say that it hits pretty much there a 100% of the time so you know?

Amanda Scolt: Yes, okay.

Al Durret: So, and then back here, it gets in here and make 20%.

Amanda Scolt: And then when it comes from here and it comes [00:10:00] down, is this whole area least effected to?

Al Durret: Yes, it is. I mean yes, I've draw that out for several...

Amanda Scolt: Sure. Yes, especially you can map it. Yes. And then does it ever come down here?

Al Durret: Yes, it has, for the most part, okay. This, I'm going to say that is 20%.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. So, having red tide in the Back Bay and having red tide this far south, those are...

Al Durret: Yes, it gets less as of, and previous years, you'd hardly really hear of red tide in Naples or Bonita. You just wouldn't very, very little. Yes, take a peek of my hand [indiscernible] [00:11:34]. I do a Marina in the wrong spot.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. Where is the Marina?

Al Durret: Right here and that's it.

AlDurret

Amanda Scolt: Okay. So, that's kind of, this is every red tide from 30 years of...

Al Durret: I'm going to say going back 30 some years which was a pretty much a normal process. And then there would be, you know, maybe [00:12:00] every fifth or sixth or seventh or eighth year, there would be a strong red tide.

Amanda Scolt: So, let's talk about kind of the strong red tides. Is there anyone that you remember really just a regular?

Al Durret: Well, the strong red tide are the 20% and...

Amanda Scolt: The ones that get on the Back Bay.

Al Durret: They get in the Back Bay.

Amanda Scolt: So, do you remember what year?

Al Durret: No.

Amanda Scolt: No? Do you remember approximately, like, if you think about that, the time that it was in the Back Bay and all your shrimp died, you know, what was going on at that point in time that would kind of narrow it down a little bit? Because if you give me like a window that might be useful too, if you can think of it. But it's okay if you can't.

Al Durret: I don't had a, define that. I, you know, I don't know how to do that. I'm just going to say that every six, seven years, it was worse. It would come further south and be a more ferocious red tide. But I can't give you the years.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. So, and the years when it was just up here and it didn't come down. What were those like for you in your investments?

Al Durret: Didn't affect us at all.

Amanda Scolt: Doesn't affect you all whatsoever? Is there a difference I mean, do you rely, are kind of relying on tourism? Are you, you know, so does it affect the numbers of, towards in that?

Al Durret: It did but previous years, the news media talks about red tide. They talked about it and the red tides here and there's dead fish laying on the bank and they, we saw Captiva pretty much and Sanibel as where the death fish were. Fort Myers Beach will occasionally get that. So, Sanibel always got hammered a lot harder than what Fort Myers Beach did.

This year, the news media has killed [00:14:00] everybody. And so I think we're going to be okay. I mean, red tide is still here. It's here right now. So, it's out here on, I mean and its farther south, it's Bonita Beach, Vanderbilt Beach.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. So, with the red tide on or, sorry and I do want to get to the one now. But I want to focus, when it's up here in the past. You'd say there were report on it, say it's in Sanibel and Captiva. And that wouldn't affect you at all?

Al Durret: Not really.

Amanda Scolt: When the tourist are around or anything?

Al Durret: Well, people expected it. The people that came down here yearly, knew that there could be a red tide. But it wouldn't only last so long, and then it would go away. So, I think that's the difference. It was a very small time frame that it was here. And it would be here for a week or 10 days and then go away and then it might come back. But it was, no, but don't make any big deal of it. And, you know, it was a big deal. We knew it was a big deal but I don't think the public knew that it was a really, really big deal.

Amanda Scolt: And with the bad ones, with the ones that did come down and get in here and, you know, when we're talking about kind of the 75% when it was on the northern side, how did that impact your like what does that look like for you?

Al Durret: Well, no, really didn't.

Amanda Scolt: Same thing?

Al Durret: Yes.

Amanda Scolt: So like people know it's around and they know how to deal with you know?

Al Durret: I can tell red tide was around when I couldn't breathe in my own shrimp tank.

Amanda Scolt: Uh-hmmm. And that's really when you notice that?

Al Durret: Uh-hmmm.

Amanda Scolt: And is that your, is it a personal shrimp tank or you, it's...

Al Durret: Well, we sell from it.

Amanda Scolt: You sell from it? [00:16:00]

Al Durret: Yes, we sell to the fisherman.

AlDurreet

Amanda Scolt: Okay. And you sell this big?

Al Durreet: Yes.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. So, does that have a huge impact on you or...

Al Durreet: Not a huge impact. It, you know, I think when the red tide was here, the people that would go offshore fishing, it didn't bother them you know?

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durreet: The people that fish the Back Bay, that's a different story. They were told there's red tide. And so, but I'm going to say that even when the red tide was here, during this 30% and 20% time, the fishermen, it wasn't a big deal.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. So, when it gets into the Back Bays that for you're in toward fisherman, does that mean they can go out that was like...

Al Durreet: Hmmm. Oh, they can go out. Yes, you're just likely not to maybe catch any fish. I don't know, you will see more, a few dead fish floating around. But, so that's, you know, it's never been a deal breakers that I'm going to go broke because of red tide.

Amanda Scolt: Okay.

Al Durreet: Never.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. But for some of your fishermen, is it ever, you know, has it been in the past, has it ever been a serious problem for them?

Al Durreet: No.

Amanda Scolt: No?

Al Durreet: Not until this year.

Amanda Scolt: And then what about kind of health impacts? So, do you find that people were...

Al Durreet: People that have a respiratory problem knows that they don't go to the beach. They don't walk the beach, they stay off of it. And when the report is done that the red tide is over with, they're back in the beach.

Amanda Scolt: Is there any inclination, like when the red tide was coming and you put in 30 years, did you know like this one's going to be a really bad one, this was going to go into the Back Bay or it's...

AlDurret

Al Durret: It just happens. [00:18:00]

Amanda Scolt: Yes. So, you don't, you know, when you feel it, when it's kind of like in your face and then...

Al Durret: If you walk the beach in here and you have a hard time breathing, you know, it's there. You're going to hear about it on the news that the red tide is, you know, on Sanibel and Captiva and now it's on the north end of Fort Myers Beach. So...

Amanda Scolt: Yes. Is there is there like a recovery time like if you get hit really hard?

Al Durret: When it goes away, it's gone. The winds will generally carry it away.

Amanda Scolt: And then are there any fish species that are particularly affected bad by it or any differences like when you talk about like you see...

Al Durret: I'm sure there are. I don't know what they are. A lot of big fish, mostly bait fish. And when you had just a normal red tide, yes, you would have this long of fish float up on the beach, ladyfish and bait fish in sea floating. It just takes all the oxygen out of the water and they can't breathe. So, I don't know how to explain it, different than that, it never killed all species.

There's been maybe one or two times in previous years where mammals, the Porpoises have floated up on a beach and they say it from red tide offshore. But...

Amanda Scolt: And that's happened previously?

Al Durret: Yes, about a couple of times, nothing serious. You know, one or two would float up.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. Tell me some few things like in the previous, in the last 30 years, how many times have you actually hear about like a bad forecast or...

Al Durret: Three times maybe.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. And you're not sure when?

Al Durret: Uh-hmm.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. [00:20:00]. I just want to make where we're going through. What do you think makes a red tide and keeps it, you know, up here in Sanibel versus coming all the way down here and...

Al Durret: Winds and current.

AlDurret

Amanda Scolt: Winds and current. What do you think makes them, you know, when they're particularly bad and there is a support for staff, what do you think is, you know, making them worse or different than ones that are on [indiscernible] [00:20:28] on?

Al Durret: I can't answer that. I know you get a northwesterly breeze and you can just picture how to shelves it right down here.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: I don't know.

Amanda Scolt: So, in the past, you haven't really had to adapt to them or change anything that you're doing besides maybe buying bait?

Al Durret: No, this year is different. But we're not talking about this year. I never had to adjust anything.

Amanda Scolt: In the past never...

Al Durret: If I ever lost a whole tank of shrimp which indicate as of red tide in my water, I would order shrimp the next day and I might lose a kill the second day, but never any longer than that. So, and I'll buy 2000 or 3000 shrimp at a time and during that time of year, and to lose, it's not a fortune to lose but I never had to worry about it for a long period of time.

Ask me that question on this year though then and I'll tell you.

Amanda Scolt: All right. So, let's talk about this year. When did this one start affecting you here?

Al Durret: June, July.

Amanda Scolt: And when it started, did you think that it was going to just be another one of these [00:22:00] kind of inconveniences?

Al Durret: Well, I think it's been publicly talked about news wise nationally that Tampa got hit first and then it just worked its way right down the coast slowly. But when it got to wherever it was going, it stayed and didn't go away. And I don't know what the difference was this year for it but I went 30 days without buying any shrimp.

Amanda Scolt: How long did you, how does that compare in the past?

Al Durret: That never has happened, ever.

Amanda Scolt: Never?

AlDurret

Al Durret: Ever.

Amanda Scolt: So, one day, two days without buying shrimp?

Al Durret: One or two.

Amanda Scolt: One or two?

Al Durret: Uh-hmm. Previous years.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. Never or never long, never a week?

Al Durret: No, no. When it hit, when it used to hit Fort Myers Beach, it would be there for a few days, a week maybe, maybe 10 days but gone. This year, it's never really gone away, I don't think.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. So, in the past with some of these other ones, does it look the same as the one currently?

Al Durret: To this year was totally different.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. So, what did the other ones look actually look like on the water?

Al Durret: We never had, in the Back Bay, we had a few dead fish floating around. And when I say a few, I mean a few.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: Nothing serious.

Amanda Scolt: What about water color?

Al Durret: Water color changed.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: Yes, yes. Just, it wasn't clean looking.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: It was just nasty looking. [00:24:00]. I don't never really analyzed the water whether it was good or bad looking wise, but it did not look the same. And...

Amanda Scolt: And what does it look like in this past year?

AlDurret

Al Durret: Just terrible. Just all the year, it's been, but not all year but since July, probably June to July. This one, the red tide really started here. We had bad – as it went on as August/September went on, it got worse. So, we were, I've never seen the red tide affect Estero Bay the way it did this year.

Amanda Scolt: How did it affect it?

Al Durret: It killed every fish in the Bay. I mean, I had dumpsters for fish that we, for a week, we clean netted dead fish from – we have some [indiscernible] [00:25:08] there that we feed and it killed all those. And they were huge. Snug here are 33, 34, 35 inch. Snug here are big, they've been for years. We had a...

Amanda Scolt: And it killed those?

Al Durret: Thirty, yes. We have a 30 pound grouper underneath our dockyard, took some of the stuff that the fishermen, you know, would feed the, you know? And actually we feed all of our dead shrimp that die in the tank, they die naturally. And we will take those down and feed the fish that are down there. And they all floated up. They were all gone. Really sad. I mean everybody was crying in random but you could have walk on the fish for a week in my Marina. So, that's how bad it was.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: [00:26:00] I mean, I assume that it's Mother Nature that's doing this. And if it is, that's fine you know? I mean, but hopefully whatever this is, is not a long lasting effect on the west coast of Florida. So, that'll be devastating if it is.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. How did that, you know, what did your Carter Captains do, what did...

Al Durret: There were... nobody could go fishing. You didn't want to take your customers out there.

Amanda Scolt: So, for how long could no one go fishing?

Al Durret: Well, I have 12 or 13 Charter Captains that work out of my Marina. And I think everybody's business was off probably 80%-85%. Now, either we cancelled or they canceled, the customer. But we just didn't want taking anybody out there.

Amanda Scolt: From in between what month was that?

Al Durret: August, September.

Amanda Scolt: And then after that?

Al Durreet: We're slow anyway that time of the year but everybody still have business just not as much.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. And after that, it started clearing up a little bit?

Al Durreet: It didn't start clearing up until really the first of November.

Amanda Scolt: But it's still in this area?

Al Durreet: I take that back, about the second week of October.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. When in this past year look the intensity of it, were there worse health effects to the people?

Al Durreet: I think so. The beach was terrible. I'm not just talking about Fort Myers Beach, I'm talking about Sanibel [00:28:00]. Every place was terrible to go. If you had a problem breathing, you didn't walk the beach. And I think the fish kill was absolutely incredible. It's the worst I've ever seen, of course, it's the worst of anything I've ever seen happen. The oil spill wasn't just bad, the freeze and O4 I think it was. Was it O4? No. I forget when the freeze was, it was a bad freeze here that killed all the snug in our area, everywhere here.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durreet: And so, it's just an abnormal year for weather. And you can probably look that up. But they implemented, you know, you couldn't catch any for snug for probably five or six years after that because there wasn't any, that kind of help die. And but the amazing part of this is we still have fish in the Back Bay after this little bit of time this year. And the guys are catching fish. And where they're catching fish is back here where maybe the red tide did not get to as bad. Yes, yes.

Amanda Scolt: Does that look great?

Al Durreet: Hmm-hmm. There's fish back there and there is fish out here now. But it's just. We're used to be able ride and catch up a few fish. You might not want to catch one or two, Charter Captains. I mean, in our base in there, it was pure fish in the water a lot.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. And that's when you [00:30:00] call people and you just told tell them do not, not even come out?

Al Durreet: Oh I wouldn't call anybody tell them, I think you got out to, I don't know what the Charter Captains did. We didn't rent too many boats. People didn't want to go out on the water. So, it was a, I mean, that was when it was really made public to the world by national news. So...

AlDurret

Amanda Scolt: What other impacts are there for you besides, you said your boat rentals are down and you have to participate? What else, what other impacts? Is it an issue for you, for your Charter Captains camp up trips?

Al Durret: It's going to be, if this red tide doesn't go away and this goes on to a year or two of this red tide, I think it'll be a big problem.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: People will find other places to go.

Amanda Scolt: What do you think will happen if, say this does continue and say it continues for another six months, you know, what would that look like for you?

Al Durret: A disastrous season here in South Florida. I think it would be very, very –I think it'd be bad on real estate sales and it will be bad on both sales. I think it would be bad on both storage of which we do. And it's just a big negative and I think if somebody's going to come down here and buy a half million dollar home to future retiring or vacation in four, five six times a year or live here in the winter time. I think that you're looking at just a negative for that market.

Amanda Scolt: Is there anything that you would change that you would do differently if that continued or is there anything you can do [00:32:00] differently?

Al Durret: I don't think there's anything I can do, except try and educate the public on what red tide really is. And, you know, I think down here, I think a lot of people had red tide mixed up with like, and I think those two things come together, right? That's probably can't be a good thing for Southwest Florida and where the blue Sachi [*phonetics*] comes out. I don't, blue Sachi is right here. I don't think there's much an individual can do. When somebody, and I've talk to a lot of people that call me and want to know what's going on in South Florida or the Marina. And I try and to be honest with them and tell them what's going on that it's natural thing that happens. But I mean I personally don't think that the people that are in charge with investigating this are honest enough with them. I wouldn't want to put my four year old kid in the water. I just wouldn't want to do that. I mean, you have a little cut on your foot, who knows what kind of fungus you're going to get.

Amanda Scolt: Have you seen issues with that people getting like skin infections? How often?

Al Durret: Yes. I don't know how often. I know two people that have.

Amanda Scolt: Recently?

Al Durret: Yes.

Amanda Scolt: And it was in the last year?

Al Durret: Yes. So I don't, I mean, I just, I'm not sure how you talk about this to the public.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. [00:34:00]

Al Durret: I think you are safe to walk the beach, maybe I don't know. Does it? You got a hangnail on your toe and it will open the spot there and you're walking in get, I don't know, let's say for none. I mean I don't and the air quality, how safe is it?

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: I think Lake O' has more of an effect than red tide has for permanent disability type thing. Myself, but that's just me, I don't have, I have no way to proof that. It's just what I think.

Amanda Scolt: So, when you talk about Lake O', you're talking about the water being discharged to the fish hatching?

Al Durret: Yes.

Amanda Scolt: How do you think that's tied to red tide?

Al Durret: It's not tide, the red tide.

Amanda Scolt: It's not? Okay.

Al Durret: No. But it's tied to it when it comes out here and meets the red tide.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: I mean, you got two bad things happening. So, yes, I don't know.

Amanda Scolt: What are the discharges look like? You know, how is the water being [Overlapping conversation] [00:35:11].

Al Durret: Have you seen pictures of the discharge?

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: And what's your take?

Amanda Scolt: They're like, it's like kind of like a dark, it's like a brown, turns the water brown.

AlDurret

Al Durret: It does more than that. I mean, you get fungus that grows that big on top of the water. And it's nasty and it's bad and it's not healthy. And people that needs canals back up close to Hachi is just terrible. But it still comes out here and go straight out here.

Amanda Scolt: Uh-hmm. Let's draw that too. So...

Al Durret: To the river. There's the bridge in here. That's a bridge. [00:36:00].

Amanda Scolt: Bridge is here.

Al Durret: Oh, there it is right there, I'm sorry. You know, you want circle but I don't how to do that.

Amanda Scolt: That's fine.

Al Durret: This is, that stuff running out down the river is nasty. And it comes out here and meets the red tide. Nobody's really talked about that too much I don't think. You know, they, Sanibel has, Sanibel, there's a, I don't know if you've met with anybody on Sanibel yet but...

Amanda Scolt: We actually have it and which I think we really need to do.

Al Durret: Ryan Wesley? What's her name?

Sky: Ryan.

Al Durret: Ryan Wesley.

Amanda Scolt: South American.

Al Durret: She's the one you want to talk to?

Amanda Scolt: Okay.

Sky: [indiscernible] [00:36:56].

Al Durret: She's very intelligent, very touched with what had happened and she will tell you all about that.

Amanda Scolt: What do you think's happening here? I want to, I mean...

Al Durret: I don't know what's happening. I mean, you've got phosphates and all kinds of bad things floating down the river here from Lake O. Contaminants, you know, and the contaminants are from farming, from cattle, from water runoff, fertilizer on golf courses to communities to, there's still a lot of septic tanks. Yes, everything drains into the lake, you know, I mean, still today. So, those things, it's not just farming, not just big

sugar, it's not. It's the whole combination of things I think that caused Lake O' to be contaminated.

I think that when it, those bad [00:38:00] things hit this bad thing, I mean, two wrongs don't make a right.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: I have to say. So Mother Nature is one of them and we, human, people are the other part that are helping to, I really can't say that red tide is something that we've contributed to. I don't, I've never heard anything said about that. But red tide's been around forever so, and just not bad.

Amanda Scolt: Let's try this 2018 the area where it's affected, the most recent red tide. So, with this, with the last year and the red tide that's been here.

Al Durret: Where is it affected?

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: On this chart, from here and it goes down to Naples.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: The only place it really didn't affect that I haven't heard of is Marco. Marco is south of Naples by 15 miles.

Amanda Scolt: And how far north?

Al Durret: Tampa.

Amanda Scolt: Tampa? Okay.

Al Durret: Tampa and Naples.

Amanda Scolt: And that's been for the past year?

Al Durret: Yes, no.

Amanda Scolt: I mean...

Al Durret: It's been on the west coast of Florida for the whole year. It has worked its way south really since, I'm going to say July.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

AlDurret

Al Durret: You know, it's gotten down to our area and down to Naples. This right here really effects this area right here, okay? That's where that affects.

Amanda Scolt: Let's show up. All right, which area?

Al Durret: The red tide area?

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: You may have a pen, you can do this.

Amanda Scolt: You work for this symbol. [00:40:00]. Yes, if it's about, if it's for this last year, yes.

Sky: People say about [indiscernible] [00:40:27]. All right. Thanks, I'll be back.

Female Participants: [indiscernible] [00:40:37], Katie's still here.

Amanda Scolt: Thank you.

Female Participants: Okay. Great.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. So, this area indicates where...

Al Durret: The Lake O'.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. That's where Lake O' [indiscernible] [00:40:51]

Al Durret: And rain can give you a better, I might have come out here. I don't know that that, that goes out here and it's in around the front. I know it hits the Back Bay really big time. But so...

Amanda Scolt: So, the brown water with the layer fungus on it, you don't see that down here?

Al Durret: Haven't.

Amanda Scolt: Okay.

Al Durret: Not at my Marina, no.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. And then, but of last, the red tide, it's been an all of these areas?

Al Durret: Yes.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. And then has they gone further south end most of all?

AlDurret

Al Durret: I'm taking down there and put to Naples.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. And then this whole area, but you're not sure how...

Al Durret: Well, this whole area appears, this was all hit by red tide.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: It just kept working its way from Tampa to Sarasota, Venice.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. And then is this the only area that just really far off in the Back Bay that not affected?

Al Durret: It was affected, [00:42:00] but not as badly.

Amanda Scolt: Then you could still go fishing?

Al Durret: Yes.

Amanda Scolt: And was that a constant like, even during the massive fish scales that you're talking about?

Al Durret: It's that way now.

Amanda Scolt: Okay.

Al Durret: I mean, the fish didn't come back alive. We took thousands of fish out of the garbage cans, full of them. I mean, for a week, solid week, I had four guys, all my forklift crew, they weren't putting boats in the water. They were dipping fish out of the bay. And...

Sky: And those are mostly bait fish or were just everything?

Al Durret: Everything.

Amanda Scolt: Where there any species that you think weren't impacted? No? And I guess, you know, you have a crew there that runs the forklifts and so they we're working on non in the fish shop? Yes.

Al Durret: So, you know, our area there that that was hit really, really hard lasted...

Amanda Scolt: This area?

Al Durret: Yes, Estero Bay lasted really bad, a month and a half.

Amanda Scolt: Okay.

Al Durret: And then the red tide went away, water cleaned up and now it's back again. But it's not in our Bay. This is just on the shore.

Amanda Scolt: When was that month, the worst month?

Al Durret: July, actually August and September.

Amanda Scolt: Do you think they're, what do you think about currently the red tide [00:44:00] monitoring? So, do you have any interaction with that or you ever looking at maps and trying to figure out where the red tide is or where it's going to go?

Al Durret: No. I only want to talk about red tide?

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: I mean, the only way you can talk about it is in a negative way. It didn't that I don't want to talk about it. It's just if somebody asked me a direct question about it, I'm going to answer them correctly to the best of my knowledge. And if you get a four year old granddaughter, I will not been under water all the time, it's red tide. I just don't it, you know?

Amanda Scolt: How long has it been that, you know, what [indiscernible] [00:44:48] ?

Al Durret: I haven't gone on the water on Fort Myers Beach for 20 years.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. Why?

Al Durret: This right here.

Amanda Scolt: It includes [indiscernible] [00:45:05]

Al Durret: That, I don't trust our water being good enough that I want to go swimming in it. Prior to that, I used to go in, I had boat in the lock, jumped in out there and went swimming in and never thought much about it. But Lake O' got worse. And as it got worse, I just, I guess I didn't have the interest of going out and going swimming anyway right? I got a swimming pool at home, that's at home.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. What about the rest of your family? Are they also...

Al Durret: They feel the same way.

Amanda Scolt: Yes, for the last 20 years?

Al Durret: No. Well, it's my wife and I so, you know, which she won't run her water out there. [00:46:00]

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: So, but I mean, you see people out there all the time, yes, so they, but I don't think they know. They don't know. I don't think they're educated enough to know that something bad could happen. And yet, you hate to kill your beaches by saying the water is not safe to go in? I mean, is it not safe for everybody or is it not safe for just a few? And how do you talk about it?

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: I think that's a real important question that nobody's answering.

Amanda Scolt: Do you think there's anything that could be done, you know, kind of the regulatory side or anything that you think could be improved and the way that this has been dealt with in the past or how it's been dealt with that?

Al Durret: I think if this is a one year, a one and a half year events, and it don't happen again for another 30 years, I don't think you need to worry about it.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: That's my opinion.

Amanda Scolt: Are you worried about long term impacts from this?

Al Durret: Yes. I'm worried about long term impact if it sticks around long term. And it's just as bad. I mean, another fish kill and I don't think people are going to be wanting to move here. For the, you got a few things that there is to do down here at retirement age. And if you're here when you're 40 years old, you will get golf, and you will get fishing, you can get boating, and you got touched. And maybe not so much touch, I don't know. But those are the reasons people come here.

Amanda Scolt: Are you worried, so say this red tide the one takes it away and it ends now, do you think there will be long term impact from the fish kills or are you thinking they don't...

Al Durret: No, everything will come back?

Amanda Scolt: Yes?

Al Durret: Yes. It's already coming back. I mean, since the kill that we have in our Marina, I'm seeing fish [00:48:00] in the water floating around. And so, they're back not in the numbers, but I had put to me by one of the Fish and Wildlife guy, she said this is a

10 year kill. And that's what it was with the freeze that we had to kill the stuff. It was a 10 year recovery program in our area for snug.

And at that point, somebody had brought in a loggerhead turtle that was dying and actually the Fish and Wildlife brought it in and turned it over to CROW which is from Sanibel. They take care of all the birds and the stuff. But these animals to these [indiscernible] [00:48:56] they just couldn't breathe. So, you know, and then these were, you know, I remember it. I used to go fishing offshore a lot, and you had red tide that was out 20 miles and you have to go through a mile of it, we'd see a lot of dead fish floating around.

But it was never the amount of fish that was dead this year, ever. So, I think that if it ends this year and goes away, you know, the public has a short memory. And I don't think there's much you can do about it. You probably, the government tries to put together some programs to figure out what to do with it if it happens again in the future. But I don't think there's much you can do. I mean it's, I don't think they need to clean up like oh, and get rid of that problem. And...

Amanda Scolt: Do you think they do, [00:50:00] they need to clean up like I won't get over there?

Al Durreet: They need to clean up Lake O'. I mean, it's been 60-70 old problem that that they haven't done anything about. None of the politicians have done anything about it. They haven't enforced any changes to be made that talked about it, but all of that caused cost money and it's not a one year fix. I want to say long term fix also. So, I don't think that, they just need to work on that problem yearly until it's done.

Amanda Scolt: Has that gotten worse?

Al Durreet: Huh?

Amanda Scolt: Has the discharges from Lake O' have they gotten worse or those are or it's kind of been the same?

Al Durreet: They're horrible. [overlapping conversation] [00:50:51], they're much worse.

Amanda Scolt: Much worse now?

Al Durreet: Yes. Are you from down here? No. Yes, they're really, really bad. And they get, they've gotten worse every year because I think there's different types of, well, everything goes into Lake O' and settles from all the runoff from, all the way around the lake. Just goes in there and settles and then they, you know, we get our water supply from Lake O', Fort Myers does and the East Coast gets their water supply from Lake O'. And I think that was probably one of the reasons was that they build it. It was to create a permanent water supply but they didn't really count on all of the phosphates and all of the manure, you know, capture it as bad and long term as anything is.

And so and then it rains and it runs in the ditches and it winds up in Lake O' and then that comes to – they open a floodgates and here it comes. And it's gotten worse every year [00:52:00] for the past. I'm going to say 10 or 15 years, it's gotten worse. Now, why? Is it because there's more chemicals that's put in there or is it, you know, I don't know. So, Lake O' is a problem all of its own. It has nothing to do with red tide. But nobody talks about what happens when Lake O' hits a red tide. Nobody talks about those types of things, that negatives that can come out of that.

Amanda Scolt: You said the Lake O' does stretches affect for this area. So, how does that impact to being in further south because you said you don't really see it down here?

Al Durret: I don't. But it's talked about nationally. So, what happens on Sanibel happens on Fort Myers Beach, that people don't distinctive to that farther with real close. I mean from here comes Big Carlos Pass. I can't see it from here right here.

Amanda Scolt: It's right here.

Al Durret: Yes, right there. From there to there is 13 miles so....

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: So, I don't, you talked about one, you're talking about both. You may only say Sanibel but you're talking about Fort Myers Beach.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. Sky do you have any other questions that you want to ask or anything?

Sky: Well, just when you mentioned before, you used to go fishing offshore and you'd see, so, just if you could comment any more on, I know what much of your experiences with the Marina but any other information you have anecdotes from as offshore blooms. Because that part of the problem is we really don't have the data to get it when they're happening and sometimes we don't know until they're here. So, there's a lot of [overlapping conversation] [00:53:51]

Al Durret: I don't think the offshore fishermen, I'm not talking about the offshore fishermen that goes five miles to a reef out here. And that's just, you're miles be fishing in the Back Bay [00:54:00], you're only in 20 foot of water. But somebody that goes 50, 60, 70, 80 miles offshore, it's clean. There's nothing out there. So, you can fish if there are still fish, you know, but you're a 100 foot of water plus.

Sky: So they have just to go out farther?

Al Durret: Yes.

Sky: But they can maneuver around and find fish?

Al Durret: Right, yes, yes so, I don't. Most of my Charter Captains lost their business this fall due to the national – if you're sitting, I mean, as ship even got over into Europe, okay? I mean, we have a lot of Europeans that come here, Germans and people from England that come here and spend two week vacation and they fish and they do the beach things. And all of a sudden, they're here in National news, "West Coast of Florida is devastated by red tide." You can tell.

So, they call their Captain what's going on? And the Captain has to be kind of honest and the people, they change their vacation plans. So, and that's only a natural thing. I guess there's not much you can do about that. National news just hammered the west coast of Florida.

Amanda Scott: Yes, I know that happened with the oil spill too.

Al Durret: Yes. And we didn't have any effect down here. But they killed the West Coast of Florida.

Amanda Scott: Do have any other questions?

Sky: I don't think so. I don't know.

Amanda Scott: Is there anything else that you want to add or...

Al Durret: What did you for [indiscernible] [00:55:57].

Amanda Scott: So, I'm with the social science research group. [00:56:00]. So, part of what we do is, you know, getting these oral histories and talking to the fishermen because, you know, we can do a cruise doing all cruise and look at red tide. But a lot of people we talked around the water all the time. So, it's about, you know, getting that information and then Sky.

Sky: So, I'm a stock assessment biologist. So, I work on the assessment models for the group or species that we assess. So, one of the things we're trying to do is, you know, normally we just run our models but there's these other events like a red tide and if red tide's killing a bunch of the older individuals, we want to be able to account for that so that we're saying all this biomass is dying likewise on fishing.

But we want to account for the losses so that we set the catch levels that are appropriate.

Al Durret: We had, the group where they had floated up in my little area right there was enough to cry for, all the fish. I mean, it was just like overnight, you're in the work one morning and boom. Our water is not water color, it's all white and fish floating and back there touching each other. I was just sad. And so, it's only happened one time in my 30 some years here. And I hope it never happens again. So, it was really a strong red tide.

Obviously you don't know, you don't know that it wasn't the combination of these two. Lake O' and dumps out water when it's rainy season. And that's what these two months were, which was our rainy season. And it may not rain here but it rains in the center of the state. All the water goes into Lake O' and then it Lake O' goes up and they got to release the pressure and so, I've never seen a red tide so bad that it did what it did.

Was it a combination of Lake O' coming in and joining in a breeze [00:58:00] that's one of like this? And was it the two things that killed all the fish? I don't know. I mean I think that question needs to be asked big time of was it a normal red tide with this, enhancing the problem? So...

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: Yes, those are definitely some, you know, some of the interesting questions that we want to look at with this, especially because, you know, from everything we've heard this one has been particularly dense and especially...

Al Durret: All other red tide I would rate them on a scale of zero to 10 and two.

Amanda Scolt: At two? And this one is...

Al Durret: Ten, eleven, twelve. So, that's an easy way to put how bad it was.

Sky: Yes.

Amanda Scolt: Yes. Thank you so much for your time for talking to us.

Al Durret: You're welcome.

Amanda Scolt: This is just a releasing that, well, we could use your interview on and put it on the website, which we may do. You gave us a lot of great information so thank you.

Al Durret: What's the date? 12?

Sky: It's at the third right? [indiscernible] [00:59:14].

Amanda Scolt: Yes. Why don't you go ahead and we're done here, [indiscernible] [00:59:24] Okay.

Sky: Thank you, sir.

Amanda Scolt: Yes, so we're watching it.

Sky: All right. I'll took a photos and we can share now right?

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Sky: Okay.

Amanda Scolt: Yes, have you, you took photos?

Sky: Yes, while you guys are talking, I took some pictures.

Amanda Scolt: Oh, that was great. I'd loved those too.

Sky: Okay. Don't say it. Do you have an email address?

Amanda Scolt: Yes, I do. Let's see. Do you have cards with you? I don't have my cards with me.

Sky: You can just write it down, it's okay.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. Yes, well, I have this email address I can give right here.

Sky: Okay. Yes, email me... [overlapping conversation] [00:59:56].

Al Durret: They were ftmarina@aol.com. [indiscernible] [01:00:00] [01:00:00].

Amanda Scolt: Okay.

Sky: Just email it then I'll respond it, I'll send you the pictures I took you all while you're talking.

Amanda Scolt: Okay. Thank you so much.

Al Durret: Okay. We have a good Facebook following of what we do at the Marina. So this would be a good positive thing to put on there.

Amanda Scolt: Yes.

Al Durret: Yes. Our customers that are up north will just like to know what the hell's going on down here.

Sky: We really couldn't share what was happening at the Marina during the time because we didn't went further.

Al Durret: You didn't want to talk about it.

Amanda Scolt: Why don't you give them something to look forward to when they're dealing with gray murky days [indiscernible] [01:00:35]

Sky: Guiding light.

AlDurret

Amanda Scolt: I couldn't say your name right here as well. That's all.

Sky: Thank you so much. That was really informative actually. I'm glad I came on and learn even more. That was like [indiscernible] [01:00:53] I'm here for it.

Amanda Scolt: Thank you so much. We are just doing a day trip today but we're going to be back so...

Al Durret: Okay. Now, we're at the Marina. Oh, gracious.

Sky: You know what? Email.

Amanda Scolt: That sounds great. Thank you so much.

Al Durret: Thank you very much.

Sky: All right, thanks.

Amanda Scolt: I hope that red tide ends.

Sky: Bye [indiscernible] [01:01:11]