

Male Interviewer: So, we're here today talking with Rick Waite about red tide in Cortez, Florida. And, Rick, will you start out, just tell us...

Female Interviewer: Also Tom and I'm sorry, how are you pronounce your last?

Tom Olyanarnyk: Tom Olyanarnyk.

Male Interviewer: Tom Olyanarnyk. But we first started a little bit about talking about your history in fishing. And how do you get started in fishing and how long you've been fishing?

Rick Waite: My uncle was a party boat captain. So, when I was eight years old, my dad took me fishing on the party boats. And from that day on, I didn't care who discovered this world, I didn't care nothing about, but about fishing.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: So, when I was 14 years old, I ran my first boat.

Male Interviewer: Party boat or commercial?

Rick Waite: No, no, commercial for the bells...

Male Interviewer: Oh, really?

Rick Waite: Yes. And here I am 50 something years later and still working.

Male Interviewer: And that was offshore?

Rick Waite: Yes. That was before they even had to Lorraine's (*phonetics*)

Male Interviewer: Oh, really?

Rick Waite: Oh, yes [*indiscernible*] [00:01:17] like for they had long lines, man.

Male Interviewer: And before red group, there were really a [*indiscernible*] [00:01:22] and they were yellow edge and red snapper, what were you - Bander wheels (*phonetics*) or what kind of gear, was it Bander wheels fishing in those days?

Rick Waite: Yes. We had no kind of navigation equipment. The only navigation equipment we had which what they call an RDF.

Male Interviewer: RDF?

Rick Waite: Radio Direction Finder and what it was, was a big black box with AM radio in it and on top of the box it had a compass, a big compass on it. So, you would turn like

[00:02:00] when you were heading home, you would turn, when you got the strongest signal, you knew you would point it towards Tampa. The signal was point towards Tampa.

Male Interviewer: I think it was on - I think it was on *[indiscernible]* [00:02:13]

Rick Waite: Yes, and it was...

Male Interviewer: And broadcast...

Rick Waite: Yes. And you know, you could turn away from it to see signal would get weaker. I mean, we did have compasses.

Male Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Rick Waite: But as far as navigational equipment, that's all I had.

Male Interviewer: When did Lorraine came in, in the 60's, 70's?

Rick Waite: I'm trying to remember, man, that was such a long time ago.

Tom Olyanarnyk: Oh, it's the 70s. That was Lorraine Haye.

Male Interviewer: Lorraine Haye?

Rick Waite: Yes, because I started running *[indiscernible]* [00:03:00] in 1978. And Lorraine, she was just coming in. You could buy two different types, you could buy a north star which was like \$5,000 or \$6,000 or you could buy, what they call a Texas instrument.

Male Interviewer: Oh, yes.

Rick Waite: And that was in 1978 Lorraine C started coming in.

Male Interviewer: Was it the Clyde who build a pretty new boat then?

Rick Waite: Brand new.

Male Interviewer: Brand new boat, right.

Rick Waite: Brand new. Yes.

Male Interviewer: That's what the -- it's broad fire, do they call it broad fire, that's when they bought the broad fire?

Rick Waite: Yes, yes.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: The *[indiscernible]* [00:03:42] was the first one ever built.

Male Interviewer: Oh, really.

Rick Waite: Lauren put up the money for the man to build it. He build it and after that they took off.

Male Interviewer: When, where was it built?

Rick Waite: Coral Gables.

Male interviewer: Coral Gables. Okay.

Rick Waite: Ain't that right? They're north to Fort Myers?

Tom Olyanarnyk: [00:04:00] Either in north or south, I think it was south actually.

Rick Waite: No, I think it's north, north to Coral Gables.

Tom Olyanarnyk: I'm not sure.

Male Interviewer: But then...

Tom Olyanarnyk: But that's where it was built...

Male Interviewer: It was Pine Island...

Rick Waite: Coral Gables.

Male Interviewer: It is hard to read this diagram.

Female Interviewer: Yes.

Male Interviewer: This is Charlotte Harbor here. So, Coral Gables is – was in this Fort Myers or Fort Myers should be there...

Rick Waite: Or maybe it's Coral...

Male Interviewer: This is Myers around here. Yes, that's Fort Myers.

Rick Waite: Maybe it was Cape Coral.

Male Interviewer: Cape Coral.

Rick Waite: Do you see Cape Coral?

Male Interviewer: Yes, I think it is around here somewhere.

Rick Waite: Yes, it was Cape Coral not Coral Gables.

Male Interviewer: And Coral Gables is down by Miami but Cape Coral is up here in Fort Myers.

Rick Waite: Right, right.

Male Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Rick Waite: That's where it's built.

Male Interviewer: So, you said when you first started fishing it wasn't red group, it was group and what was...

Rick Waite: Well, no -- we target more black, black group, gag group and red snappers.

Male Interviewer: Red snappers.

Rick Waite: Yes, because you know, like gag -- I think 50 or 60 cents a pound for the reds. So, you know, you targeted the highest fish.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Tom Olyanarnyk: And I think the marketing have been developed for the black groupers and the red snappers was always...

Male Interviewer: Yes. There's always shrimps.

Rick Waite: I got more back then than I do now for red snapper.

Male Interviewer: Oh really?

Rick Waite: Oh, yes.

Male Interviewer: *[overlapping conversation]* [00:05:46]

Rick Waite: Yes. We got to pay 370 for the lease. Back in, I got \$2 a pound for the red snapper.

Male Interviewer: \$2 a pound?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: And you didn't had to lease them? [00:06:00].

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: So, back then were you still fishing in the same area, so you've always been kind of in the south?

Rick Waite: Yes, yes.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: I fish when I actually, when I fish at *[indiscernible]* [00:06:16] before I get very little red group for fishing because to *[indiscernible]* [00:06:23] Bell was set up to motor fish. It had a big study and sail on the stern of it. So, I mostly fish for yelloweyes, yellowfins, deep water fish.

Male Interviewer: So, when you say motor finish, what is that?

Rick Waite: That's me staying in the wheelhouse holding the boat on spot without an anchor down.

Male Interviewer: So, but you've got, and this is a band of wheels so you're just holding it on, so you don't anchor up at all.

Rick Waite: No, no and the studying sail allowed the boat stay at the end of the wind.

Male Interviewer: Oh, really?

Rick Waite: So, it couldn't drift off this right here, it couldn't drift off this way, it could drift off but it was a lot harder to drift off with that stud in itself.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: If you had a tide running, you pulled that sail over one wide and it would balance you out for the tide and keep you ride up into the wind.

Male Interviewer: Okay. So Tom, when do you get started fishing?

Tom Olyanarnyk: Pretty much under his belt, I guess. I did a few trips before him, but he was kind of my mentor. [laughter]

Male Interviewer: Don't say that...

Tom Olyanarnyk: In the early 80's.

Male Interviewer: Okay. So, you crewed on his boat?

Tom Olyanarnyk: Yes.

Male Interviewer: And then did you...

Tom Olyanarnyk: No, it was in the 90's.

Male Interviewer: That was in the 90's?

Rick Waite: Yes, because we were fishing outside of 20 fathoms and that one, in fact in the 1992.

Male Interviewer: And the boats were before that.

Rick Waite: So that it was [00:08:00] probably 95 that me and him hooked up.

Male Interviewer: That right?

Rick Waite: I think so, because in the 90's I went to Honduras.

Tom Olyanarnyk: All right. But like I said, I was fishing on a feed boat jumping from boat to boat before that, but like I said, I wasn't sure if I was going to keep doing it. But when I got with him, that's kind of when I decided to make it my lifelong career too.

Male Interviewer: And you had a boat...

Tom Olyanarnyk: That was being in the 90's, I guess then.

Male Interviewer: And both of you have been working on Cortez all that time, or...

Rick Waite: No, we worked out of Fort Myers.

Male Interviewer: Fort Myers.

Rick Waite: For I think, seven years.

Male Interviewer: Seven years.

Rick Waite: That we worked out of Fort Myers. At one point I went and bought my own boat.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: And I moved down to Fort Myers with it because the prices was higher.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: And...

Tom Olyanarnyk: It was closer to where you fished.

Rick Waite: And it was closer to where I could fish. It was a small boat. I could fish where I could see land, long line.

Male Interviewer: Oh really?

Rick Waite: Yes – oh, really.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: Yes. And you know once I put at 20 fathoms then, 25, 20 fathoms boundary and it got to the point where I felt that it was too risky to run 60 or 80 miles offshore in a 34-foot boat.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: You know. I remember one time I put 5700 pounds of fish on that 34 foot. That's when you could fish inside the boundary.

Male Interviewer: Yes. And what were you catching down in Fort Myers when your...

Rick Waite: Red groupers.

Male Interviewer: Red groupers. Okay.

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: So, let's talk about the first red tide that you really remember and experienced. [00:10:00] Can you – do you have a time and you know a year that you remember the first red tide that you saw that was here?

Rick Waite: Yes, whole long I got to tighten a couple screws. [laughter].

Male Interviewer: Can we have a long line?

Rick Waite: I don't think we did.

Tom Olyanarnyk: It's not right..

Rick Waite: No, no.

Tom Olyanarnyk: We are in the motel on low key like '76 to '79. I remember one summer we had a pretty bad one.

Male Interviewer: One in the 70's that was pretty bad?

Tom Olyanarnyk: Right. There was all kinds of *[indiscernible]* [00:10:50] I don't remember so many fishes, it seemed like mostly crabs.

Male Interviewer: Were you on the water then?

Tom Olyanarnyk: Yes, we were right on the gulf.

Male Interviewer: Were you fishing?

Tom Olyanarnyk: No, no *[indiscernible]* [00:11:02] probably about 14.

Male Interviewer: Yes, but you just -- so if you just remember that during that time there was a red tide...

Tom Olyanarnyk: Right we were in that Lakes Sandview (*phonetics*) motel so we go break them up and dig holes and *[indiscernible]* [00:11:12] [laughter].

Rick Waite: Good work and *[indiscernible]* [00:11:18].

Male Interviewer: Do you remember that one, Rick?

Rick Waite: Oh god, no.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: My brain is very fried.

Male Interviewer: Well, what would be the earliest one that you do remember? I mean...

Rick Waite: I remember probably for the last 15 years, I would say and each year it gets worse and worse and worse and worse and till we got where to the point we got last year.

Male Interviewer: Yes. So you've seen them there are getting worse [00:12:00] to its intensity?

Rick Waite: Yes. And size.

Male Interviewer: Size?

Rick Waite: Yes, yes. *[indiscernible]* [00:12:09].

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: But you could run up here to say, Tampa Bay and you wouldn't have nothing or you could run down here to Moca Grand (*phonetics*) and you wouldn't have nothing. Now, you look at the size of the one we just had.

Male Interviewer: Right.

Rick Waite: It was basically, you know, it stayed down here for most of the time. But then it made it all the way up. I think in Pinellas County.

Male Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Rick Waite: And see that's why I say if you always look the best way, Gale is the crab fishermen. They always catch him off Crystal River they have since I was a kid. Gale...

Tom Olyanarnyk: And stone crabs.

Rick Waite: Stone crabs. And well, Everglades city was one of the hottest places there was for stone crab. Crystal River was one of the hottest places in between and, you know, these guys would say, catch 50,000 a year. These guys would catch 10 and that would be a good year.

Male Interviewer: So, you see the crab fisherman shows up there initially, you can kind of track it by whether or not they're being affected and you know what's going to happen or is it other signs?

Rick Waite: Well, we know for a fact getting water temperature because you don't get -- if it was water temperature, you will get red tide in January.

Male Interviewer: Right.

Rick Waite: You know, so a lot of this is just common sense.

Male Interviewer: [00:14:00] Yes.

Rick Waite: Which a lot of people don't like to use common sense. I only went to the eighth grade. But I have a lot of common sense. Try to prove that to my wife [laughter] is a different story.

Male Interviewer: And so, you said that 15 years ago, so that would have been about 2004 or no, before that?

Rick Waite: It's the long line boundary, the boundary went in that in 1990.

Male Interviewer: 1990.

Rick Waite: Yes. So it's been in effect basically 28 years.

Male Interviewer: But when you said you remember red tides back to about 15 years ago...

Rick Waite: Right.

Male Interviewer: Was there one of those that's particularly affected you that you saw some impacts from that -- I mean, I think there was one in 2003 or 2004, 2005 wasn't there?

Rick Waite: I think they all affect it.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: They all affect different...

Male Interviewer: No, no, but I'm trying to...

Female Interviewer: Do you think it went back to 1990 or back when the long line...

Rick Waite: Red tide, yes. That would be a safe estimate.

Male Interviewer: But back in those days in the early 90's, the fact that they were spotty. You just weren't seeing the big...

Rick Waite: Right. Right.

Male Interviewer: It was there -- from there on was there one big one that you remember prior to last year that had an impact?

Rick Waite: Yes, the year before.

Male Interviewer: 2017.

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: There was...

Rick Waite: But nothing like this one.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: Did this last one's the biggest I remember.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: You know, when you start seeing porpoises, turtles, sharks washing up the beach, there's a serious problem.

Male Interviewer: What are the species were affected by this last one that you saw?

Rick Waite: [00:16:00] Groupers.

Male Interviewer: Groupers.

Rick Waite: Goliath groupers...

Tom Olyanarnyk: [*indiscernible*] [00:16:02] Snook.

Rick Waite: Snook, in fact I saw it last night on the news that they're the keep snook and red fish.

Tom Olyanarnyk: And they had another one, I didn't see which one they had it.

Rick Waite: Sea drought. Yes, they're going to continue to keep it closed for a year...

Male Interviewer: Oh, really?

Rick Waite: Because of the stock assessment.

Male Interviewer: Do you know the scope of the range of the red tide of the word affected and where you have along the coast? I mean do you have any...

Rick Waite: Do you mean for last year?

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: Yes, from Pinellas Park. I don't think it got north of Pinellas Park.

Male Interviewer: And where's Pinellas Park, is that in Tampa?

Rick Waite: Sand Peak.

Female Interviewer: Oh, yes. That's coast from Sand Peak.

Male Interviewer: Okay. How far out do you think it went?

Rick Waite: It went out to 80 feet of water, 90 feet of water.

Male Interviewer: So it came down, I don't know what 80 feet, this isn't a fathoms, right?

Female Interviewer: It was way up here then, right?

Male Interviewer: Yes. So, this is I guess this is the 20,000, is that it, this blue? So what was it? Did it come outside of that?

Tom Olyanarnyk: Yes, it's a 10th fathom.

Male Interviewer: This is 10th fathom?

Tom Olyanarnyk: Yes.

Rick Waite: It got to a point come outside of 10 fathoms.

Male Interviewer: 12, 18 so this is a 20 so this could be the 21?

Rick Waite: Yes. Up here, it didn't make it out that far. Down all Fort Myers it made it out to nine foot of water.

Male Interviewer: [00:18:00] So, that's where it was about 90 feet?

Rick Waite: Right.

Male Interviewer: So out here and it was about out here. And then where did it come in?

Rick Waite: Well, it was...

Male Interviewer: Because this is Fort Myers here.

Rick Waite: Okay. Well, you are way too far down.

Male Interviewer: Okay. So, it's about that up in here?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: Start about here.

Rick Waite: And it gets kind of pair to load to shore.

Female Interviewer: All the way up to Pinellas Park?

Rick Waite: All the way up to Pinellas Park, yes.

Male Interviewer: 15. So, just kind of in this area, just all the way up in here?

Rick Waite: Right.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Female Interviewer: You should say that *[indiscernible]* [00:18:44]

Rick Waite: And I think if you research, you'll see there's more building going on between here and there that narrows down here or up north of there.

Male Interviewer: North is more populated for sure.

Rick Waite: Well, if you got more population, you got to have more building, right? Because I got to live somewhere. Well not all of them lives...

Male Interviewer: So you're fishing outside of this, right?

Rick Waite: Yes, sir.

Male Interviewer: What kind of impact did it have on your fishing?

Rick Waite: Well, we're having the worst year that we've ever had. I mean, from going to make 10-day trips to get 7000 or 8000. We're having a to stay 17 days to get 6000.

Male Interviewer: Okay. So, you're staying out longer and catching fewer fish?

Rick Waite: Oh, yes.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: Any other -- well, let me go back because I forgot, we've got a system that we're trying to get. So this area, what did you see in terms of the water color and just can you describe what you were seeing coming through there [00:20:00], what it looked like, and other things about that water and things like that?

Rick Waite: Well, you wouldn't see clean water until you got out to about 100 feet of water.

Male Interviewer: 100 feet?

Rick Waite: Yes, and you could smell it.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: You could smell it, you could see it. The water look like that they did.

Male Interviewer: What color? I mean, was it different colors that you saw?

Rick Waite: Yes, greenish.

Tom Olyanarnyk: Some days like in the bay, it was really reddish.

Rick Waite: Yes, and in the bay you could see the redness in it.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: And a couple times, you could see the redness send it out there, all the way up to about 90 feet of water.

Male Interviewer: Oh, really – okay. So, it was sort of changing at times, depending on...

Rick Waite: Right, right.

Tom Olyanarnyk: Weather condition.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: Right. It's like when you get a hard blow out the Northwest, the water gets real murky.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: Well, it wasn't murky. You could actually see white stuff in the water.

Male Interviewer: White stuff?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Rick Waite: Well, just, you know, I don't know what you'd call it.

Male Interviewer: So, the colors range from the red that you would see more inshore but sometimes have come out here, you'd see a greenish, where was the greenish color water, was inshore or was it more offshore?

Rick Waite: No, it would go all the way out to nine feet of water.

Male Interviewer: Okay. You'd see all the way out here?

Rick Waite: Right.

Tom Olyanarnyk: But they typically it's like greenish to up to 40 and we start getting past that, I mean the normal environment and start seeing the blue and you can start seeing some depth.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Tom Olyanarnyk: Whereas I mean, there was like no visibility.

Male Interviewer: You couldn't see through it and then more inshore you were...

Rick Waite: Right. I got stabilizers on my boat [00:22:00] and went through all these bards, you know, my stabilizers are, right?

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: And normally you can put the bard in the water at the sea blue. And within, say five miles, you can see the bard down there travelling and it's 18 feet.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: Well, when this stuff was at its peak, you couldn't see the bard until you got to 120 feet of water.

Male Interviewer: All right, so it was way out there?

Rick Waite: Yes, yes. It was.

Male Interviewer: And in terms of dead floating fish, where did you see most of that was it to that entire area or decrease as you came out or?

Rick Waite: I saw the most dead fish Southwest of Cortez.

Male Interviewer: Southwest of Cortez?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: I saw Goliath, I saw gags, red groupers.

Male Interviewer: Smaller fish?

Rick Waite: No.

Male Interviewer: Just big fish?

Rick Waite: Yes, yes.

Male Interviewer: To what depth do you remember?

Rick Waite: At one point it was out to like 15 fathoms. But you know, boys out in Ford Myers says it got all the way out to 90 feet down there that you would see dead fish.

Male Interviewer: That's good....

Rick Waite: Now, it's that because the East Wind blowing them out, who knows, you know.

Male Interviewer: So, we had a lot of West Wind last summer.

Rick Waite: Right.

Male Interviewer: So, I mean that could -- the accumulation of dead fish could have been wind blowing it in...

Rick Waite: Right...

Male Interviewer: That didn't necessary...

Rick Waite: Right, if we had a lot of less West Wind, then the fish would...

Tom Olyanarnyk: Pile up on the beach.

Male Interviewer: [00:24:00] Yes, yes.

Tom Olyanarnyk: That was only a relief because when we have East Wind, we'd go back up and some of the tourists would come back out but...

Male Interviewer: So at that time, how did you adapt to all this in terms of your fishing?

Rick Waite: Like I said, instead of making 10-day trips, we're making 18-day trips.

Male Interviewer: And that's continued into this year and they'll have them to do that, because you're still seeing the impacts of that red tide in those fish?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: When you're going out there, was your health affected at all by this stuff that you guys saw out there?

Rick Waite: Yes, you'd get sneezing and sniffles and stuff like that. You could definitely smell it when you got into it.

Male Interviewer: Okay. Yes.

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: Definitely smell it. And make your eyes water, you know, if you went to make enough blown *[indiscernible]* [00:25:07].

Male Interviewer: Did you do anything -- do you have a mask or anything, I guess it wouldn't really help.

Rick Waite: No....

Male Interviewer: Mask wouldn't help or anything like that.

Tom Olyanarnyk: It was strange because I figured and I was working at the fish house right here and stuff and it's like I'm probably going to be taking some time off because you know, I thought it would be so toxic.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Tom Olyanarnyk: But that really never...

Male Interviewer: You could smell it though.

Tom Olyanarnyk: Yes, but I mean, it wasn't so detrimental that I had to take a time off.

Rick Waite: He couldn't help but smell it here at the fish house because of all the dead fish.

Male Interviewer: Yes. There were a lot of dead fish washed up, right?

Rick Waite: Oh, yes, yes. Excuse me.

Male Interviewer: Were there any species that that survived it or weren't affected by it that you could tell?

Rick Waite: I didn't see no lady fish dead [00:26:00]. I didn't see no turtle purple tails ever floating.

Male Interviewer: Mainly fish?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: So, some of them there might be some that didn't - affected by this?

Rick Waite: Right, right.

Male Interviewer: Did you see a change, other than coming out further, did you see any other changes out here that you might have attribute to the red tide and how it affected fish species in particular?

Tom Olyanarnyk: Well, they would had, maybe a reduction in the number of group or is it like, I say...

Male Interviewer: No, you're just catching less, yes.

Tom Olyanarnyk: So I don't know if it hurt the *[indiscernible]* [00:26:46]

Rick Waite: But see, you don't know if you can blame that on a red tide, you can blame that on the red snapper, you can blame that on the sharks, you can blame it on the black fish.

Male Interviewer: Tell me about black fish. And we talked about that the other day you mentioned it?

Rick Waite: Right, they're supposed to be in the whale family.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: That's what Charlotte told me.

Tom Olyanarnyk: And some of the porpoise, but they're huge, may be 70, 100 pounds.

Rick Waite: Well, a porpoise they're not the whale.

Male Interviewer: Oh, they're the same family though basically.

Rick Waite: Are they?

Male Interviewer: I don't know, I'm not a biologist [laughter]. But...

Rick Waite: What the hell is a biologist?

Male Interviewer: So, do you think they're showing up now is as a result the red tide or is it something else, what do you think?

Rick Waite: No, I think they're showing up. Each year, they've been getting worse and worse. I don't know if that's a proper word. But they've been getting worse and worse and worse. And I think it's like I told you yesterday, [00:28:00] you keep feeding a bear, a bear's not going to go hunt on his own. Why should these fish these big, smartest fish in the world?

Tom Olyanarnyk: The mammals.

Rick Waite: Mammals.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: They're damn fish to me. But why would they go hunt fish where they know they can get them right off your line.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: And they're teaching the babies to do it too.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: You know, that's, like I said, I don't know if I could actually sit here and tell you if red tide is why we're having to make 17-day trip, most boats go through 1000 hooks a trip now.

Male Interviewer: A thousand?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: How many did you used to go through in a trip?

Rick Waite: 200.

Male Interviewer: Really?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: They're not - quad or triple at least, the number that's gone through?

Rick Waite: Yes. And there're so many sharks out there. It's unbelievable.

Tom Olyanarnyk: And so, I can understand why they will keep saying they're endangered.

Male Interviewer: Yes. Well, since this event last year, has the number of sharks increased?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: It has?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: Yes, he used to catch maybe one or two a day. We catch 10, 12 a set.

Male Interviewer: Really?

Rick Waite: and we're not talking about this, we're talking about 6 to 9 footers.

Male Interviewer: Six footers? Sandbars?

Rick Waite: Yes. All kinds bowl, sandbars, Tigers...

Male Interviewer: All *[indiscernible]* [00:29:43] different species?

Rick Waite: Yes. And when you get one on that big on a long line, what he does is sit there and just twist, twist, twist. So, when you finally get them to the surface [00:30:00] you can't, you're talking about a 600-pound shark.

Male Interviewer: What do you do then?

Female Interviewer: Is it dead or...

Rick Waite: No, it's not dead -- it's dead when we get done with.

Female Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: No, what we have to do is cut its tail.

Male Interviewer: On the cable there's slides...

Rick Waite: And sometimes the cable slides dried off. And sometimes we just got to cut them and leave them and run five miles back to the other end of our gear and pull it backwards and get it up and if it's still going on a twist, we have to lose the cable.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: But you definitely see an increase with this last red tide that more sharks are around there?

Rick Waite: Oh, yes more sharks and more black fish.

Male Interviewer: So, it hasn't recovered since last year. So, you're still having to go out further. And so, what do you -- just in general, why do you think this is, this happened?

Rick Waite: Why do I think the red tide happened?

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: I think there's too much building going on.

Male Interviewer: So, it's all the development on the coast is feeding...

Rick Waite: Well, it don't even have to be on the coast. You know, it's like right now, The environment people, EPA is that what they called their Sue and Sarasota County for dumping raw sewage in the bay. And you know, every time there's a storm, there's so much population. And I know it's not just Sarasota. I keep saying Sarasota because I live in Sarasota and I see it.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: Like I said, you can drive [00:32:00] five blocks and you will see at least a 200 or 300-foot cranes putting buildings up, you know.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: All that fertilizer, you know all the sewage. This is one thing they can't blame on and the fisherman.

Tom Olyanarnyk: And natural habitat, you know, the coast.

Male Interviewer: Yes, taking away the natural habitat. So, all these all this stuff back here is coming in and it's way back here in the rivers *[indiscernible]* [00:32:40]...

Rick Waite: Look what *[indiscernible]* [00:32:43] he did last year.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: You know?

Male Interviewer: Did that -- well, do you think that affected up here?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: Okay. Because they've had some dead zone was down there...

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: And before this tide there's been some kind of weird -- so is there anything on the other coast which is pretty rare?

Rick Waite: They had red tide this year on the other coast.

Male Interviewer: On the East Coast?

Rick Waite: Somebody likes diet mountain dew. You didn't offer me now.

Female Interviewer: Do you have...

Male Interviewer: It's not that, it's some kind of weird [laughter]. It's a mango flavored.

Rick Waite: That's all right, it's a water.

Female Interviewer: You have one.

Rick Waite: Yes, guess I can have a cigarette and water.

Female Interviewer: Would you like one for you?

Tom Olyanarnyk: No, I'm okay.

Male Interviewer: But so, when you think about all this stuff, what do you think that in terms of management, what could they do to help?

Rick Waite: What could who do?

Male Interviewer: Management? I'm talking about Noah...

Rick Waite: Noah Fisheries?.

Male Interviewer: Yes, what could they do?

Rick Waite: They could open the red snapper, they could open sharks. [00:34:00] They don't have to leave them open but that's the biggest thing. See, they got us where we're only targeting red grouper.

Male Interviewer: Right.

Rick Waite: And you know...

Tom Olyanarnyk: I mean right, whenever you're managing an ecosystem you got to take some of the predators out there otherwise they become too prolific.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Tom Olyanarnyk: Unless *[indiscernible]* [00:34:24].

Rick Waite: See that's why I invited him. He's got the college. I just got the good old boy terms, it's screwed up.

Male Interviewer: But, I mean – well, that's...

Tom Olyanarnyk: But as far as mitigating the red tide, I'm going to obviously reduce the destruction of the natural habitat.

Male Interviewer: Yes. I think that's a way to filter out a lot of this stuff.

Rick Waite: Five, five or 10 years ago, they tried to put a five-year ban on any building in Sarasota. Well of course it didn't pass, because how many contractors, you know, now we're getting into the Trump era, money, money, money, you know. Who's got the most money?

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: You know. And another thing I think with the fisheries is, it's been 28 years since we've been allowed inside of 20 fathoms. I think personally, they should open it up to 15 fathoms. And when June comes, you have to go out side of 35 fathoms. You're not allowed to fish in there for the turtle nesting. But if you opened it up to 15 fathoms and then January 1st – no, I'm just screwing this up [00:36:00] January 1st, you close it from 35 fathoms to 60 fathoms. It stays closed till June 1st.

Male Interviewer: Why, why would you close it then?

Rick Waite: Because that's when they spawn.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: It's like May 1st, there's a place called the Edges up off Panama City that just opened up. It's open for 30 days. Well, there's probably 25 boats up there right now fishing it.

Male Interviewer: Right.

Rick Waite: But see, the way the fisheries got it set up, the council is, they'd like to go out here in the wintertime and catch the rowed out fish. And that's from Panama City all the way down to Key West. It's called the 40 fathoms break it's what it's called. And I'm a strong believer in January, they should close the whole thing then...

Male Interviewer: They're spawning then?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: Yes. And then June 1st, when they take you and shove you out there, they should open it back up. You see kind of what I'm saying?

Male Interviewer: Yes, I mean and kind of what you're saying is that because of the regulations that you have right now with the red snapper, IFQ and the various different closures you have in 20 fathoms is that you have no flexibility now?

Rick Waite: No.

Male Interviewer: They've almost create a stress the area?

Rick Waite: Yes, that's what they're doing. They're creating their own stress areas.

Tom Olyanarnyk: And corals, there's only so much once you get past 35, there's not that much...

Rick Waite: [00:38:00] Bottom, but it does run the whole length of the coast. But, here's what happens. Like right now, there's guys out there fishing, pounding 35 to 40 fathoms, 35 to 40 fathoms. So June 1st, when we're allowed, we have to go out there. There ain't no fish there, because it's been pounded in rough season.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Rick Waite: And you probably won't get another fisherman to agree to that. But that's just my opinion.

Male Interviewer: That's about all the questions I've got. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you think is relevant to all of this?

Rick Waite: Not me. Maybe the genius over here. [laughter] if he's done smoke cigarette. Does this place have a bathroom?

Male Interviewer: Oh, yes, the right out there the first door -- yes, I didn't lock it back. So, the first door on the left.

Rick Waite: Okay. It ain't just voluntary or something like that.

Male Interviewer: A what?

Rick Waite: It's not just some voluntary...

Male Interviewer: No, no.

Rick Waite: Okay.

Male Interviewer: There's two doors, you'll see that building on this end of the building.

Rick Waite: Okay.

Male Interviewer: There's two doors, the first one's open.

Rick Waite: I'll be right back.

Tom Olyanarnyk: It seems kind of hard to argue that man doesn't have an influence on this demographic where it occurs. Same off you know, of Miami that's heavily populated -- so, there's got to be some kind of...

Male Interviewer: Well, you referred all the development and stuff and floor just keeps growing so. *[indiscernible]* [00:39:47] you know.

Tom Olyanarnyk: I don't know why people want to live by the water so much. [laughter].

Male Interviewer: Where do you live now?

Tom Olyanarnyk: I live in Sarasota.

Male Interviewer: You're still in Sarasota, okay.

Tom Olyanarnyk: We're around there five or six miles from the coast.

Male Interviewer: You used to be on the coast but...

Tom Olyanarnyk: Yes, so that was -- we owned a motel around a long boat key there for three or four years but then it's finally this. I definitely remember one red tide from then and it was pretty bad, it lasted quite a while.

Male Interviewer: Yes. Now, we've heard that from other fisherman that 70's so it was a bad red tide and affect that those areas. Yes, how did get into fishing?

Tom Olyanarnyk: Just like I said we used to get out of marine with Jackson, whatever was like our hangout and stuff. And one of the guys bought a boat and asked if I wanted to get on I said sure. And it was kind of hit and miss because I wasn't sure, I mean the first trip was brutal. Obviously, I hated it, but somehow I fell in love with it.

Male Interviewer: Yes. So, and now you're the fleet manager for *[indiscernible]* *[00:41:00]*.

Tom Olyanarnyk: Yes, I just kind of make sure that boats have what they need to fish offshore and fix this, that and other thing.

Male Interviewer: How long you've been doing that?

Tom Olyanarnyk: About five years now. I want to say I probably fished for around 20, 25. I crewed with him and ran my own boat *[indiscernible]* *[00:41:21]* you're not mining a boat but ran a boat for a bit...

Male Interviewer: Okay. You were for *[indiscernible]* *[00:41:26]*

Tom Olyanarnyk: Yes, I ran that team for quite a while.

Male Interviewer: So, which do you prefer now? Do you prefer working in the fleet *[overlapping conversation]* *[00:41:38]*.

Tom Olyanarnyk: Right. And sometimes I miss being out there but you know when the weather's crappy I should *[laughter]* seems the middle of that is winter but the price is just kind of outrageous there so we shut *[indiscernible]* *[00:41:52]* with a few years but he sold the boat, that was it and that -- find another boat but...

Male Interviewer: Well as a fleet manager, have you seen, I mean is, you know, what Rick is talking about, have you seen the differences in the other boats? Are they seeing -- are they being impacted by this red tide and stuff which is just kind of from...

Tom Olyanarnyk: No, most of them like I said, it had them to do a little bit longer trips.

Male Interviewer: And using more gear. What about bait, you guys losing more bait?

Tom Olyanarnyk: Yes.

Male Interviewer: Than normal?

Tom Olyanarnyk: Yes.

Male Interviewer: So there's something down there?

Rick Waite: Yes, and that took 4000 and we brought back 200 pounds. Now, when I fish down here. I don't do that much bait but he was fishing right here off the house.

Male Interviewer: Right.

Rick Waite: And he called the trigger fish, but – oh, yes we lose bait.

Male Interviewer: How much bait did it usually take?

Rick Waite: Well, it's up to like I said, 3500 to 4000. We used to take 2500.

Male Interviewer: And this one we were sending 1200 hooks that was before this...

Rick Waite: Yes, that was – yes.

Male Interviewer: So, you were setting more hooks back then taking less bait?

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: I know, you're doing fewer hooks and more bait.

Rick Waite: Almost double the bait.

Male Interviewer: Wow, that's good. [laughter] You know, I always looked at that, I mean that was kind of – yes, so. Like I said, any other environmental changes out there that you've seen other than the red tide anything else that relates to water, anything else out there?

Rick Waite: Yes, I think the University of Florida I think that's what did back when the oil spill happened. [00:44:00] And they said, and they were the only ones I think have said this. It'd be seven to 10 years before you seek repercussions from this oil spill. Guess what? It's been eight years.

Male Interviewer: So, that could also be contributing to a lot of this stuff?

Rick Waite: I think it is actually. I've got pictures at my house that when the oil spill happened, and they were flying over and putting all that disbursement on it. Oh, its way down here, way down here. We got a very bad Northwestern blow. And it blew like 30 knots for three days then it gets slick calm. That morning when we got up and I've got pictures to prove what I'm saying, you know what was all around the boat for as far as you could see foam.

Male Interviewer: So, you think that came from those dispersers?

Rick Waite: Yes, I'm sure do.

Male Interviewer: It's interesting.

Tom Olyanarnyk: I remember when we were fishing *[indiscernible]* [00:45:20] whatever, I don't know, 100 feet and I remember a couple of weeks after it, you could smell the oil.

Rick Waite: Yes.

Male Interviewer: Oh, really?

Tom Olyanarnyk: That was pretty weird.

Rick Waite: Yes, and there's boys that say they have set their gear in certain areas. And actually, this happened to us too, I couldn't pinpoint the area. But I remember Matt calling me out there that he brought bait up, laid it on the deck and you get wind of -- Water was running off the bait [00:46:00] and you could see the -- and this is probably three years ago or something like that.

Male Interviewer: So it's been pushed over there, something like...

Rick Waite: Oh, yes, yes. Well, at one point they had this whole thing shut down.

Male Interviewer: Yes, that's right.

Rick Waite: They had the whole gulf basically shut down.

Male Interviewer: That's right, yes.

Rick Waite: I mean the Gulf stream even though it's not. This I still it...

Male Interviewer: Well, they were concerned because what's that, there's this loop out there, right? They thought that loop was going to pull it off and maybe it did pull some on the ground. They didn't really see it. They didn't see it on the surface, but maybe pull around in other ways, something like that. That's kind of interesting.

Tom Olyanarnyk: Well, that was a whole idea behind that, disperse them right outside our mine which obviously was...

Rick Waite: And like I said, the university...

Male Interviewer: The best way to do.

Rick Waite: It's not the University of Florida. It's at one out at Tampa that has their own research.

Male Interviewer: Oh, USF near South Florida.

Rick Waite: South Florida. Yes. They have their own ship and everything. They were the only ones out of all of all of them that said you will not see the result of this oil spill first eight to 10 years. And I think we're seeing it now.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Rick Waite: You know, it's just a combine of things. You got the oil spill, you got the sharks, you got the black fish, you got the closed areas, you know?

Tom Olyanarnyk: The human impact.

Male Interviewer: Oh, yes.

Rick Waite: Yes, you know. No fisheries is supposed to be trying to make this fishing better. They're not, that's why Mr. Crabtree don't like me and I don't like him. You know, we just got different opinions. [00:48:00] At the last meeting, he made a comment, you need to learn how to speak to the council. And I looked at him I said, you need to frigging learn how to listen. So, we don't have a good communication and that's why I haven't been back in the meeting. Because a lot of my friends say, Rick, you get to passion and they're – of course, I'm passion. I got four grandchildren, girl, boys. My son's running in the boat now, why would I be passion?

Specially the government is giving you millions and millions and millions of dollars and you get a percentage from imports to fund no fisheries. So, common sense tells me, the more you can make us not catch, the more you get from the import, the more commission your go get off the imports. Say something... [laughter]

Male Interviewer: Well, there's lots of groping to do.

Rick Waite: Uh-huh?

Tom Olyanarnyk: He says there's lots of groping to do but...

Male Interviewer: Yes, well we'll save that for another interview.

Rick Waite: Oh, you really want to interview me again. Damn it, I didn't do a good enough job, did I? I enjoyed this.

Male Interviewer: And I don't know if there's anything else about this...

Rick Waite: That's an easy way to say get the hell out of there. All righty then...

Male Interviewer: Well, we appreciate you guys taking the time.

Tom Olyanarnyk: Yes.

Rick Waite: I hope it helps.

Male Interviewer: No, it really will.