

## WaylonMills

Female Speaker 1: Okay. So, we are here in Boca Grande with Waylon Mills, Captain Waylon Mills. And I am curious, first of all, what – if you could tell us a little bit about your background and the fishing industry and your experiences in Boca Grande and what you fish for and just a little bit about yourself?

Waylon Mills: Okay. All right. Basically, I'm a fourth generation, right here in this area, Charlotte Harbor, Boca Grande area. I've got – basically, I'm going into 26 years of charter fishing being a charter fishing guide. But like said, I mean, we all grew up on the water, seeing, you know, all the changes and stuff like that. But I do some offshore fishing. Did a lot of about 27 years of inshore guiding, chasing the snook, the reds, the trout, of course, our big industry here in Boca Grande, Charlotte Harbor, the tarpon industry, it's kind of what makes this place and keeps it keeps it going. And the other thing that I did do on the side for several years, did some stone crabbing. So, like I said, whether I was chartering or not, I was constantly – I've been on the water and you know, and I get to see the water to talk about of the red tide.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: Seeing it and seeing in the places that doesn't get tested because a lot of people don't take the boats out there and take a water sample. So...

Female Speaker 1: How many years when were – are you still stone crabbing?

Waylon Mills: No, no, I actually – I've got out of that business in 2017.

Female Speaker 1: Why did you [00:02:00] move out of it?

Waylon Mills: It's a couple of reasons. As far as a property that's located on the water commercially to house our gear, that's really limited in this area. And then also the buyers, the stone crab dealers are too far from us there's no one really local. So, it just became I'd go and be say 10, 12 hours on the water. I had another three hours to get into my buyer to get rid of my crabs, so, I was like okay. I really don't want one that job that bad.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: So, I just went ahead and just, you know, kind of basically got out.

Female Speaker 1: When did you start it?

Waylon Mills: Oh, gosh. It'd be guess just stuff on my head, I mean, I it was probably '09, 2008, 2009 maybe.

Female Speaker 1: Where were you going to sell them down in Marco or where?

Waylon Mills: No, over in the Pine Island, Matlacha...

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Female Speaker 1: Okay.

Waylon Mills: ...was a buyer over there and then you know then there was times I had purchased licenses to you know retail them myself to some of my clients and stuff like that. But I was you know, I catch too many crabs, you know, so, I needed the dealer because you know you come into 500 pounds of crabs in a day. I don't know how many people that want to buy and I left on my boat. So, that was an issue and I just you know want to catch them, get them sold and go on about another day.

Female Speaker 1: So, on your –you are predominantly fishing offshore now, doing offshore trip?

Waylon Mills: Well, my biggest season is still the fishing in Boca Grande pass for the target.

Female Speaker 1: Right.

Waylon Mills: That's my still my biggest industry but outside of that, chasing the snook the reds, the trout and in the inshore waters, I no longer do that. I don't have the boats for it, and a lot of my clients and finally, just with, you know, the lack of fish, the more boats [00:04:00] that we're seeing, all of that, they're just – they're opting to go offshore now.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: My personal clients so, I'm still entertaining them.

Female Speaker 1: So, mostly it was a decision that was based on what your clients want to do and they decided they kind of...

Waylon Mills: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yes, definitely. And it was just in trying to get newer clients to do the inshore fishing, ones that were repeat clients. That was kind of tough. You know, so I just like to say that was mainly taking care of my client base. They were like, yeah, hey, we're ready, let's go catch some snappers, we will have snapper dinner, grouper dinner or whatever.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. Cool. That's interesting to me, because I heard that fishing offshore is usually a completely different client base, just because it's like a longer trip. Yes. But for you, it was kind of the same people and it was because of the changes that...

Waylon Mills: Yeah, just that's just the changes because they've been with me for so many years, and just seeing the, you know, the lack of productivity inside in the back country, they just you know, you know in restrictions and limits to you know, and a lot of my lot of my clients are big families. And you know when snook season or even redfish season when it's open and you can keep one per person or something like that, you know

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you got these clients of mine that we're trying to feed a big family off of a trip and that's not going to happen.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: Yeah.

Female Speaker 1: What do you think are some of the reasons for the decline and productivity that you've seen in the inshore fishing?

Waylon Mills: Well, the biggest thing was the – now, I mean, now, it could be of the freeze that we had...

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: The 09 or 10 somewhere whenever that was...

Female Speaker 1: I think it's 2010.

Waylon Mills: Okay, 2010. So, I mean, it didn't discriminate. Water got too cold and just stuff died.

Female Speaker 1: And you never saw [00:06:00] it really recover since then?

Waylon Mills: No, it's – me personally and I always explained it to my clients this way, there were certain times like March just for example, March was a big month for arsenic fishing. Pre the freeze, I could go out, say at the end of March and I could take you for a ride and I can take you to a dozen places and show you over 100 head of snook and a dozen places, since then, I can't take you to one place it show you 100 head of snook lane on one spot. So, has the fish come back? Yeah, sure. There's some fish that came back. Are they like for 2010? No.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: And I think a lot of guys that you'll ask, they have not seen it. But you know...

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. So, um, yeah, we are we are focused on red tide, but any other large environment changes like algae, especially other types of algae that you have seen or any type of fish kill whether it was a freeze or anything like that? We're also interested in this too because you know...

Waylon Mills: Red tide and whatever because obviously red tide is, you know, the, the, you know, I'm not a scientist, but obviously I know its annual, I mean, it's quote unquote, we normally would always get it around here, late summer, early fall, that was just kind of the Gulf of Mexico is wildfire, I mean, it was just, we always had some sort

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of red tide everything got right and you know, and it came and did its thing. But, you know, the red tide that we had, here red tide that we had, because I was actually seeing the red tide, laying offshore in 2017. And then by June of 2018, it [00:08:00] came ashore and when it came ashore, it stayed. Then it just bloomed. And it just kept blooming and blooming and just, you know, I mean, we're, you know, we're not supposed to have it though, that part for summertime, I mean, and then you take the reins and the nutrients had run off and it just wouldn't go away.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: Would not go away.

Female Speaker 1: So, I want to start and actually go back in time to like the first red tide that you remember in this area.

Waylon Mills: Oh, gosh.

Female Speaker 1: And to kind of talk about some of the other big events besides kind of these annual. So, what's the first time you remember seeing red tide?

Waylon Mills: Well, let's see, I mean, it was, I mean, I mean, in my whole childhood. I mean, there was always some sort of red tide at some point. And, you know, we always, you know, my older relatives were always kid around. It's like yeah, red tide, red tide. Yeah, that's nothing you should have been here in 1938 you know, something like that. And so just wiped out everything for two years, you know, and I always tell stories like that and then, you know, come along there be no the red tide and you think it's bad and it would be bad, but, you know, go away.

Female Speaker 1: How long would those last usually?

Waylon Mills: For the most part, normally, it seems like if you want to call it typical, I guess a typical red tide just seems like it would be a couple months, maybe, yeah, the most. But they were always in a situation where, like you said, it seems like it would come into the fall. And then we'd have the cold fronts and stuff and then it start breaking it up, then the water get cold and it would go away.

Female Speaker 1: So, with these typical Red tides [00:10:00] that you remember in the past that would be annually and only a couple months late summer to fall. What? What areas do you remember seeing them in? And if they're areas on kind of this chart that you think you could draw out areas like you remember specifically more affected or less affected? Is there anything like that, that you think you would feel comfortable trying out?

Waylon Mills: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, basically, I mean, obviously more than anything, it's right on the beach, right on all the coastline.

Female Speaker 1: So, let's just draw that.

Waylon Mills: Okay.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. So...

Waylon Mills: So, yeah, I mean, basically, it would, when it would come ashore, I mean, it just was, you know, this coastline and then, you know, obviously depending on how bad it was then depending on the winds, you know, then it kind of would obviously come in these passes of a current stuff, you know, and then if it you know, stayed prolonged yeah, most of the time it would just kind of get in an area like this around this, this stuff just kind of and then worst case scenario was, you know, you know, if you want to note it on the marker but this was kind of the typical...

Female Speaker 1: Let's do another, let's do worst case scenario for that typical that same...

Waylon Mills: So, when I got and then it just it would infiltrate all the way up to they [00:12:00] are always seemed to be kind of a dividing line somewhere in here where the rivers were pushing out that it wouldn't doubt it, you know, and it was but this is, you know, where it took over. You know, all these stuff, you know, kind of, you know, and then I didn't spend a lot of time down there, but I just heard about it down there. But yeah, I just wouldn't all of like...

Female Speaker 1: So, farther down here is a [indiscernible] [00:12:47]

Waylon Mills: Yeah, that was – kind of not my zone down that way. I mean, I would just, I would just hear about it, you know, through other fishermen that I knew and they're like, you know, they would just tell me like, yeah, there's nothing alive down here. Everything's dead and they just kind of the same thing but.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. So, for red tides be up in this area, how often did this happen? Was this, you know, you said like this is the annual typical red tide and then sometimes it would be bad, do you remember how often it was it was this extensive?

Waylon Mills: It seemed like it was, I don't know maybe seven or eight year basis maybe, it seemed like it would come around and get hot enough where it just everything cooperated for it to bloom and just get massive and you know, not get turned up. And it will do that because this last I mean, this last one that we just had, you know, that's it did all of this.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. And for the...

Waylon Mills: But it probably so it may [00:14:00] might have been longer, might even be go out 11 or 12 years maybe since it got where it got hot enough to kind of take up a bigger part of the water on the inside there.

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Female Speaker 1: Yeah. So, you think the larger ones had more to do with just a temperature if it was hotter summer and it lasted longer than?

Waylon Mills: Yes, definitely. Definitely hot water, less quench, definitely.

Female Speaker 1: And for this area where you said you'd see it on the beaches, and then the passes, where are you going to areas offshore where you wouldn't see it wouldn't extend past here, or were you not visiting these areas?

Waylon Mills: Yeah, there was times where, yes, it would, it would push a shore and say would only be within a mile of the beach once you got pass that mile, then there wouldn't be anything. And that was kind of, say a typical of red tide. And then if I was stone crabbing and I was out here on the water all the time throughout the fall and winter, you know, then there might be just little hot zones, just a little like a teardrop down here are some of it. But when it finally got to where it was kind of getting parallel to the coast typically that was inside that mile.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: Just kind of spread you know, north and south.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. So, are there any areas I would predict predictively get patches or such as kind of a sort of patchy thing that you...

Waylon Mills: Yeah, I mean, that's just a flip of a coin on that one.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: Just never know like this, like fishing this past fall, going offshore, I had to run, I mean, there was times where I've run through it for 21 miles and then I had to get out there 22 to 23 miles before I got on the other side of it.

Female Speaker 1: What's [00:16:00] this typical red tie that you ever know it wasn't really annually, it was it you knew every summer that you were going to get a red tie in the late summer, did you plan for it?

Waylon Mills: No, no, I mean, just kind of thought that it might come around because it just seemed like it always did but you know, it wasn't really, you know, wasn't consecutive by no means but it just seemed like, you know, because, like said, we're on the water or it's just kind of run together. You know, but, but there were times yeah, we didn't we didn't have it. But there would be times where it was, you know, okay, so it happened then just, for example, say it happened in 90, then it happened 91 and 92 and you just, you just thought nothing of it, it was just kind of an annual thing, but normally said it, I know, probably in the last 20 some years since I've been charter fishing, I want

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to say there's probably been three times where it's been really hot like that, I remember correctly.

Female Speaker 1: You mean all of this whole area?

Waylon Mills: Yeah. And all out here.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: Yeah.

Female Speaker 1: Over a mile?

Waylon Mills: Definitely, yeah. Yeah.

Female Speaker 1: So, how far out like in the - and are there any years that stick out to you as being particularly bad?

Waylon Mills: It's just past one.

Female Speaker 1: Just the past one?

Waylon Mills: And because like you said, it's the freshest on our mind.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: You know, because there was there was one and I don't remember it was early 2000s where it went into Sarasota Bay. And we had it for a long time. And ours is kind of dissipated a little bit, but I know Sarasota Bay had it for like, a fish a lot of clients there and they had it for, I mean, over a year laying in that Bay.

Female Speaker 1: So, how would you know that this was red tide when it would come a typical red tide that would come annually? [00:18:00] Where would be the first thing that you know that the red tide was here. Like what were the indicators?

Waylon Mills: I mean normally smell, there's times where, like said the water might not have a change yet the colorization of it. But you could, you could always any breaking water will wash from a boat waves breaking the white from them just to get an airborne. You can just you can tell. Is that okay?

Female Speaker 1: You feel it on your throat?

Waylon Mills: Yes, they're just yeah, you feel it in your throat and you just know, you know, it's there. And then eventually you like, it won't take how many hours or how many days next thing you know, like, okay, there's the colorization. Now, I can see the

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bloom and yeah, I knew I was smelling it, you know, whatever just verify what you already knew.

Female Speaker 1: Did it ever change your fishing activity or what you chose to?

Waylon Mills: Oh, definitely. Yeah, I mean, that just, yeah, it's a big corporate in our charter fishing. I mean, they don't and move the fish around, the ones I can get away from it and I move them and then obviously, you know, that's up to us to go and find them again but and then most generally all your guides do live bait fish of some sort. So, you know, that's, that's a tough one, like you can't try to carry live bait and you know you don't know where to run you might run through it not know it goes in your live well, and kills like the bait.

Female Speaker 1: For the species that move away which species do that? Which species are able or that move that you're targeting and...

Waylon Mills: They all – they will all try to move away from it. But what does happen is if we get into the part of the season where the fish have row, and they're going to spawn, but Mother Nature is telling them to get going and go to where there you got to go in a red tides in a way they still go. And then they don't [00:20:00] make it, you know, like mullet because that's normally when you have your red tide is that fall mullet run and then when the mullet get the rowing on it, it's telling them to head offshore to go spawn red tides in the way they just tried to go through it, they die.

Female Speaker 1: Are there any other species that you noticed the same thing with the – when they have frill and they have to move through it besides mullet?

Waylon Mills: Well, I mean you know, the snook spawn now, late spring through the first of the summer. And you know same thing like last, that was the last 2018 at this time of the year, I mean you couldn't count, you couldn't count all the snook that were dead. But they were collected all this was infiltrated with red tide and you know, Mother Nature is telling them to get out here on the beach to do their thing and yeah, so it was it was wiping them out.

Female Speaker 1: And part of that was because of the extended into the spring?

Waylon Mills: Yes. Yeah, I mean, yeah, well yeah because it well, that's when it really started getting hot last year was about the time this new course trying to spawn. And then it just carried around until I mean it, I think it finally went away from us in February 2019.

Female Speaker 1: Have you ever seen it? Yeah. Have you ever seen it happen like that effect the snook like that?

Waylon Mills: Yeah, yeah, it's it has because we've had some the late spring summertime ones, but not in you know, I mean, I don't even know what they said how



far we reached this past year. But I mean, I know it went all the way down to the Everglades from and it was all the way I think it was South Tampa to the Everglades. 2018 I believe.

Female Speaker 1: So, aside from fish moving around, and impacting the mullet spawn and the snook spawn in the spring, what other [00:22:00] impacts fish species?

Waylon Mills: Well, I mean the redfish same thing because they're responding in the fall late summer and fall. So, I've seen, I've seen several of us have local guides, I mean we've seen massive kills of the big row redfish, I'll get caught up just get called out here a mile off the beach and just wipe out the whole school, you know, they're all 20 to 40 pound redfish, full row.

Female Speaker 1: And that's something that you would say because sometimes during annual ones in the past?

Waylon Mills: Yes, yes because that's typically when we would start seeing it right there, last September, you know, maybe late August, September [indiscernible] [00:22:50] seen a little trickle of some red tide showing up.

Female Speaker 1: Did you ever notice what these typical red tides that you ever see fish kills?

Waylon Mills: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: What type of fish did you see?

Waylon Mills: I mean everything. I mean everything that we have, I mean, I'm just trying to think the list would be shorter if I said what didn't die.

Female Speaker 1: Well, you can, I'd like to know that's like my next question, so we can talk about that.

Waylon Mills: But I mean because it's all the shark species that we've had inshore, I mean, as far as the black nose, the Atlantic sharp nose, black tips, spinner shark, nurse shark, seeing them killed. All the different skates and stingrays, seeing them dead, your flounder, all your pinfish, grunts, pigfish, sheepshead, trout, trout, snapper, gag grouper, rd grouper, ladyfish, snook red, goliath grouper, needlefish, lizardfish.

Female Speaker 1: So, literally everything?

Waylon Mills: Yeah. You know I'm just like, I don't even know if there's a short list.

Female Speaker 1: And even in one of the like in the smaller annual red tides, that's just the red and not the purple that you wouldn't be, you would see shark die offs and some others raise and stuff like that?

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Waylon Mills: Yeah, because even the smaller ones, they'll it'll kind of move around like a cloud in the sky and it will get fish trapped in that and that's where it doesn't matter because like I said, they'll keep going, keep going, keep going. Well, I mean, as good as a map that they have, they don't you know, all of a sudden they just get surrounded and they just get they get kind of get trapped. They can't get out to see they got to go through it or you know, or whatever but still if they go through there, they weren't on a bed.

Female Speaker 1: Are there any species that aren't affected or impacted at all by red tide?

Waylon Mills: No, because my stone crabs die, the blue crabs die, mullet crabs die. Even the shrimp and this tank out here when it gets real hot inside this body right here, they've had it when they couldn't keep them alive in the shrimp tank.

Female Speaker 1: So...

Waylon Mills: And I mean and you could go there and the water running in there would choke you down.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. Yeah, I know. I've heard a lot about like the shrimp tanks and the live bait and everything just gets totally wiped out.

Waylon Mills: Yeah.

Female Speaker 1: It's not the first thing. What about size of species? Does that have anything to do with how its impacted?

Waylon Mills: No.

Female Speaker 1: And you said you saw so you've seen die off of stone crabs from red tide in the past?

Waylon Mills: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. How did you know like that must have been?

Waylon Mills: Well, I mean, we want we like so because they would they would actually my traps actually would catch stone crab. And then red tide would come down on my trouts, so, when we pulled the trout off, every crab then the crab is dead. And then you know, I just you know now this is coming from, you know, marine I think they publish some sort of video or some kind of little documentary they were talking about that depending on how high the count of red tide is that stone crabs were could only live in it for like three hours before they perished. But like I said, I've seen them in my in my trap die and some that were maybe hanging on by a thread could hardly move. If you pick the

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crab up, his claws will be hanging, his legs will be hanging, but he's still just you can just, you know, it was like it wasn't long.

Female Speaker 1: So that's something that you notice in between, like, '09 and 2017 when you're crabbing commercially or...

Waylon Mills: Oh, definitely.

Female Speaker 1: ...were you like crabbing before that just personally?

Waylon Mills: My whole family.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: Yeah. So, yes, I have been around it but yeah, personally yeah that so when I was commercial doing it then but also when I didn't have the permission I wasn't doing it and then you know, my other family members or you know, we'd see all that.

Female Speaker 1: So, as far as taking people out on charters, you said it changes the fishing because you have to kind of avoid it especially if you have live bait.

Waylon Mills: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: And the fish move around.

Waylon Mills: Right.

Female Speaker 1: How did you adapt to that? What did you do differently on charter boat?

Waylon Mills: Well, you see the good thing for me in the last couple years that I went back to offshore fishing, a lot of that fishing, you can get away with dead bait, cut bait and, and or catch live bait outside of the red tide boundary line, kind of whatever it happens to be that day. So, a lot of my said this past year, fall trips we just [00:28:00] right offshore that we got out of it and then we start, maybe catch live bait there or you know of course we had dead bait for cut bait and just go fish and catch our fish.

Female Speaker 1: What does that mean for you as a business? Are you like spending more money on fuel going out farther?

Waylon Mills: Definitely, definitely. And it cost me a lot of trips because there are on our coast. There are a lot of clients that, you know, they don't want to run 30 miles, you know, and typically the west coast of Florida outside of being in the panhandle, I mean, you know, just across the state on the east coast in the year when they're the big pond, the Atlantic Ocean so that's where the guys that are real salty, that love to go offshore fishing. They ought to go over there.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: Here it's more of the tarpon seeing the inshore [overlapping conversation] [00:28:42]

Female Speaker 1: Yeah families.

Waylon Mills: Yes. So, now that I'm just doing outside of the tarpon, when they're not here and I'm doing offshore now I'm at the mercy of you know, I only have a handful of clients that you know, the red tide pushes me 35 miles offshore handful and we'll go.

Waylon Mills: But we still have the clients, I'll do that and you're able to keep your business running and everything like during a red tide when you when you have to go out 30 miles you're still able.

Waylon Mills: Yes, yes. I have enough. Yes. Yeah.

Female Speaker 1: So, with you know, you said there's these fish die offs that happen when a red tide comes annually. How long does it take before the area recovers? Like how long before like say, you know there's bad red tide right here in the speeches where this red area you drew, how long before you can go back and fish in that area? Does it take a while to get back to what it was like before?

Waylon Mills: If it's a mild, mild red tide. Yeah, I would, I would, you know, say that it would get really fishy again and maybe a matter of months [00:30:00] depending on the species you were looking at, you know, because also you got to take into account that a lot of species will move around. They're always kind on the go. And then you got a lot of fish that just like to be lazy and not really move. So, if you're targeting those and they've cleared those out of that spot, then it might take a while for that particular species to you know, get back in there.

Female Speaker 1: Could you give some examples of sort of move fish that would take longer to recover?

Waylon Mills: Well, it's basically just a migratory fish. You know, you say like, if you were chasing Spanish mackerel, and it and they came into the Charlotte Harbor and it in it, wiped them out and ran them off, I mean, it was a matter of that water clearing up and bam, they're right back in there. Now, if it was, you know, goliath grouper, which you know, tend to – it was target anyway but you know, or you know, something like that that just likes to kind of find a place at home and live their whole life, you know, that takes a while for them to come back a little bit now and get and get there. But the good thing about if there is a good thing about that I mean, Harbor, we do have a lot of different species as far as the Charter business where they really migrate, I mean, your pimperl come and go, your permit come and go.

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The Spanish mackerel, the kingfish, Cobia, all that stuff is traveling up and down, you know, depending on the time of the season, but before so that you know because I've even heard from scientists that you know, like snook they've tagged on Pine Island Sound. Even the redfish, they would capture them and find them in Sarasota Bay. And so that's good that they're moving. But it was also there was [00:32:00] back in the early 2000 we were talking about that Sarasota Bay that got wiped out. Well, it happened when a lot of our fish that they were tagging upon on the south did their little trap in Sarasota Bay. So, you know, even though the red tide didn't kill our fish here, kill them up there.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. So, there's, you know, you mentioned that with the red tide, you can kind of smell it first and you feel it in your throat. Were those kind of health impacts that those ever stop you from going out on the water? Did they?

Waylon Mills: Not me, personally no.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. But other people?

Waylon Mills: No, definitely. Yeah, there's, uh, yeah, I mean, depending on you know, kind of sensitivity they have and, and everybody's different. But, I mean, I would have a few clients that could not be around it. They had to stay away from it you know, health issues but myself, yeah, I mean, I just go through it and go on.

Female Speaker 1: And there's no like, lingering Health like you don't like how long do you have a cough for? Like when you...

Waylon Mills: I mean, basically just when you get out of it...

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: ...breathing it, you know, it'll go away. But I, you know, have heard you know, from, you know, some, you know elderly people that you know if they stay in it for too long before they get away from it that it gets irritated their throat so bad that, you know, they wind up with that stuff, even after that.

Female Speaker 1: So, let's talk about this past year. And we'll draw a new - is a different color and kind of draw the extent of that and then go over kind of some of the same questions.

Waylon Mills: Okay.

Female Speaker 1: And I just also want to confirm like a when you say like a typical red tide and you talked about one that was less [00:34:00] severe and we're still talking like two months in the late summer.

Waylon Mills: Yeah.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: Yeah, really fall, yeah.

Female Speaker 2: Very patchy, right like it sort of missed, you can keep fishing, you just go to different spot?

Waylon Mills: Yes, yes. Yes, definitely.

Female Speaker 1: And then yeah, like I said it might come in just infiltrate right here and you know there's north port of Pine Island Sound and well, we just stay out of that area. And then come stay up here and you know, go around it.

Female Speaker 1: And then prior to this last year when there was a about red tide with the purple, how long did those last like what's the longest that you ever saw a red tide before last year?

Waylon Mills: Before last year, that I remember while I was guiding probably, probably 10 months I think, maybe 10 months and earlier.

Female Speaker 1: Do you remember when that was? And what year it was?

Waylon Mills: I had to be the – I would say the late 90s I would think.

Female Speaker 1: And other than that lasting longer was it similar to the ones that you would experience in the past? And, you know, the way that you experienced that on the fish floated species that are affected or unaffected?

Waylon Mills: Yeah, I mean I, we did it, you should ask me for reminding me of the one that we just had?

Female Speaker 1: No, I'm saying so for these red tides for the typical red tides for the...

Waylon Mills: Okay.

Female Speaker 1: Red area.

Waylon Mills: Right.

Female Speaker 1: In the past that would happen annually, and you would see it would kill all species of fish, but an amount it really depended on where they were especially?

Waylon Mills: Yes, yes, [00:36:00] I didn't yes, obviously. I mean, it didn't wipe out, you know, a bunch but it just you know, it took out whatever was in that area.

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Female Speaker 1: And then for the 10 month red tide that you said you remember, you know in the late 90s was that the same thing except it just took out more fish that because it was in different and went into the spring, it was affecting spawning aggregations that were occurring in the spring as well?

Waylon Mills: Yeah, that one lasted yes that one lasted through the late winter through the spring and summer, if I remember right and so yeah, so it went through a went through a snook spawn, no doubt. And even though the mullet spawn and just try to think it was – this last one so fresh in my mind, it's hard to remember the previous ones.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: Because I said I mean it's just as far as this new this this last one was it was pretty devastating.

Female Speaker 1: All right. So, let's, let's talk about this last one then and then we can draw the extent of it as far as you want to on this map and then also I have a map chart that's Savannah to Tampa also that shows the offshore areas if you think that would be...

Waylon Mills: Okay. Well, like I said, I mean, just in my area, and I'm just, you know, hearing people talk about up to where Tampa how far it was. I know that it was – it seemed like it was 60 foot, seemed like 60 foot it in was everywhere from South Tampa, down to the overlays. But now here off of straight out above the ground past, there was times where I had to run like said 23 miles to get out of it. It would be [00:38:00] you know, it'd be that whole way and then when I think it's Hurricane Michael came through and hit up and panhandle, then I'd go offshore. And then there will be a lot of where I tell it wasn't running through the red tide.

Of course, there wasn't any fish there. And then when I got on out to about 17 miles, there'd be a strip that was probably three miles wide and you can just see it like somebody took a marker and just did the line is like that was the there was a little fence setup. There was a red tide fence. I had to go that four miles to get on the other side of it, and then there would be where there is clear water, there is a fish.

Female Speaker 1: Okay. So, I have a smaller thing, I think, I have a Savannah to Tampa map because I want to draw that fence.

Waylon Mills: Okay.

Female Speaker 1: Is that something that you think you could draw on here or do you want to I have this but in a larger size.

Waylon Mills: Yeah.

Female Speaker 1: And if that's, you know difficult to...

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Waylon Mills: Yeah, I mean I just like said basically when I was going through it after Hurricane Michael went through and kind of changed the shape of stuff with the winds. It was basically from 17 to 21 miles out offshore and it was just parallel in the coast. So, like this kind of small but like...

Female Speaker 1: Okay. Let's, [00:40:00] let's get off the both get out the other one done and but before we move over to this chart, I just want to ask in this inshore area, was there anywhere in 2018 that was not where you did not see red tide? Like did it come up here also?

Waylon Mills: I never saw it up there but I heard people saying that it came up this way, but I didn't see it because I July and August, I was going up here to still do my tarpon fishing because there weren't any tarpon here because of the red tide but there were some that had pushed up here.

Female Speaker 1: Okay.

Waylon Mills: So, but like I said, personally, I didn't see it up this for but I heard other people talking about it now. You know, you might want to take that with a grain of salt because the moment the fish dies, it was drifting, floating somewhere, just because there is a dead floating up, we got red tide here.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: You know, that's not always the case.

Female Speaker 1: Is there anywhere else or was it been when you talk about you know, and being this whole area down to the Everglades is that also inclusive of this whole area on this chart as far as what you were?

Waylon Mills: Yeah, no, it was yes, had this one written on down because like I said even though I know guys that were going down here and mess with tarpon and when I was here in July in August, and they would have sharks tarpon and they all got trapped in some of these bays.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: And we go on there in bay and it would kill, it would lump the tarpon off.

Female Speaker 1: Is there anywhere that you know there were a shark die offs in these areas that you feel comfortable marking on the map?

Waylon Mills: Yeah, I believe there's – they were in this area right here. So, they are to the Pine Island. It's kind of where [00:42:00] it's kind of that was the last too rough of and I mean, I heard there was hammerheads, I heard there was all the blacktips, bull sharks, lemon sharks got kind of – got pushed in like we talked about and it caught them



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and they couldn't get out of it. And the guys would go back looking for the tarpon. The tarpon left the ones that made it and the sharks would be laying on the bottom dead.

Female Speaker 1: So, the tarpon left so that were, was it, were tarpon that died off here with the sharks...

Waylon Mills: No, they, they didn't they didn't see there, they didn't see the dead tarpon.

Female Speaker 1: Do you know what they're doing?

Waylon Mills: No, I mean, there was there was all kinds of reports of, you know, just the decomposing some tarpon and then pass away, you know, decomposing in different places. But you know, is to say where they actually died it.

Female Speaker 1: So, you think they may have swim through it and maybe survive or maybe just swim through it and died and send to the bottom or what?

Waylon Mills: I mean – yeah, I mean, it's a, they says and telling me like that I'm not down there so I didn't get a chance to see it. But I know up here like I said, you know, this this thing of tarpon this group of tarpon I was here.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. And you were talking to the guys on here and they told you about this area?

Waylon Mills: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Okay.

Waylon Mills: But I mean, throughout the summer and fall of 2018, I think I'm maybe saw four, four dead tarpon floating.

Female Speaker 1: Did you notice that when you're fishing, I guess you weren't really targeting them at that point, because you weren't fishing inshore?

Waylon Mills: What's that?

Female Speaker 1: When you saw – when you did see that tarpon?

Waylon Mills: Oh, no. Yeah, no, I was going offshore fishing. And I was – yeah. So, they'd be on the tide, tide line offshore, and I'm just see, you know, see them but didn't make it. But I was going enough at [00:44:00] you know if it had wiped out at school, I'm sure I would saw at the school. You know, up floating and decomposing.

Female Speaker 2: Did you ever see any big fish kills offshore like grouper or snappers or anything like that?

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Waylon Mills: In previous, previous Red Tides.

Female Speaker 2: In previous right, but not this past year.

Waylon Mills: Yeah, this this past year because it was well because one thing you got to in consideration was when, when this past year's red tide was getting really, really going out here and in killing a lot of that stuff were you inshore doing inshore fishery. So, we were witnessing what was you know, there's a lot of it wasn't making it to the shoreline. But I've seen it when I've been out there offshore fishing or crabbing where – yeah, grouper, grouper, grouper for miles. Yeah, dead and floating.

Female Speaker 2: And all different is that like, big grouper and those...

Waylon Mills: Yes.

Female Speaker 2: Any small just everything.

Waylon Mills: Everything.

Female Speaker 2: Everything.

Waylon Mills: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Okay. So, I definitely want to draw this fence because we've heard about it from some other fisher as well. So, we'll get the other chart off. I think we can just probably just put it on top of it. It's right there. [00:46:00] Okay, so let's go ahead and draw any offshore areas that notice especially you know we can start with just where you experienced and saw red tide. So, where?

Waylon Mills: Okay, we'll see.

Female Speaker 1: Right there.

Waylon Mills: Right, I'm just because I had I talked to all these guys that are down here and I know that basically before Hurricane Michael everything that from 60 foot in in was just no life red tide just everything is kind of dead and gone and rotting and then you would have, you know, maybe do a pre Hurricane Michael...

Female Speaker 2: Yes, definitely.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: All right. So, yeah, so basically kind of like this contour right here. Yeah. So, here's at the bank. Yeah, because I know that that guys were crabbing. So,

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yeah, so basically just follow that basically that contours kind of how it was. So, everything was...

Female Speaker 2: And this is pre-Michael, right?

Waylon Mills: Yeah. Here's Michael EA...

Female Speaker 2: AEL?

Waylon Mills: Is it AEL?

Female Speaker 2: Yeah, it's my dad's name what I know that.

Waylon Mills: Okay. So, that's and then so, and then [00:48:00] – so probably, the – oh, yeah, there kind of think what wreck that is? I just want to say Fish Haven.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah, they do.

Waylon Mills: So, let me go so let me just say so after – so probably right in here was from 70 – 70 some foot, yeah, so, I would just kind of – I mean, this is – this was outlined and that was basically three miles wide. And this was – where I post my [Laughter] it was a three miles wide strip. So, yeah, three miles wide this way.

Female Speaker 1: Okay.

Waylon Mills: That's what I was saying after Michael went through and it is like I said and just it reached just like that. But now like I said, I was going through here after Michael went through and there was no you know, there wasn't the typical the vapors of the red tide but of course all this was dead there was no bait. No, nothing everything had moved out here. [00:50:00]

Female Speaker 1: So, this is 2018 pre-Michael, this whole area and you don't go how far down do you go?

Waylon Mills: Yeah, I mean I was here in – I mean I was here in you know, to at least to here.

Female Speaker 1: Okay.

Waylon Mills: That's what I was here from the other local commercial fishermen and captains. Now, this was just kind of about you know here and there's about four times over. You know, before it got back to us up there but this was, this was personal phone calls from here that I you know, guys I could trust what they were seeing.

Female Speaker 1: This area is you experience or this, this one.

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Waylon Mills: No. Yeah, in this yeah, up in the course up here's my experience. But this was good friends with the family, guys that have been on the water on the life, and just communicating with them.

Female Speaker 1: So, can you explain what, what this strip? Is this also were an extended north and south?

Waylon Mills: Yeah, I mean, I don't I don't know. I knew that it was just from I knew that it went to at least Sarasota Bay. Because I was communicating with guys that work there up in that part of the Gulf.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. So,

Waylon Mills: Because, because they actually were calling me to ask me what we had, you know, because we're all trying to communicate it's like – hey, you know work we go fishing work we put our crab traps where can we do something? So,

Female Speaker 1: So, pre-Michael, when you went out to this area, you had to go out this far to catch anything?

Waylon Mills: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Okay. So, what's, what is the strip indicate how did that Waylon, you know...

Waylon Mills: I can it was just, it was just a I mean, the moment Hurricane Michael made landfall and the weather calm down, I had charters and I was going out there you know and like get all this inshore stuff [00:52:00] for several days seemed like there was no red tide but when I got out to there...

Female Speaker 1: That's where the fish were?

Waylon Mills: That's, that's where the strip of red tide was.

Female Speaker 1: This is where the strip – okay. So, this was a strip of red tide.

Waylon Mills: Yes. And then, it took you know then it was like I don't know how many days but maybe six, seven days later next thing you know we've got little hotspot popping back up again.

Female Speaker 1: So, the hurricane pushed it offshore into this three mile strip and then it's slowly it's start of coming back in shore.

Waylon Mills: Yeah, the winds went up high it, basically like I said it just looked like, it looked like a natural time timeline.

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Female Speaker 1: Did you think with the after the hurricane that it was going to totally push red tide away altogether? Is everything it's going to get rid of it?

Waylon Mills: It was hoping but which it didn't it really didn't come close enough to us. But, you know, because then we know that it takes strong, strong winds. You know rough water or cold water the buses stuff up and get it off of us. That means that it's just what we've seen over, our experience on the water.

Female Speaker 1: When after Michael when it push it out of this area before it started coming back and patches and it was in the strip, were you able to fish here right after Michael? You said like there wasn't really red tide in this area.

Waylon Mills: No, no, I still had to go.

Female Speaker 1: You still have to go out?

Waylon Mills: Yes, because the fish didn't. I mean, matter of fact. Of course, I started tarpon fishing March 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. But up until March 1<sup>st</sup>, I still was running 21 miles offshore to find fish, good fish. I mean, yes, pack inshore 10, 12 miles there was fishing moving in but they were small.

Female Speaker 1: Right. What about the fence? Is that what you're talking about with this? Is this what you when you talked about the fence earlier?

Waylon Mills: It went away where you couldn't tell [00:54:00] that it was like you know, like I said somebody's drawing a line there, it went away. It probably took a week or so for you know, this to go away the fence...

Female Speaker 1: The strip.

Waylon Mills: Yeah, the strip. And then, I'm sure that's where it just kind of got blended back into the water and you know that things shouldn't happen again.

Female Speaker 1: When this one started when this Red Tide, this 2018 red tide when it started did you have any inclination or ideas that it that it was going to last so long and that it was going to be?

Waylon Mills: No, because I, because the 2018 red tide, I was seeing it in 2017 stone crabbing offshore.

Female Speaker 1: Right.

Waylon Mills: But like I said, you know, we always generally seen some hotspots out there. And it doesn't always make it in shore and then turn into something bad. So, it's just kind of like okay, we got a little hotspot here with red tide. But the 2017 just linger to linger, linger and went into the winter of 2018 and blah, blah, it did what it did.

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Female Speaker 1: When you go out and you see what you're describing as a hotspot, is there a usual size that they are like, a mile wide or smaller?

Waylon Mills: Oh, not yet various, like – yes, I mean, I've been in an area where it's shaped like its 200 yards wide. You know, then the, and then you know, go to the mile or whatever. But you know, and I always, people always asked me about and I was like, well, it's just like, look it up into the sky see the cloud because that's what I run into when I'm out there. I'm fishing there's stone crabbing and it's the time of the year where we expect to see it like I said, I just run into the area no bigger than this right here and just be sure red tide other. And but they but that they don't always come ashore and turn into this massive bloom.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. [00:56:00] And when you're out there and you notice that it's because you smell it, or how do you know that that it's a patch to do see it or do you smell on it?

Waylon Mills: I see and I'll smell it. I'll see at the times and then I'll see the smaller fish of fish that around two pounds coming to the surface spinning, dying.

Female Speaker 1: Is there a species that you noticed that is the first?

Waylon Mills: Normally, we're pin fishing across. There seemed to be the first ones that you'll notice on the surface floating.

Female Speaker 1: And then, when you say you, you, you see it too, is that water discoloration?

Waylon Mills: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Okay. So, how did this last year how does this impact your fishing?

Waylon Mills: Well, I mean it impacted it as far there's been a charter captain it's the no calls. Because, you know, obviously I've get X amount of inquiries about hey, we were maybe thinking about doing this. Well, we don't get those. So, we know that as, you know, the news media and everyone has it out there. And then, I had a lot of clients that were had that had already been booked on my calendar and they're calling me I'm like, like, you know, hey, when we you know, we're in Ohio, we see that you got Red Tide, just want to hear from you. And I'm like, what are we supposed to be doing? Like, well, we're going to go offshore catch snapper. Come on. That's we're not going to catch him right here, we're fine. We're going to run through it, but we'll be fine. And then, other guys are like, hey, we're set up for a tarpon trip. And then, now we got an issue. But, but like that is basically the no calls, the lack of inquires that you notice.

Female Speaker 1: Is there anything that you can do when that happens? You know, you have it like a whole season of no calls and you're not getting any business?

Waylon Mills: [00:58:00] Well, that the, I mean, yes. I just take care of the my personal repeat clients, because I'll give them phone call and give them a heads up, tell them what's up, depending on what we're chasing, maybe change it from, you know, it was like what, anything, just maybe change species. You know, and try to try to keep the business going that way.

Female Speaker 1: So, you're still able to stay full time in serving?

Waylon Mills: Trying to.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. That's great that you, you know, clients that are really...

Waylon Mills: Yeah. Well, I mean, any course that has to do with you know, how many years you got into business. Because I was two years in business and it'd be tough.

Female Speaker 1: This past one, because it lasted so long that the health impacts or the coughing or the issues with your throat, did that bother you more? Was it the same thing, just kind of an inconvenience?

Waylon Mills: Yeah, this and get me it some and I because I don't live on the island. So, I'd have to breathe it every day. So, you know I'm from the water here I'm about seven miles away even though there was times when the wind got right that this was so hot that we smelled it in land seven miles. That my house, I mean just, just choking them.

Female Speaker 1: So, did this last one, did this kill any different species or were there any species that were unaffected?

Waylon Mills: I just think I killed just everything that we mentioned.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah, everything well.

Waylon Mills: Everything – yeah. I mean, because I think they were you know, I think the news, we were reporting, you know, dolphin, dolphins dying, manatees dying and.

Female Speaker 1: When did you notice that was finally and actually to talk about manatees and dolphins and the typical Red Tides that we talked about before. Did you ever hear about dolphins and manatee dying with those?

Waylon Mills: No, not I'm not one – yeah, not, not on the typical ones. It's rare. They [01:00:00] normally will get away from it. But I have, you know, now as far as the manatees, the manatees are slow and sluggish or whatever, you know when they're just being lazy, but they will get trapped in some basins in that but I have heard them you know, getting sick and dying. And then, of course, they'll say, well, we're going to do an autopsy to see if it really died from Red Tide, but they get trapped. Because why were

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they like to be. So, but even on a mile red tide I have heard you know, the manatees going down.

Female Speaker 1: So, when did you first when were you able to fish in these areas again? Like when was the first time that you went out in the past?

Waylon Mills: Week, week so for 2019 – February.

Female Speaker 1: Okay. So, how have you notice as far as productivity and what you've been catching have you notice is it fishing comeback, or is it still...

Waylon Mills: Know what, yeah, it has and come back. I mean, now the offshore, it's going to be the fastest one to come back. Because you know, but the inshore, these guys that are doing inshore stuff. Yeah, the reports when I got.

Female Speaker 1: So, they're right now inshore they're still not catching snooker, tarpon.

Waylon Mills: What they're, they're catching them. But you know, there's just a handful of spots. So, they're all fighting over the same spot. It's not like you can just go everywhere. I mean, I've been doing some, just some riding around with the boat in a places where I would normally see snook and reds left and right. I mean, I was going for three, four miles riding and not see a fish.

Female Speaker 1: How long do you think it'll be before this inshore area recovers from this past?

Waylon Mills: Well, that's a guess there.

Female Speaker 1: No, it's definitely I guess.

Waylon Mills: I mean, because of – because, I mean, it's already you know, we're already mid April and, like said September, October be upon us. And we back in probably some red tide again. You know, so yeah, [01:02:00] that's, that's a tough one.

Female Speaker 1: Do you think it's, we're in for another big red tide like this? Or do you think we're going to?

Waylon Mills: I hope not. I hope not.

Female Speaker 1: What if it was what if, you know, I hate to say this, but like, what if there was another super long 10 months red tide that happened again this year? What would that do you know, how would that impact your business or the fishing?

Waylon Mills: Well, I mean, if it now make sure that our biggest fishery here is the tarpon, so fit messed up the tarpon industry again, then yes, it'd be a lot of guys with their



hand out, you know, needing some support. But you know, with like I said if we can get past, if we get past that where we can get that season in and then it goes to us like last summer fall, you know, I'm like, there again I'm back to going offshore again. So, now it's matter how far I have to get. You know, now the inshore eyes would be you know, if they took another kind of a repeat of 17, 18 then you know that will be pretty bad.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. Because there's guy that they're only fishing inshore, right?

Waylon Mills: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: And they just have inshore boats. And...

Waylon Mills: Yes. Well, I see them offshore fishing outside of into federal waters. There's only as far as my knowledge as a couple weeks ago, there's only a little over 1300 permits that are issued in the state of Florida to what's left for us. And so, legally to go offshore outside of nine miles with paying clients on the boat and go keep, keep fish and bring them back. We said there's only a little over \$1300. So, a lot of the guys are fish inshore, don't even have the opportunity legal to go, go do that. [01:04:00]

Female Speaker 1: What did they do? Like do you know anyone who just runs inshore and you know, they weren't obviously also had a terrible last year? Did they, were they able to stay in the fishery at all? Was there anything that they do to stay on the boat? Or did they, you know?

Waylon Mills: No, they were making they were making it work. They said they had to go further up into the harbor, or and just tried different species. You know, different things. And just – yeah. I mean, like I said, that's right. Yeah, we, you know, we do have, you know, a lot of our clients are, you know, will work with us and, you know, let them know that, hey, you know, you want to, you want to beat a dead horse here, or do you want to go and try to find something different that we naturally have fun at to do? So, you know.

Female Speaker 1: What do you think? What do you think this past year was so bad? What do you think it, are there any reasons or causes, ideas, theories that you have for why we have such a bad Red Tide?

Waylon Mills: Well, I mean, yeah, I mean, it's all you know, it's all pointing toward that fact that you know, we had a mile 2017, 18 winter, so it didn't get rid of it and then once it once it lingers around and comes into the spring and summer on us, everything gets so hot and then we start having rains and then we start having all the, you know, I'm not a scientist, we start having fertilizers and everything run into the water and this stuff just explodes. You know, and that's like seconds. We don't, we don't ever want red tide around when we're heading into the summertime. Because it's like, it's just not going to go away.

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Female Speaker 1: Do you have any suggestions for management changes or anything that can help fishermen survived during the Red Tide?

Waylon Mills: No. I mean it to [01:06:00] I mean I almost be kind of like, if they made an appointment for us if we, if we cannot do, we couldn't do our job because of, you know, natural occurrences. You know. But,

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. Well, they're do farmers, right you know?

Waylon Mills: Yeah, yeah you know. And I and I think they actually have like, some help like if, you know, taking out a loan to go do something, but we don't always need to do motor, motor boats. So, it was like – yeah, and okay, you're going to give me a loan. Easy to go do this, but I don't need it. And then here, I'm paying the pack for I don't need a new motor. You know.

Female Speaker 1: When you, when you have to go out farther and spend more money on fuel do you like charge your clients more?

Waylon Mills: Yes, yes, it's added.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. Okay. So, the costs associated with that you're able to like helpless...

Waylon Mills: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's yeah. Because doing offshore fish and that's the only way we can do and we say look okay, if we're going to stay inside of 10 miles, here's your calls, but if we run 20. You got to, you got to, you got to count for the fuel. So – yeah, so yeah, we're not, you know, so either the added expense is going to be on it. And we're going if we're not going then. You know, not getting stuck with, you know, the biggest expense.

Female Speaker 1: What do you think about the current monitoring for Red Tide? And the, you know, are there any changes that you think should be made to like better forecasted? Or what that be helpful for you or?

Waylon Mills: I mean, basically, you're now that just everybody does a water sample and most of the people that are doing water samples for people that live on the beach, walk on the beach and do that. But, but like yeah, there's times like, I look back, I'm like, well, if I were to take water sample of red tide when I was offshore, and it was a little patchy area. But it went away like you never know what it's going to do but [01:08:00] you know, but like I said when it's on the beach you know, and they're doing samples kind of you know, I think that would I think that might help them out better as far as they putting restrictions on because I think around here if you're within X amount of miles of water during the summertime, I don't think you're allowed to use chemicals in your lawn or stuff like that, I believe depending on the county. So, yeah, so that's going to help out some if everybody abides by the rules. You know, because we all you know, we always said, you know, like, you get a for or fire out west, you don't have

firemen putting gasoline on the fire. So, if we got a red tide inshore you hate for people to keep using fertilizers and having run off where it's just going to make this algae bloom.

Female Speaker 1: So, are there any other algae blooms or strange colors or anything else that you've seen out on the water that done it? You know, was it were there?

Waylon Mills: I mean, there was you know just from what I was hearing you know that there was a combination of there was the red tide bloom and then there was a there was a red algae bloom up that that we had in this harbor. That was just something totally different I guess. And then of course, you know, we heard the stuff coming out of Lake of Okeechobee the blue, green algae that we never saw right here in Fort Myers. I guess you got it.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: Yeah, but, but we did see the red you know, outside of red tide was the other one that they just said was a red algae bloom that was not associated with red tide but, you know, we saw that are [overlapping conversation [01:09:53] it was like it was almost to some Mossy Grass slimy type. You know [01:10:00] stuff.

Female Speaker 1: When was that?

Waylon Mills: Matter of fact there's still some around now that's around. But it was a last spring it was bad it was a it was actually getting into the intakes of motors and overheating their motors and even the out board or in board because it was like shut up basically which is like a sea weed. But they were calling it a red algae, it's real, real tough.

Female Speaker 1: Other than it getting in your motors does it change the fishing at all?

Waylon Mills: Well, yeah, I mean if you're fishing with a live bait and you're in in that then obviously getting all of your bait and as far as what are the fish running off – no, but you know you presenting a bait to them does, does interfere with that.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. Does it affect do you think it has an effect and how many calls are getting if people are worried about?

Waylon Mills: No, no, no that it's a big the red tide is the big scare. You say red tide then.

Female Speaker 1: So, even though it happens annually and like in the past are people calling you during the summer and saying, hey, I want to come I just want to make sure there's not red tide there or.

Waylon Mills: No, that I won't have anybody ever asked me that.

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Female Speaker 1: Yeah, until this past year.

Waylon Mills: No, what that is, is if it's all over the news. Then they'll, you know, they'll just they'll have to make a call and asked if we have it here. Because they want to know because the biggest thing to them is, you know, that dads going with me. But moms with the kids on the beach, but they're not going to come and have them hanging out on the beach as there's red tide on the beach so that's big issue. And they want to know, you know, double check that you have in your area, like no, come on. It's to the south of us and to the north of them.

Female Speaker 1: But that's only if it's in the news.

Waylon Mills: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah.

Waylon Mills: If it's not in the news out of sight out of mind.

Female Speaker 1: Did you have any questions?

Female Speaker 2: No, I don't think so. I mean, I think we covered dead species, the offshore blooms. I mean, it's really a lot of information here.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. Is there anything else that you want to add or other environmental concerns or anything like that?

Waylon Mills: No, I think we pretty much covered it all.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. Yeah, I know this is great. And you know, we're all we've been talking to a lot of fishers all up and down the Gulf Coast.

Waylon Mills: Well, like that, maybe some of that stuff you know, you'll see you'll see a pattern and what they're seeing and what I've seen it come together.

Female Speaker 1: Now, we're definitely starting to see patterns and, you know, it's, it's good to show that you know, your knowledge and you being on the water every day is a really important part of figuring out this problem and getting this information. So, thank you so much.

Waylon Mills: Yeah, no problem.

Female Speaker 1: Um, we have a consent form. So, if you're, you know, comfortable with everything you said, and you're fine with us sharing and with people all there. And so, it's just your name up here and then sign on there.

WaylonMills

Waylon Mills: Okay.