

[00:00:00]

Interviewee: Up north of us. Boca Grande North.

Interviewer: So, it's February 21 and we're with --

Interviewee: Don Jones.

Interviewer: Don Jones. So, go ahead.

Interviewee: I grew up here. I've been here most of my life. I'm in commercial fishing and everything. Red tide occurs pretty regularly but it usually lasts two weeks to a month.

Interviewer: Yes. When you say regularly, do you mean --

Interviewee: It's an annual thing, pretty much --

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: -- but it's in small areas. This is big volumes of area and you can't blame it on a lake like a lot of people are doing.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Boca Grande North up to Charlotte Harbor/Tampa is where it's been really super, super bad all last year. It was there the whole year. The water doesn't drain from the lake up there. It drains out way down here.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It does -- we get touches of it because the wind will change and it'll blow it down this way. During the tides, the winds shift and then they go back the other way. I've never seen it go out to 100 foot. You get 20 foot, 30 foot, yes, then they were out of it. It was up to 100 foot. You can run. As you're running offshore, you're going through like bands of de-coloration in the water. Definitely dumping chemicals. It's a combination of things. I'm not saying it's not red tide but it's not -- the majority of it's got to be chemicals, in my opinion. The media blew it so far out. It about wiped out the charter boat fishermen last year.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: My business went down by 70% for the year. The back-bay guys, they're devastated, too. There's a lot of talented people in the fishing business. I mean they're very good.

[00:02:01]

Interviewee: Sure, we're catching fish but the average guy ain't catching. I don't know what really to say but it's killed sponges. It's killed a lot of things and I know reefs out here 15 miles, 12 miles you dive on. They used to have of big fishing stuff on them and a few decent fish. You dive on it, you see one, two fish and nothing. I mean --

Interviewer: Yes. What species survives? Like what, were there any --

Interviewee: I've seen everything. Jewish, sharks, you name it, I've seen it dead. All the porpoises are killed. Got to be killing them. They don't *[indiscernible]* [00:02:44]

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: They breathe in air.

Interviewer: So, let's map that area. Like the 2018 *[indiscernible]* [00:02:45] that you're talking about and every area that --

Interviewee: Well, it went all the way down but where the majority of it was Boca Grande North is where it was real bad, then it would come down. It's out at Fort Myers Beach. It went all the way down here, down to Marco.

Interviewer: So, go ahead and draw on this because this is for you to draw on.

Interviewee: I can't even see. I lost my real glasses.

Interviewer: So, this is --

Interviewee: Marco's got to be down in here somewhere.

Interviewer: That's -- that's Marco. Yes, and that's *[indiscernible]* [00:03:22] right there. Yes.

Interviewee: Hello? No, sir. I don't.

Interviewer: So, yes, down here is Marco Island.

Interviewee: It went basically from there -- hell, all the way up here to Tampa almost.

Interviewer: Is this an area that you experienced it or?

Interviewee: I seen it.

Interviewer: Yes.  
[00:04:00]

Interviewee: I go offshore 40, 40 miles pretty much to 120 miles in every direction. I always kind of do it the one direction. It didn't matter where I went. I was seeing it out to 100 foot seeing dead fish. You name it, it was dead. Even some shrimp coming to the surface, which you don't normally see. They usually say buried up but they were coming to the surface. It was bad. I seen sponges float. I seen everything.

Interviewer: So --

Interviewee: Nobody supplemented us. Our income was devastated. They had to supplement a guy with a motel, offer him a government loan. They don't do nothing to the fishermen. We work on the order, you're screwed and that's my livelihood. It's fertilizer. Somebody somewhere is dumping a lot of chemicals and it's got to do with some of the lake.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Up there in this region, it was really strong. It's got to be chemicals.

Interviewer: Where was it the strongest?

Interviewee: Above Boca Grande North.

Interviewer: Can you draw it? I'm going to take all of this data and I'm going to digitize it. I'm going to turn these into shapes.

Interviewee: This is Boca Grande.

Interviewer: So, whatever circles and stuff that you can draw for areas that were more effected or less effected *[overlapping conversation]* [00:05:23]

Interviewee: I would say pretty much up to here is pretty much the area as far as I went north. Okay?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: This area, basically, this area here was where it was really bad. It would drift in and we'd get it but it'd come and go like the Naples or Fort Myers beach. This was where real high concentration and they always -- in the news. You know how the news is. They exaggerate crap but it's going. Everybody's got a damn phone so everybody in the world knows what's going on. It really -- they're going to wipe out the fishermen.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: They're really hurting the tourist business but it is chemicals.

[00:06:00]

Interviewer: So, you saw it all the way down here?

Interviewee: Yes. See, I fish all the way down to here.

Interviewer: You haven't seen it past Cape Romano?

Interviewee: No. I heard of it. So, it traces down in the Keys because in the summer I do a lot of trips down the tour *[indiscernible]* [00:06:17] You hear hearsay but I didn't experience the dead fish and stuff. Here we've seen, I mean it was like riding and walking the beat watching cars go by.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee: You could look any direction. Any direction you looked, there was these dead fish. It stunk. I mean I never seen sharks dead, manatees dead. I seen a couple but there was bunches of them. Turtles. It was, it's bad. It was really bad.

Interviewer: Were there any areas that you fished that weren't affected by the red tide?

Interviewee: Oh, you used to be able to fish in 30, 25 to 30 foot off to Captiva and stuff, 40 foot. There's no fish there. It's devastated. It's wiped out. It'll probably come back in time. Well, it will come back a little bit. I don't know how much. But if it -- right now, basically, you don't go 40 miles, forget it. You're not getting no fish.

Interviewer: Did you have any inclination, like before this bad red tide year? Did you have any clues or any idea that it was going to be worse than other years before that?

Interviewee: No. It did get worse in different years, though.

Interviewer: Yes. So --

Interviewee: I have seen it worse but not year-round.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Nowhere near year-round.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: That's the thing. I'll be honest with you. I think a lot of it's got -- coming from Disney World. All around and all that cleaning is going in the Kissimmee River, coming down and they're dumping their irrigation ditches and that's what's hitting this today.

[00:08:00]

Interviewee: That's my honest opinion. You can blame it on anything you want. There again, it's a combination of cleaners, fertilizers, growth.

Interviewer: So, what --

Interviewee: Everybody wants to blame red tide because politicians going to blame the red tide for it.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: They say it's because they -- they're getting their pocket lined.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It's the truth.

Interviewer: So, what do you do? You said your business has been down 80%. Is there anything you can do to adapt or to work through the red tide in any way?

Interviewee: We're starved. We literally starved. I almost lost everything and I know several other fishermen that did. I know some that packed their bags and left.

Interviewer: Were they headed to other areas in Florida or?

Interviewee: No. They were leaving period.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I've never heard of it up in the panhandle, neither and it was in the panhandle there for a little while.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I've fished the entire Gulf and the entire Caribbean and the entire lake. I've been -- fished all my life.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I got a lot of war experience. Never seen it like what it was. Nobody cared about the fishermen and his livelihood as it was. We got wiped out and they cared about the motel and the restaurants. Sure, they a hit. All of us took a hit but nobody wants to help us out at all.

Interviewer: So, I want to talk about some of these other years with red tide, or some of the other red tide events that you also saw fish kills or anything. So, let's go last --

Interviewee: It's usually pin fish and stuff, small fish. Bigger fish you don't see.

Interviewer: What's the last time that there was a large red tide event in this area?

Interviewee: In my memory? I can't honestly tell you. I got to write notes. I couldn't honestly tell you. It does occur but it's been a few years since we had a real major one.

[00:10:00]

Interviewer: Like a decadal kind of thing or every --

Interviewee: Like every couple years but it's not bad. It lasts a couple weeks and then it blows off. It's like mother nature's got a way of restoring it. It's like a forest. It gets overgrown with --

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: -- grape vines or whatever growing. Trees has a natural forest fire. Burns the vegetation off. Trees come right back.

Interviewer: Yes. Yes.

Interviewee: Six weeks later, it's healthier than it was.

Interviewer: So, yes.

Interviewee: So, the red tide I think is part of mother nature, cleaning it to an extent. Wait a minute. You mean like big fish? They came back. It didn't stay there long. This is staying here all the time. Water colors. You can look at it. The water just ain't got its color.

Interviewer: Are there any specific areas where you saw like different water colors and then --

Interviewee: It changes with the tide here.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: That's like asking me -- the water declines and the water temperature. It varies from day to day because of the currents.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It was ugly.

Interviewer: So, we touched on a lot of the things. The most recent one, we did touch on health.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: So --

Interviewee: Oh, it's probably a lot. In the restaurants, a lot of these beach restaurants, they wouldn't let their employees work more than four hours because their coughing, their eyes and stuff.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Bother me but hell. Maybe they're used to be around a decent *[indiscernible]* [00:11:25] difference. I'm not blind. Any *[indiscernible]* [00:11:30] my eyes.

Interviewer: So, about -- you said about three years ago. So, maybe 2015 or 2016, there was a red tide?

Interviewee: Yes, but it wasn't no major --

Interviewer: So, let's kind of just describe like how long did it -- how long did it last?

Interviewee: Maybe a month, six weeks. It wasn't -- it wasn't nowhere. For me growing up and stuff, I'd say generally it came along.

[00:12:00]

Interviewee: The way I remember it, always September for like two weeks to a month growing up. Then they'd go away. We'd get the cold fronts coming in. With mother nature changing a little bit, it's getting a little warmer. Winter's coming a little later it seems. Basically, we had it all the time. Fish came back. It was small fish mostly that got killed. It killed some decent fish that you'd smoke and stuff but it's the smaller -- it's not the great big breeders.

Interviewer: So, it would kill --

Interviewee: *[indiscernible]* [00:12:27] wiped out everything.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It didn't care what it was. If you went through it, it was dead.

Interviewer: The one a couple years ago, you said pin fish. What else did it kill?

Interviewee: Trout, catfish, kills everything that swims in the bay. The mullet it really devastates. Fish, all different types of fish here. It's different in its heartiness.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Some are real frail.

Interviewer: What are some of the --

Interviewee: Some of them are little rascals.

Interviewer: What are the tough ones? What are the hearty ones that, that get away that survive the red tide?

Interviewee: It's hard to say but I'm just saying. Your snook, your red fish, your grouper, your jewfish. There's jewfish everywhere floating around.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: You don't see sharks down there. I seen sharks floating dead. It wasn't a pretty sight. A lot of people couldn't stand the smell.

Interviewer: Yes. So, the red tides that you say in the past only lasted from a couple weeks to a month. Were those red tides -- how did those affect your business? How did those affect charting?

Interviewee: It bothers because it was close. If you knew it occurred, you'd go out -- it'd go out like 20 feet. You go out five miles from shore and, basically, you were out of it and your sail. This one, 30, 40 miles offshore wiping out everything. Pretty much happened all the way down. You're talking a big volume of area.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I don't care what anybody says. To me, it's chemicals.

[00:14:00]

Interviewer: So, with those past ones, there would be red tide in this area but you'd still have as many clients and you'd still be able to do business. They knew that you could get them offshore?

Interviewee: Yes. Most of the people come down here to go group fishing and stuff. There's a lot in the back-bay.

Interviewer: Yes.



Interviewee: It hurt them but they got areas and it didn't kill -- it didn't wipe out everything. This last year wiped out everything. The small fish, mostly them little jewfish. *[indiscernible]* [00:14:39] or whatever the hell you want to call them. Here next year, couple years, *[indiscernible]* [00:14:42] was getting hurt when the red tide occurred, not a great big spawn. It didn't kill the spawning fish so they were being replaced. This time, it didn't care if it swam, it died.

Interviewer: You think it's more than red tide?

Interviewee: Yes. I honestly think -- I know the government paid lilies by the gallon in the lake. They dug up cattails and stuff and the trout. Then you got Disney World which drains in the Kissimmee River, comes down. It's a combination. It's not just red tide. It's a combination but everybody's trying to point their finger on Lake Okeechobee, sugar farms and that ain't it. It's a combination. Somewhere there's a lot of chemicals being dumped. It's just like *[indiscernible]* [00:15:32] 16,000 gallons of bee sprayer or whatever. Same thing. Somewhere they're getting -- somebody got a contract. They dumped it.

Interviewer: I have a question.

Interviewer: Go ahead.

Interviewer: In the past events, if you had to like avoid an area because of red tide, how like -- once the red tide was gone, would you see the recovery happen? Would you be able to go back there or?

Interviewer: Yes. Yes, you can go right back.

Interviewer: You can go right back once it's gone?

[00:16:00]

Interviewee: Pretty much a couple of weeks.

Interviewer: It would be like before? It's re-growing? How is the -- have you been able to go to any areas now that you --

Interviewee: Pretty much got to go to 100 foot. If you don't go 40 miles from Fort Myers beach, you ain't going to catch not more than half.

Interviewer: Even now?

Interviewee: Yes. If you go over -- once you break the 100-foot mark, then you start getting fish, decent fish.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Inside, you might catch one or two. You ain't going out *[indiscernible]* *[00:16:29]* You're not catching all you want. It ain't going to happen. There ain't much life in there. You used to mark life in big stacks. You don't see it. It's a bare bottom.

Interviewer: Before it was gone and it would be recovered and it was alive?

Interviewee: It was all alive. Yes. I mean it's -- it's going to -- if it comes back, it's going to take a long, long time and sponges grow very, very slow.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: *[indiscernible]* *[00:16:53]* It's been probably 10 -- 10 years since I've seen a strong enough red tide where it killed the sponges.

Interviewer: So, about --

Interviewee: That was in shallow water again.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: You're not out 30 foot. After that, I've never seen it go this far off and it just wiped out everything.

Interviewer: So, you're seeing red tides that have killed the same amount of --

Interviewee: Not the same amount but close to it.

Interviewer: The same species?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: And close to it.

Interviewee: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: That was 10, 15 years ago?

Interviewee: It only lasted for a couple weeks to a month.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Not all year long.

Interviewer: It's the same thing with sponges, porpoises, like all of --

Interviewee: Everything.

Interviewer: Everything. Then --

Interviewee: Just like you not having air to breathe. If you died, you can snorkel through it and watch the swim fish and the coloration, watch the fish cross into it. Then they just start going crazy because they can't breathe.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Next thing, belly up.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: So, are the main differences between the red tides you've experienced in the past is the duration of them, that they were a lot shorter?

Interviewee: Yes, it was way shorter.

Interviewer: Yes.

[00:18:00]

Interviewee: Like I said, this --

Interviewer: Then --

Interviewee: Somewhere there's a lot of -- and it could be a combination of things growing. That's all I can tell you. Somebody --

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: -- is dumping a lot of stuff and being exposed to a lot. They keep it up and go where the condos going. Nobody going to come here, anyway.

Interviewer: When you saw red tides in the past, like 10, 15 years ago, was it also in the same area?

Interviewee: No. Basically, you used to hang out around Fort Myers beach where we notice -- Charlotte Harbor got it.

Interviewer: So, let's draw --

Interviewee: Mostly in the bays.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: The bays got really wiped.

Interviewer: Yes

Interviewee: They come back. Most of them fish are migrating up and down.

Interviewer: So, I don't know if this is a better amount. This is where -- this is a chart. It's a little more close up. So, there's a room --

Interviewee: All your bays. Look at all this.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: See, I used to mullet fish and net fish but they banned it. All this, it's just wiped out.

Interviewer: *[indiscernible]* [00:19:02] So, can you draw some areas that affected --

Interviewee: That was Bill Crow *[phonetic]* [00:19:13]

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It probably should go right along the shoreline.

Interviewer: Yes. Then you anticipated --

Interviewee: The bays, like I said, the shallow water and stuff.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: But we did -- it would come down here but look at the volume. See the water here? You got --

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: That's where the big concentration, and this is where we usually go to fish. They ain't got that much bay down here and it's very shallow down here. There is good places but until you get down in Florida bay, you don't have a way of water like this.

Interviewer: Yes. So, in the past, this is where it would be? This is where it would stick around is up here?

Interviewee: Well, it was all over. It would come because the wind currents carry it.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: The wind. Depends on how your weather is. When you're bad, a lot of it goes by your wind direction is where it blows it.

[00:20:00]

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Really below, I'd say Naples or whatever, you didn't really see much of it. It's really thinning way out going down.

Interviewer: Yes. So, coming down here, it would kind of thin out.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: So, you've seen it --

Interviewee: Even where it's got like the after effects and most -- a lot of stuff you got is the dead fish blowing down here in the wind direction.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: They show up and everybody's saying it's red tide.

Interviewer: Yes. What were the dead fish that would blow down?

Interviewee: Mostly thin fish, various things. You see the snook, the red -- it's all there. You see some group or a little snook. Lady fish, trout, catfish galore.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Mullet out galore because it's the main things in the bay.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It's pretty much the same thing every time when you see it. If it's there, it's going to die.

Interviewer: Did you ever know about red tide in this back-bay area? Has it ever been back here?

Interviewee: Yes, it's been there. It's been everywhere.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: That's -- it's the natural currents.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Last two weeks, maybe six weeks it's been -- it was growing. It did it in like in sections and it traveled along and then -- look, it didn't stay there killing and killing. This stayed, just kept wiping out and then you see the other -- there would be another massive kill.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I mean it was really, really ridiculous.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Eventually, they're going to find out a lot of chemicals being dumped somewhere.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Just like what they busted some company, they're dumping somewhere.

Interviewer: You said even this -- this didn't disrupt your fishing? Just enough to disrupt your business?

[00:22:00]

Interviewee: No because I'm way out here.

Interviewer: Because you're coming out? So, is this stuff, the red tide here --

Interviewee: Well, it -- see here, see there?

Interviewer: Yes. Was this up here, though, since you weren't -- you weren't really fishing in this area. Was this just something that you like heard about it up here?

Interviewee: I fished all that area.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: In shore, off shore. I used to be a net fisherman.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Mullet fish.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I did all the back country. I started out as a back-bay guy. I got a bigger boat. I still play in the bays.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I ain't too interested in going in the bay because of the -- it ain't nothing like it was. It will get better but it ain't good enough for me right now. I like action.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Otherwise, I'm going to drink a beer.

Interviewer: Were there like environmental changes? Like did you notice like back in --

Interviewee: It wipes out everything, yes.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: There's no environmental there. No birds, nothing.

Interviewer: I mean like --

Interviewee: Everything's got to eat.

Interviewer: When you --

Interviewee: It's gone.

Interviewer: When you used to fish in the back-bay versus now, you notice the difference in the fishing?

Interviewee: Just in what it killed this last year.

Interviewer: Just in this last year?

Interviewee: It was -- it never stopped. It just kept going and going and going until there wasn't nothing else to kill. It come before and then fish migrate. Fish do travel a lot. A lot of people don't realize how much they do migrate but it's like birds. Some types swim thousands of miles. I don't know how the hell they do it but they do it.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: A lot of it goes by weather and temperature. It's a real big gauge. Anyway, that's about the best I could tell on it.

Interviewer: Yes. Have you ever -- have you noticed any changes in spotting aggregations or fish distribution or?

Interviewee: Just now starting to show. We're coming into the spawn season now.

[00:24:00]

Interviewee: That's why there wasn't much to spawn this last -- like mullet spawn. All fish spawn at different times pretty much.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: A lot of it's in the water in the spring if you want to see the fish. Your mullets start, when the water gets cold, they bunch up and then they start roaming, usually around Christmas time.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Then they get down and they lay their eggs. It's like karma. Your groupers start in February and March and into April. Some of them are later but the majority of them, February and March. The snook, the spawn like June and July. Red fish, I don't know that much about the red fish.

Interviewer: What are your main target species?

Interviewee: Grouper and snapper because I'm offshore now. When I did the back-bay, it was snook and red fish and trout. When I fished in the Keys, it was tarpon mostly *[indiscernible]* [00:25:09]

Interviewer: If there was red tide going on at a time when you were fishing, did that change your decision to fish offshore versus in shore?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: No?

Interviewee: No. It's just I like catching a bigger fish --

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: -- because of growth. I only got a limited amount of space to fish here. There's so many folks on weekends, forget it because it's all weekend warriors go out.

Interviewer: Yes.



Interviewee: It got to where I didn't want to fish the weekends. Offshore, I can go seven days a week. My business is seasonal. Goes up and down like everything else. So, the offshore paid off better for me. It's a hell of a lot more money invested, too.

[00:26:00]

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Instead of having a \$50,000 boat, you got to have \$1 million boat.

Interviewer: Yes. Do you think there's any fishing management related measurement -- measures or anything that could be implemented that would help mitigate the red tide? *[indiscernible]* [00:26:21]

Interviewee: No. No, the measures ain't going to do nothing. They got to find the source.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It's definitely -- you can't see the water's color change. That far, that deep unless there's major chemicals being dumped. There's no way.

Interviewer: Have you had experiences in this area seeing areas of green algae overgrowth?

Interviewee: A little bit of that. That's from the lake. Most of that just filtered down and it was breaking up. I didn't go up the river to see it. I kept going. Very little of it I seen but it does occur. Mostly what I've seen around here is what rolls up on the beaches, red crabgrass and junk that stinks. It's like low tides. It's got to know when the tide comes in, it's not there. It only happens a couple weeks out of the year. It washes up big time and then it just lays there and it stinks. People don't want to go out there on the beach.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: *[indiscernible]* [00:27:30] and it's something that occurs naturally.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It dies off. It's like *[indiscernible]* [00:27:37] grass in Africa. In every leaf, it's -- and that's what gets in the dolphins and stuff and it floats across the Atlantic and ends up in the Gulf, goes all over. It takes a long time. By the time it gets to this area, who knows when it started.

Interviewer: In the past, did red tide ever affect how many clients you had or how much business you had? People still come out here?

[00:28:00]

Interviewee: I've only had a couple days off but that was it.

Interviewer: Yes. So, people who -- your clients who fish with you and have fished with you for years. Were they -- would they know about the red tide that it was here?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes?

Interviewee: Oh, yes. You're going to take your kids and whatever and go to the beach? I know you ain't going to go there. It's like going to the dump.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: You're having a day off with your family and let's have a picnic. I just -- it stinks. They're nothing you can do about it. Everything's dead and rotten. It was sickening. It really was. What really upsets me is *[indiscernible]* [00:28:44] or anything. They just blame it on one thing. It ain't the red -- just the red tide. There's a lot of -- and I think a lot of it's coming from Disney World. I'll be honest with you. All cleaning and they're dumping -- Kissimmee River's been dying for years. It's going in the lake. The lake is totally ruined. Then it goes through the Foss Bay, then it goes through the damn sugarcane. Then they okay another big Foss Bay thing. It's going to keep killing. Then they'll say we can't fertilize your yard this summer because of the rain. It's a Foss Bay mine.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: So, they -- they don't -- politicians don't care about small guy. All they care about is big bucks and corporations and development, whoever's lining their pocket.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Bottom line. I've seen it. I've fished all my life and sat there and watched it and they don't even know what they're talking about. *[indiscernible]* [00:29:40]

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: You need to leave your golf cart, buddy and stay on the golf course.

Interviewer: Yes. With the extent of this past red tide and all the destruction that you saw and the bottom being dead and everything, how long before you think this area --

Interviewee: Some of it's never going to come back.

Interviewer: Yes?

Interviewee: Some of it won't come back.

Interviewer: Can you describe kind of what you think, how long it's going to take for any of it to recover?

[00:30:00]

Interviewee: I really, really don't know the answer but a lot of it ain't going to come back.

Interviewer: Yes? What specifically?

Interviewee: Well, the sponges and stuff. It's always going to be a desert out here.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: So, a lot of bay fishing stuff. Some will come back but a lot of it's not going to come back.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: How far? Like I said, some of it -- if they could stop it, it probably would come back. It's like the coral dying in the Keys and that. They're making progress but they got a long way to go. If they don't, them beautiful reefs are going to be gone.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I don't know if you ever snorkeled or not but it is beautiful. It's really beautiful. It is getting killed and it's still the same thing. It's growth and it's huge. Then they run these damn cruise ships in foreign countries that don't go by our laws, and they're dumping all this shit. I've sat there and videoed it and watched them at night throwing tons of shit overboard. Like all your garbage trucks in this town at one time at night, let it go, instead of going to the dump.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I've seen it all. Everywhere they are, you can see where it gets cloudy and nasty. Let's see. What else goes overboard? It ain't exactly great.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: *[indiscernible]* [00:31:37] It ain't going to stop. It's too much money. It's too big a business. They keep building them bigger and bigger.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I won't be here to see none of that.

Interviewer: Yes. No. It's really sad. Just talking to everyone in this area. Just seeing how this environment has changed over time with the -- now this past year.

[00:32:00]

Interviewee: Not just the beach. Coconut Grove. This beach was paved down the fire station. I don't know if you've been down this way. It only goes down about a half mile from here. I used to ride my bike from there to the swim bridge which is where the big bridge is. It was tourist season and I passed three damn cars.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I ride that bike and never see a vehicle.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee: Going to school, I had to go catch the bus. I've seen a lot of change. There wasn't a condo on this beach. The rest of the island going to the other bridge at the other end, you drove on the sand and it was cow fields, and this end was potato fields. I've seen it change.

Interviewer: Yes. Yes. No. There's been a lot of development here.

Interviewee: I see it every day, man. Driving on. Wow, I wonder what the hell they're building there.

Interviewer: Yes. No. I noticed.

Interviewee: It's going on everywhere, though. I don't know where they're getting the money to buy this stuff.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It's out of my pockets. Anyway, that's the best I can help you, dear.

Interviewer: Yes. I don't know. Do you have more --

Interviewer: Yes. I have one more question about like how you've -- how you've -- how do I -- when you find it and figure out what areas to avoid. When you figure out that it's everything, like how is that? Is that just kind of you're exploring kind of to see where it's at or communication between captains?

Interviewee: Some communication. Most of it's running and looking at the bottom of it. There ain't no life.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It ain't got no life. In a sense, it stopped.

Interviewer: Before, I guess because --

Interviewee: There was life everywhere.

Interviewer: There was life everywhere but you ran into red tide, it would be --

Interviewee: Red tide, we stayed -- we used to distinguish which way we were going. It was mostly one direction. We'd encounter it but we'd look sideways to it, let it roll. Let's go.

[00:34:00]

Interviewee: You'd go any direction, basically, and catch a fish. Now, up here, we couldn't catch a fish. Everything and everybody's been fishing south of here mostly.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: This up here was dead.

Interviewer: So, a lot of people have been going down and past Cape Romano, past Marco Island to fish?

Interviewee: Probably down as far as Marco's Bluff.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It's pushing it. Cape Romano, 40, 50 miles.

Interviewer: Yes. Are you -- have you been doing that this past year?

Interviewee: When I fished, I did for a while.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I'm back in -- I do mostly overnight trips and stuff. I fish 80, 100 miles.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: A day trip, I go 40, 50. I like the longer trips. I used to go out there 100, 130 miles I'm out here.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: I'm off your chart.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: That's it.

Interviewee: All right, buddy.

[00:35:08]