

Matt McPherson: Okay. Well my name is Matt McPherson. And it is August, Monday, August 5, 2019, and we are at the Panama City Lab with Mr...

Buster McKay: Buster McKay. You can call me Buster.

Matt McPherson: Buster, okay. And we are here to talk, primarily, about the history of red tides in this area. But before we move onto that would you, could you talk to us a little about how long you've been fishing in this area, and what kind of fishing you've been doing?

Buster McKay: Well, I started it when I was started working on the prairie boats and all here when I was 12 or 13 years old. And a day trip then was 7:00 to 5:00 and the crew got paid two dollars, two dollars-and-a-half, if you were real good. And that was Camp Madison and Camp Davidson and few of the others [indiscernible][0:01:18] was the ones had the prairie boats here then. And Andersons was the big wheel, they had five boats at that time, five party boats. And all of sudden he was hired a captain to run them.

So, the fishing was mostly red snapper and grouper. We fished mostly rocky bottoms and close enough to the beach to where you get ranges because nobody had any equipment. We [indiscernible][0:01:47] and it got pretty good at it, at Paul's hand lines fishing. And it was quite a few fish. Fish everywhere. If you went real far offshore then you went off to a hundred feet of water, but most of it was inside of about 80 feet.

Matt McPherson: Okay.

Buster McKay: There was snapper, big snapper, grouper.

Matt McPherson: And all of this how far offshore?

Buster McKay: Well, anywhere from a mile-and-a-half to 12 or 13 miles.

Matt McPherson: Okay.

Buster McKay: We didn't go further because you didn't have any ranges after you go that far.

Matt McPherson: And we are talking back in the 1960s?

Buster McKay: Yeah, you are talking back in the early, late '40s and early '50s

Matt McPherson: Late '40s and early '50s. Okay.

Buster McKay: Yeah. In the late '40s when I first started working regularly, instead of just working on weekends or when school was out, I started working regularly then. In '48, '49, and '50. And we were out, boats ran real good all through the summer in late, well, early fall I'd say. And then about October you quit party fishing, and everybody went to commercial fishing.

Matt McPherson: Okay.

Buster McKay: Same boats.

Matt McPherson: And did you, were you also, did you also work in commercial fishing?

Buster McKay: Yeah. I know how it works. I worked in the party/commercial fishing for probably 30 years and work from the back and [indiscernible][0:03:34].

Matt McPherson: So, it's the same boats?

Buster McKay: Same boats, same crews.

Matt McPherson: Same crews that would do the party boats?

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [0:03:41].

Matt McPherson: And how many people would be on those party boats?

Buster McKay: Oh, the crew you talking about, or the passengers?

Matt McPherson: Well both, the crew and the passengers.

Buster McKay: The size of the crews depended on the passengers. There was head captain and probably one or two deck hands. And then if you had a full load of people, sometimes you go as much four deck hands.

Matt McPherson: Okay.

Buster McKay: Maybe a pick of 10 or 12 people to each deck hand. It worked out pretty good that way.

Matt McPherson: And how many people would be on a typical party boat?

Buster McKay: Anywhere from 40 to 50.

Matt McPherson: Forty to 50, a lot. Okay.

Buster McKay: So, it's all fish came in. We caught a lot of fish then. We discarded a lot of fish that was [indiscernible][0:04:33] that's not fit to eat, or you don't want to catch them and stuff, like small bee-liners, grubs, things like that. And actually we threw them overboard. [indiscernible] [0:04:45] was a big food fish.

Matt McPherson: But back then there weren't really too many regulations or restrictions on what people caught?

Buster McKay: No, you catch all you could.

Matt McPherson: All you could. Everything, all you could. No [indiscernible] [0:04:57] or anything?

Buster McKay: No [indiscernible] [0:05:01] anything. But you didn't, back then you didn't have any small boat fisher yachts outside of a mile or two from the beach. Nobody in our boat ran offshore. They just didn't do it. And it wasn't that many smaller-boat fishing either.

Matt McPherson: Okay.

Buster McKay: And then in the '60s and '70s party fishing got really active. I mean at one time nearly had 26 head boats, a hundred and something tug boats in this area...

Matt McPherson: Oh, wow.

Buster McKay: ...and numerous small boats. But even then, the outboards weren't the big high power things coming on [indiscernible] [0:05:44] so the outboards didn't go offshore.

Matt McPherson: Okay.

Buster McKay: And then, early in the '70s and the '80s the [indiscernible] [0:05:58.] boat fisher really jump. Everybody had lots of money. Everybody was buying boats. Everybody thought they ought to be able to go out there and catch all we want. They owned their own boat. The equipment got good so that they had the same equipment that the bigger boats had.

See you started off, everybody had the same equipment for the thing we were doing. You hit the same amount of fish, but the little boat with four or five people caught a hell of a lot more fish per person than the party boats did.

Matt McPherson: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But the party boat still had 40 or 50 people, so you have 26 party boats out there with 40 or 50 people. And then by the '80s you're getting all these private boats that are going further out. [Overlapping conversation] [0:06:44]

Buster McKay: So, for recreational end of it. [indiscernible][0:06:49] you go out with three or four people, five people and you catch four or five hundred pounds of fish, and you sell them. You pay for your trip.

Matt McPherson: Oh, so they would go out for fun, but they would also be selling them?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: And at that time there still were no sort of restrictions that people... they just go out, fish all they wanted, and sell part of it, and take some home?

Buster McKay: Believe it or not, they still do the same damn thing. But I live in Van Haven, which was 16 miles from here but it's back up on North Bay. It was a couple of boat launchers here, and you see the boats all the time. You have three in the morning, and one at daylight. And they wait until after 5:00 to come in because some [indiscernible] [0:07:35]. And the they come in, they've got older. Load the boats up on the trailer, bring the fish boxes up and put them in, and take off. A lot of times you go down there in the morning and the dumpsters in Van Haven would be half full of snapper carcasses.

Matt McPherson: Oh my gosh.

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [0:07:55] But they take them back and sell them. They're not wasted.

Matt McPherson: And why do they wire the carcasses? Because these are [overlapping conversation] [0:08:06].

Buster McKay: It was easier. [indiscernible][0:08:06.8].

Matt McPherson: Oh, you are saying they were laying them right there. Okay. I see what you're saying. Yeah. Oh wow.

Buster McKay: Fillet them on the way in, but they don't get done before you get in there, finish it up there and throw it in the dumpster.

Matt McPherson: And the whole time all these there the main target was just snapper/grouper?

Buster McKay: Snapper.

Matt McPherson: Snapper?

Buster McKay: Snapper, that's what drives the fishery, a snapper.

Matt McPherson: Okay. And you said that you would always, you would do the party boats in the summer time and then they shifted over with commercial fishing. Can you talk a little bit about how that worked...?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: ...and when you were targeting in the commercial fisheries?

Buster McKay: There's just money tied in snapper and grouper, and up until about in the '80s, we started long lining in the late '80s, we start long lining fish. And it started, it

originated down in the lower part of the state around Tampa and St. Petersburg, those boats along in there, they started doing it. And we tried it up here at first [indiscernible] [0:09:28] started the charter boats at that time, and we'd commercial fishing in the winter. And I put a [indiscernible] [0:09:33] hopper on there, used rope gear and long line fishing and we found these yellow-edge groupers around here, which nobody knew they were out there. But they were about 300 feet out, so it's safe from, from [indiscernible] [0:09:58] going after 160, 175 on [indiscernible] [0:09:57] in mud bottom. You didn't need structure. It was just a fishery that nobody had touched before.

Matt McPherson: And what was that? What did you call them? [Overlapping conversation]
Yellow edge grouper.

Buster McKay: Yellow edge.

Matt McPherson: Yellow edge grouper.

Buster McKay: We called them yellow fin to start with, they corrected us.

Matt McPherson: And before how were you fishing? You said you started long lining in the 80s, late '80s.

Buster McKay: Yeah, I was fishing before that?

Matt McPherson: Yeah.

Buster McKay: We were fishing what we call [indiscernible] [0:10:30] bridge. What we were using was call [indiscernible] [0:10:36] reels mounted on over frame. And just [indiscernible] [0:10:41] with a, and we used swigs of 20/12 hooks [indiscernible] [0:10:58] it was really successful.

Matt McPherson: That's the way you fished in the late '40s?

Buster McKay: No, that was in the, it started in the late '70s and '80s.

Matt McPherson: Okay. And before that?

Buster McKay: Oh yeah, we fished there. We fished [indiscernible] [0:11:18] in the '50s and '60s.

Matt McPherson: Okay. And was there other, any gear other that you used before that?

Buster McKay: Some of them used rods and reels. First started off using a handline.

Matt McPherson: Just regular handlines?

Buster McKay: Yes.

Matt McPherson: So, the [indiscernible] [0:11:36] started more in the '50s.

Buster McKay: Yeah, and the electric reels, and that reel made the difference.

Matt McPherson: Electric reels. And when did that start, the electric reels?

Buster McKay: I would say [indiscernible] [0:11:50] in the '70s, [indiscernible] [0:11:54] And that way maybe you didn't get tied down, you know you could fish deep water, that did all work, made a hell of a difference.

Matt McPherson: Initially, you got into it just because – was the family, was your father involved in it?

Buster McKay: He moved down here from up north when I was 12 years old. We used to go fishing on the weekends on the party boats. They had some boats, so sometimes they'd need help when I worked that way, and school was out, I'd get down there and work. It was [indiscernible] [0:12:35].

Matt McPherson: So, you would work, initially, in the summers, and then after that, you started working throughout the year?

Buster McKay: After I got out of the Navy, I worked full-time on the fishing boats.

Matt McPherson: On the fishing boats. And then eventually you got your own?

Buster McKay: Got my own. I got my own boat, yeah.

Matt McPherson: I mean that was something that was fairly easy to do back then. Would be that work full-time on other boats, and then get your own boat?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: Is that something you still see?

Buster McKay: You still see it now but it's according to all the regulations and stuff, you have to get permits. You have to have licenses as yet, because got to have seller's product license. You got to have a re-fish permit. You got to have a snapper permit if you're going to catch snappers. You have to have a grouper permit if you're going to catch groupers.

Just before they started off, you just had to have an endorsement, and then all these other permits come by. And that when the more you escaped it, the higher price they get, which the government doesn't seem to understand that.

And now they're having a problem there with snapper quota there, they're trying to rebuild the snapper stock, which I keep trying to tell them it's already rebuilt, but they're holding it

down so. They're got a total allowable catch [indiscernible][0:14:14] on red snapper. It is far below what would be an allowable catch. And they're supposed to bring in all that [indiscernible] [0:14:28] allowable catch in 2030. Well you only got 10 years now to get it. And right now, we can only get half of what they catch [indiscernible] [0:14:39.6]. So, they're either going to have to start releasing some fish or we're in a big problem.

But the only problem is, your commercial fishing is restricted. I mean it is really severely in [indiscernible] [0:14:55] place. And I think it's 18 or 19 years it's been in effect, it only been over the quota once and that was by a matter of a couple of hundred pounds, whereas the chartered a head boat industry, they shutdown only when they can't reach their quota. They don't have enough days.

And the recreational quota has been over by at least a hundred percent every year since they started. But there doesn't seem be any effort to restrain it, and that's what's happened. That's one reason commercial fishermen are so aggravated with the way everything's been. Even when the [indiscernible] [0:15:44] makes a case against the recreational fishermen, and then go court, the judge throws it out or gives them a warning, they're not doing anything then to really to [indiscernible] [0:15:58].

Matt McPherson: Do you consider that you were primarily a commercial fisherman, or primarily a recreational fisherman or...?

Buster McKay: I'd say for the first 30 years, I was in the recreational industry, running head boats and charter boats, primarily. I mean that was primarily recreational fishing. [Overlapping conversation].

Matt McPherson: You had your own head boat, your own party boat as well?

Buster McKay: Party boats and charter boats.

Matt McPherson: And charter boats, okay.

Buster McKay: Yeah. I mean the commercial part of it was just a [indiscernible] [0:16:36] to get us through the winter. And now, for the past 30 odd years, I did commercial fishing, and there's other regulations that I did [indiscernible] [0:16:51]. But my son and I have been, well my middle son's is a hell of a fishermen. He does have much business sense. But my oldest son [indiscernible] [0:17:04] what's his business. His business is making money, that's what he does. Any opportunity, he always looks at it and sees the ways to make money, when he can make money, like [indiscernible] [0:17:15]. So, when they came up with the [indiscernible] [0:17:18], Chris looked at it real good, talked it over with the people that were promoting it, which was [indiscernible] [0:17:26] Fishery and he said we need to get into this, [indiscernible] [0:17:32]. So, we got into it as big as we could, we didn't have a hell of a lot money, we bought into as much as we could. [indiscernible]0:17:42.4, and now it's a pretty successful business.

Matt McPherson: Oh, okay. So that's why you shifted into, more into the commercial side was because of the IFQ you decided?

Buster McKay: No, I did that...

Matt McPherson: You had already moved into it?

Buster McKay: I had already moved into it, yeah.

Matt McPherson: And why have you moved more into the commercial side of things?

Buster McKay: You don't have to deal with other people every day.

Matt McPherson: Well, you mean like, Chris? [Laughter]

Buster McKay: We were running up to 200 days a year. You have the same questions every day. Same people every day. It was always [indiscernible] [0:18:24]. My father used to say, he says, "For every 10 that you get, you got one SOB." You get 20 people you got three. If you got 30 people you got five. And you got 60 people, 50 percent of them SOB... I got to a point, I didn't want to deal with them anymore.

Matt McPherson: Yeah, yeah, okay. That's interesting.

Buster McKay: That's what happened.

Matt McPherson: But when you first got into fishing, there were no restrictions? Did you have to get a permit?

Buster McKay: You didn't have to get permit.

Matt McPherson: Nothing. You just got your [indiscernible] [0:18:57] and went out and fished.

Buster McKay: Your own equipment. So you [indiscernible] [0:19:01] on the kind of hooks you had to use, which we went to the [indiscernible] [0:19:09] jack hooks, circle hooks first. But they were totally different from what we're using now. And [indiscernible] [0:19:19] fishing than the hooks they are using now. But they're harder to bait too, a lot harder to bait, because [indiscernible] [0:19:31] and pointed right straight back down. So, you had to get the big [indiscernible] [0:19:35] then pull it back up on the hook. And now you can just hook it on. But it's quite different.

Matt McPherson: So, what are some of the other major changes that you've seen [overlapping conversation] around here over the years?

Buster McKay: The biggest change was the GPS. The [indiscernible] [0:19:57] first and then the GPS. I mean, everybody that could beg, borrow, steal or buy a rig made him a

captain. He was next to a fisherman. The more rigs you get the more experts you [indiscernible] [0:20:10]. You didn't have to know a damn thing about fishing just what they do.

Matt McPherson: Oh, okay. And did a lot more people get into [indiscernible] [0:20:20] [overlapping conversation].

Buster McKay: They got in because of that. And they got to where they were pushing rigs around. If you found a place, you kept it to yourself. And now, the first thing they do, some of them, hit a place they hadn't hit before, and they tell everybody where it is.

Matt McPherson: But those aren't commercial guys?

Buster McKay: No.

Matt McPherson: No. But there you don't need the same kind of, I guess...

Buster McKay: Everybody's got the same equipment.

Matt McPherson: Everybody's got the same equipment, more or less, the same knowledge so even the...

Buster McKay: If you got a little bit more money, you can buy a little better equipment. I see tour boats, party boats that have some machines on there that cost 40, 50, 60 thousand dollars. [indiscernible] [0:21:18] charter boat, but with an ordinary boatman, you don't need that kind of equipment to make a living. But it would be nice to have it, but you can't afford to have it.

Matt McPherson: So, the recreational fishermen are fishing for the red snapper in state waters? No, because the federal seasons have been...

Buster McKay: No, they fish everywhere.

Matt McPherson: They fish everywhere. But I mean though haven't the federal seasons been really, really short, like just a few days, or have they been able to fish?

Buster McKay: It don't bother them, they can go ahead and fish anyway.

Matt McPherson: They ahead and fish out there anyway?

Buster McKay: Nobody really enforces it.

Matt McPherson: Oh, okay.

Buster McKay: If they'd put a [indiscernible] [0:22:04] and patrol on Gulf and just not announce it just pick some weekend and stop boats two or three miles off the beach. I mean

just randomly pick any kind of boat, big boats, yachts. Stop one and board one if you find any boats in there, take it to the docks and attach his boat where he couldn't use it for the rest of the summer. You'd be surprised how much less fishing there will be out there.

Matt McPherson: Are there just very little monitoring, very little enforcement so people aren't really worried if they go out? They go off in federal waters? They....

Buster McKay: Dock side enforcement. Because if you don't stop them in the bay here at the dock [indiscernible] 0:22:47] stop at the dock he gets on forever. [indiscernible] [0:22:58] there's no check here, and then you see it all when you're coming in later, you see a fish boat. They just dump them overboard. I hate to sound bitter, but....

Matt McPherson: No, no, no, not at all. It's really, it's very, very interesting. And what has been your perception of sort of how the fisheries have changed? Like the populations and all that kind of stuff has changed over time? I know you said more recently that...

Buster McKay: A whole lot more people fishing now than there were. And most of it's from an old boat, party boats. The head boat business is just, in spite of what I'm saying, I'm going to say it's just [indiscernible] [0:23:46] And the catches are terrible right now on the head boats.

Matt McPherson: Oh yeah. Do they still have 26 head boats that of right now?

Buster McKay: No there's only about ten, probably ten or twelve altogether here now.

Matt McPherson: Okay.

Buster McKay: If you get that many.

Matt McPherson: And is that because it's harder to catch fish, or is it because of, what is it?

Buster McKay: The business has slacked off. The dock space is at a premium. It used to be if a party boat at the downtown arena, and the St. Andrews arena, you don't have party boats at either one of them now. You have, I think, about maybe eight charter boats downtown all together. Have five over at the west end of the [indiscernible] [0:24:53] grid. I think those are private boats.

Matt McPherson: So, there's just more private boats now than there used to be?

Buster McKay: There's more private boats. There are very few charters.

Matt McPherson: Not as many charters and head boats?

BusterMcKay: But according to your own records here, which we have about 20 charter boats in Bay County. The Chambers of Commerce says we have 167. But most of those are boats that don't have a state permit. [Overlapping conversation] They're state permits.

Matt McPherson: State permit, right.

Buster McKay: They not supposed to fish here [indiscernible] [0:25:38] waters.

Matt McPherson: Right.

Buster McKay: But they fish state waters.

Matt McPherson: They fish state waters, okay.

Buster McKay: And the state waters are managing [indiscernible][0:25:44] state water is as far as I can go and get back in one day.

Matt McPherson: So, there are only 20 that probably have federal permits?

Buster McKay: Yes.

Matt McPherson: Okay, and the others are all state. That's interesting. Okay. Well, let's you know, we'll make, you've started giving us some information, but I mean, we are really interested in red tide events over time. And you had already started talking to us a little bit before we started taping, but if you could just talk to us a little bit about when you started seeing red tides and...

Buster McKay: The first time I can remember [indiscernible] [0:26:33] oh, I'm trying to think – in the mid '70s. I can remember that because I was on a new yacht and the first time I ran into it up here we didn't even know what the hell it was. We saw fish floating there and started bring some of them in while they were still alive, but oh man, they smelled bad.

Matt McPherson: So, you are actually fishing the [indiscernible] [0:26:57]?

Buster McKay: No, just picking them up.

Matt McPherson: Oh, just picking them up because they were on, okay.

Buster McKay: Because they were running off. I mean big fish. Fish, we never even knew were here. Crazy looking fish.

Matt McPherson: Oh yeah, like what kind of fish?

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [0:27:13] and stuff like that. Of course, you see a lot of grouper. Lot of trash fish, bottom dwelling fish, see them come floating up. I never saw any crabs coming, so I don't really kill the crabs or not. Didn't see any porpoises come ashore. saw a quite a few of those. Never saw a [indiscernible] [0:27:41] so. I don't know whether at that time, well I haven't even seen any since. But I don't know whether the [indiscernible]

[0:27:56] too deep for it or whether they were smart enough to get away from it or what. [indiscernible] [0:28:00].

Matt McPherson: And do you remember, we were trying to sort of identify where different red tide events happened [overlapping conversation].

Buster McKay: Between the cape, cape [indiscernible] [0:28:15] and Panama City.

Matt McPherson: Can you sort of point that out to us, like more or less, where the area would be on the map?

Buster McKay: Yeah, I can see it.

Matt McPherson: You can get it, okay. If you could draw it, more or less, the area where you saw it?

Buster McKay: Well the [indiscernible] [0:28:38.8] right along in here. River is right along in this area right along in here. As you're coming from the cape, you run through it and you could be put in Panama City, but you...

Matt McPherson: So more or less...

Buster McKay: ...yeah, more or less, right around in there.

Matt McPherson: It's just around here, like sort of?

Buster McKay: Going to say from here back towards Panama City.

Matt McPherson: In here, and then back towards [indiscernible] [0:29:03]. Oh, up in here.

Buster McKay: Panama City's here. Panama City should be right there.

Matt McPherson: Oh, okay. So, it's sort of... and then it just sort of like more or less to here and then kind of this area?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: Sorry about that, okay. So, this is [indiscernible] [0:29:22]. Okay.

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [0:29:29] when you are on your boat. And [indiscernible] [0:29:33] good shade when you leave the [indiscernible] [0:29:35] and you go over an hour or so, you don't want to go back in it, and all your bait will on top [indiscernible] [0:29:42]. You go from over there and then catch fish on all sides of you know, small fish, you can throw them in your bait whatever. They'd be in good shape. If you're coming in, you had any left, they die on the way in. So, it wasn't just everywhere, if it was it wasn't strong enough in concentration everywhere to kill them.

Matt McPherson: Okay.

Buster McKay: We just street sell them.

Matt McPherson: Street sell them, okay. And do you remember how long that lasted? I mean was short?

Buster McKay: About three or four months.

Matt McPherson: Oh, three or four months.

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: Okay. And did it affect your fishing at all in terms of the way you [indiscernible] [0:30:20] fish?

Buster McKay: Well, we were worried about it the first week or so. So, we changed where we were fishing.

Matt McPherson: So, you were able to fish around the [indiscernible] [0:30:32]. It wasn't big enough that it prevented you from...?

Buster McKay: No, it didn't prevent us from fishing. It aggravated the [indiscernible] [0:30:40] made it more expensive because it doesn't run different directions [indiscernible] [0:30:46]. It was really a couple of years before have any more of up here. It was the same general area.

Matt McPherson: Okay. So, then you had another there a couple of years later in that same area?

Buster McKay: In the '80s.

Matt McPherson: Oh, so, at that point it would have been the early 80s late 70s, early 80s more or less?

Buster McKay: I think it was about the middle 80s.

Matt McPherson: Middle 80s, okay, so it would have been maybe 10 years after?

Buster McKay: Yeah, about 8 or 10 years

Matt McPherson: Every 10 years. And that was in the same basic area?

Buster McKay: Same area.

Matt McPherson: Okay. So, and then we have another. And what do you remember about that event? Is there anything different that you remember about that one?

Buster McKay: That one was, fish washed up on the beach in Panama City. The one before that we never saw any fish on the beach.

Matt McPherson: Okay.

Buster McKay: So, since that we've had two or three of them over in there in the same area right off Panama City.

Matt McPherson: So, every time it's been more or less in that same area?

Buster McKay: Well the last couple of them were further west primarily, I mean as far down as, well I guess they got as far as Dustin, I don't know.

Matt McPherson: Okay. So, let's see. So, the last couple starting more or less like in the middle '80s?

Buster McKay: I said middle '80s

Matt McPherson: Middle 80s.

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [0:32:15].

Matt McPherson: They would extend further down?

Buster McKay: They extend further west.

Matt McPherson: Further west. So, it would still be sort of starting over in this area?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: Where is Dustin here?

Buster McKay: Like Pensacola and Dustin's half way between [indiscernible] [0:32:34] Panama City. [Overlapping conversation].

Matt McPherson: Anyway. And then it would kind of extend out sort of along here where you are fishing [overlapping conversation].

Buster McKay: It wouldn't be too far offshore, we'd see it. [indiscernible] [0:32:50] for six or eight miles offshore.

Matt McPherson: Six or eight miles offshore. What line would that be? How would we identify that?

Buster McKay: Okay. [indiscernible] [0:33:22] about here, from here down.

Matt McPherson: From here, from here down? And then Dustin is down here somewhere, right?

Buster McKay: I don't think, is Dustin there?

Matt McPherson: Is that Dustin?

Buster McKay: Yeah, that's Dustin.

Matt McPherson: Okay. So, you also sort of like distance?

Buster McKay: It'll be right along in here.

Matt McPherson: Right along, more or less, right along this line here?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: And that just kind of out like that too?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: Still pretty close to shore? Sort of like that?

Buster McKay: Yeah. I don't really remember seeing them way offshore.

Matt McPherson: You don't remember seeing it way offshore? Okay. And this would be like the ones you saw in the mid '80s, starting in the '80s?

Buster McKay: Early '90s.

Matt McPherson: Starting in the '80s. Mid '80s, okay. And for these, I mean, did any of them – you were always able to fish around them, or how did they affect your business?

Buster McKay: It affected the business some, but we managed to fish [indiscernible] [0:34:11] fish were all here. It didn't seem to be, it doesn't even seem to be offshore.

Matt McPherson: Okay. So, you are always in this one?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: And these are the same sort of, the ones in mid-, you know, you remember one you said in the mid '80s, and then?

Buster McKay: Yeah, I believe, most of them rushed at two or three months.

Matt McPherson: Two or three months, okay.

Buster McKay: Yeah. We had one, I don't know if it was last or year before last, that got in the Bay area, bam! I mean it work on them in the bay area.

Matt McPherson: Right. That was, yeah, a couple of years ago.

Buster McKay: Yeah, a couple of years ago.

Matt McPherson: Okay. And that one still was inshore, you don't never remember seeing them further offshore?

Buster McKay: No, I didn't. I mean I didn't pay any attention. That's when we were commercial fishing, and we were running [indiscernible] [0:35:09] way offshore.

Matt McPherson: Way offshore, okay. So, you weren't seen. But during this period of time, you were fishing much closer to shore and so... okay. But you didn't go further offshore to see if was... You weren't offshore to see if it actually, how far out it went?

Buster McKay: [Overlapping conversation]

Matt McPherson: Okay. So, got up into the Bay a couple years ago, late 2016.

Buster McKay: One thing I never did see, I never did see any dead sharks.

Matt McPherson: This is the Bay here, right? Anyway. Okay.

Buster McKay: I don't know whether it makes any difference or not.

Matt McPherson: Yeah, absolutely.

Buster McKay: We saw some porpoises, but...

Matt McPherson: You saw dead porpoises, and that was the more recent one in the 2015, 2016? Or [indiscernible] [0:36:00]?

Buster McKay: That was in the '90s

Matt McPherson: Even in the '90s.

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: Okay. But you never saw dead sharks?

Buster McKay: Never saw a dead shark. [indiscernible] [0:36:14].

Matt McPherson: Do you think there were any particular species that are more resistant or vulnerable?

Buster McKay: [Overlapping conversation]

Matt McPherson: Once it gets in there equally.

Buster McKay: I think most of the fish don't realize what's happening. Of course, there again, we never saw any [indiscernible] [0:36:36] fishing or [indiscernible][0:36:40] anything like that.

Matt McPherson: So, you never saw any pelagic fish killed from this?

Buster McKay: No.

Matt McPherson: Are these the ones that you just mentioned, those are the, they always would last two to three months? I mean, are there any particular ones that you remember because they affected your business, different from any others?

Buster McKay: Most of the time, when I haul them in, after I got my two long line boats we stayed outside, offshore, most of the time. And I didn't pay a much attention to it except hear the people laughing about it on the beach. You couldn't go enjoy the water.

Matt McPherson: But you were just steaming through it. [Overlapping conversation].

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [0:37:46].

Matt McPherson: Like how far offshore would you do your fishing [overlapping conversation]

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [0:37:49]. Yeah, kind of...

Matt McPherson: Oh really, oh wow, that's tough. That's way offshore, oh yeah.

Buster McKay: But still there be a 200-mile limit. But [indiscernible] [0:38:04]. We had this fine line fish we the Gulf because all of those 75 and 100 long line boats in the Gulf everybody catching fish, and the government say, well, we got a 200-mile limit now, you can't come within 200 miles of Mexico, they can't within a 200-mile limit. It's only 426 miles to Mexico. Then you have 26-mile puddle of water you're supposed to put a hundred boats in, 250 fishing 40 miles a year in, you couldn't do it.

Matt McPherson: There's 26 miles that weren't Mexico or US, basically?

Buster McKay: Yes. International waters.

Matt McPherson: International waters. And that's what folks were kind of looking for International water to kind of avoid the...

Buster McKay: They didn't want [indiscernible] [0:38:54] Gulf for a while. I don't know why. But we had go that half way or better before you get any good fishing.

Matt McPherson: And you were still targeting the groupers?

Buster McKay: Well the first time we were doing tuna fishing.

Matt McPherson: Oh, you were doing tuna fishing too? Okay. And that was, more or less, in what, sort of in the '90s.

Buster McKay: Well one boat I had it was tuna fishing through the summer and like grouper fish through the winter.

Matt McPherson: Oh, okay.

Buster McKay: Then that got to where the government stuck a moratorium on the [indiscernible] [0:39:42], and February and March and April, you don't catch any other [indiscernible] [0:39:51] in the Gulf except blue fins.

Matt McPherson: And when was that, more or less, do you remember sort of the timeframe when you were...?

Buster McKay: That started in the '90s.

Matt McPherson: In the '90s, okay.

Buster McKay: They put a lot of restrictions on it. And without, they restricted us, but they didn't restrict it on the east coast and let charter boats up there catch them but they were limited to one per person, per day. So, if you got six people on your boat charter fishing, you can catch six or eight tuna fish and blue fins. And up there the blue fins were [indiscernible] [0:40:32] the boat, you know, a lot of passengers.

Matt McPherson: So, from the east coast, that area you're talking about, east coast of the Gulf? East coast of...?

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [0:40:44]. He's the one that....

Matt McPherson: Oh, you're talking up in Massachusetts?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: Oh, right, right, right.

Buster McKay: Yeah, we were restricted [indiscernible] [0:40:54] catch. It's restricted now and there are several different real funny laws. It's not so bad that, half the boats wouldn't even go tuna fishing anymore because they don't want to catch the blue fins. They knew if they catch more than, most of us catch more than three a year, they shut you down.

Matt McPherson: Oh wow!

Buster McKay: But up there they have a – well [indiscernible] [0:41:21], they got a seven-month season.

Matt McPherson: Right, right.

Buster McKay: Sometimes don't even have anything to catch the one boat, and one or two, but sometimes three, but they got they a seven-month season.

Matt McPherson: But when you were going into sort of the Mexican waters, that was for tuna, that was for tuna primarily?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: Yeah, okay. Have there been any other species that you fish for in different periods of times throughout your career?

Buster McKay: Well shark fish for a while.

Matt McPherson: Okay. What kind of shark do you fish for? [indiscernible] [0:42:00].

Buster McKay: Well that's a funny thing. Everybody showed all these pictures of these sharks. We caught, primarily, bull sharks, silkies and dusties, and tiger sharks. We'd catch how long was this, six or seven years and then we average about three or four great whites...

Matt McPherson: Oh my gosh.

Buster McKay: ...which the government said they weren't in the Gulf, but we going to catch them. But they told us we were mistaken.

Matt McPherson: When you showed up with them, what did they say?

Buster McKay: You are mistaken, you didn't catch that in the Gulf. Well I said [indiscernible] [0:42:49].

Matt McPherson: When, more or less, was that when you were doing the shark fishing?

Buster McKay: The shark fishing was four years ago, heavy in the '90s.

Matt McPherson: In the '90s okay.

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: And why did you decide to fish heavily for sharks during that period?

Buster McKay: In the '80s snapper fishing got bad. I mean there was – they had beat the fishery down to where you couldn't make a living catching them. And so, they came around and wanted to meet and said, any you fellows that can – how did they put it? Not the [indiscernible] [0:43:41] Fishery did so and then when the snappers come back, you'll have first opportunity to get back in.

Well that was the first time they really lied to us. Because when it came to get a permit, they said, you are not eligible. You didn't have any history of at least four years. I said, no you told us to get [indiscernible] [0:44:04] from the fishery, diversify, which we did. They said, well, you didn't catch any snapper, you don't have any history of snapper. I caught more snapper than half the people in this country put together [indiscernible] [0:44:21].

Matt McPherson: So, in the end you ended up having to buy most the quota that got, you didn't get it from the history?

Buster McKay: Yeah, I was allotted for my part of it, the allocation they actually gave me was 321 pounds.

Matt McPherson: Wow. You had been shark fishing during most that period of time...?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: ...and tuna still?

Buster McKay: Yeah it was mainly sharks and tuna, yeah.

Matt McPherson: Shark and tuna?

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [0:44:52]. That's a dirty word.

Matt McPherson: So, these are the red tide.

Buster McKay: That's the main one.

Matt McPherson: The main one that you remember?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: And that was more when you were fishing inshore.

Buster McKay: Inshore.

Matt McPherson: But when you were fishing for sharks, and even long lining, you were all offshore...

Buster McKay: [Overlapping conversation]

Matt McPherson: ...and never saw any red tide?

Buster McKay: If we had good tide. We'd go to the west, go down around Pensacola on across the gully. Fish down there are off Mobil and Pensacola, it didn't get down there.

Matt McPherson: Okay. So, the red tide never got further than... [overlapping conversation]

Buster McKay: As far as I know they [overlapping conversation].

Matt McPherson: ...Dustin as far you remember. So those sharks, you still were fishing pretty far inshore for the sharks?

Buster McKay: Yes.

Matt McPherson: Okay. But you would just shift then?

Buster McKay: Until they made us move. [indiscernible] [0:45:44] 10 miles from the beach. But we caught them. We caught one trip fishing in [indiscernible] [0:45:54] bay, but I could talk to people on the beach, we caught 170 head sharks and it took us three days.

Matt McPherson: Oh my gosh.

Buster McKay: Yeah, big sharks.

Matt McPherson: Big sharks that close to the beach?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: People didn't know that they were lurking around out there.

Buster McKay: Where are you from, St. Pete?

Matt McPherson: Right now, we're from Miami.

Buster McKay: From Miami.

Matt McPherson: Yeah.

Buster McKay: Get in the helicopter and just run up and down the beach. Just take a – most of them won't do it, but just an hour or two hours ride up and down the beach within about a hundred yards of the beach.

Matt McPherson: I'm not going to want to go swimming anywhere.

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [0:46:43]. And they are real thick out here.

Matt McPherson: Is that right?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: So the, did the population start to drop of the sharks?

Buster McKay: No.

Matt McPherson: No.

Buster McKay: No. I don't know whose agenda that is to say they are in such bad shape, but shark fishing when it was a big business, Chris Bannon, he was out of, not Pensacola, but a place in Mississippi. He was selling sharks. He had a contract with the state of Louisiana to furnish sharks to the prisons and the schools. And, again, eight or nine shark boats, that's all they were doing sharks, selling the meat to the schools and the prisons, selling the liver to Borden Company for vitamins, and selling the fins to the Japanese, Chinese and when they came in with this so-called survey and said, [indiscernible] [0:47:56] well then this is the limit of sharks and according to our records. And they looked at me and said, well, where did you get these records? Well we got them all in [indiscernible] [0:48:14]. Says you must not have these because my boats, two of my boats caught more sharks than you kill here for the whole [indiscernible] [0:48:22]. And so, we got a camp here. [indiscernible] [0:48:22] I got the records right here with me. He says, we sell, I forget how many hundreds of thousands of pounds of meat to the state of Louisiana every year. Well, we don't have any record of that. So, we turn it in, you know, the law requires you to turn these reports in. He says, well what happens. I said well I don't know about [indiscernible] [0:48:50] but I know right here in [indiscernible] [0:48:53] they are 10, 12 years behind in their stuff that they are got. They order the [indiscernible] [0:48:59] and the specimens they get in [indiscernible] [0:49:02]. They are 10 years behind in all that. So how can you manage a fishery when you don't know what's happening?

Matt McPherson: So, you just think that the deal wasn't good for the sharks? The population is never...

Buster McKay: The population is not hurt at all.

Matt McPherson: And why did you decide to stop fishing for sharks then?

Buster McKay: They came up with all these damn different regulations [indiscernible] [0:49:28].

Matt McPherson: And so, then what did you shift to?

Buster McKay: That's when we shifted primarily to [indiscernible] [0:49:35] offshore for tuna or for grouper.

Matt McPherson: Okay. And now what kind of fishing do you, are you doing?

Buster McKay: I got out of it.

Matt McPherson: You got out of it?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: But your sons are still...

Buster McKay: Involved. One of my sons quit fishing all together. He quit fishing because he got aborted by the Marine Patrol, and the Coast Guard – what's that other outfit that's a counter terrorist group of some sort?

Matt McPherson: I don't know about that.

Buster McKay: Well they got red boats call them.

Matt McPherson: Like some kind of a Border Patrol type of thing?

Buster McKay: Border patrol, yeah. They got bordered that one day, four times, for their inspection. The inspections usually last about two or three hours.

Matt McPherson: Oh gosh.

Buster McKay: So, they got boarded first Marine Patrol, then they have Coast Guard. The Coast Guard border is run before we just leaving. [indiscernible] [0:50:41] again. And then there's Border Patrol. They hassled him for about three hours because he had a .22 raffle on board. And then another Coast Guard. And then when that happened, he just picked his gear up, and came on in, and he quit. He said, you have it, I don't want it. You know, you are working 12 to 14 hours a day, and you can't get to eat, and plus you got all these Marine [indiscernible] [0:51:09]. You can't eat, you can't do anything until they get through.

Matt McPherson: Right, right. Wow. So, what is he doing now?

Buster McKay: He got a hydraulic shop.

Matt McPherson: Oh, okay.

Buster McKay: Then the one that's a real good fisherman, he's fishing with somebody else now. I sold my boats. I just got out of it.

Matt McPherson: You got out of the career?

Buster McKay: It got to be too much hassle.

Matt McPherson: Oh, okay. More or less, when was that that you sold your two boats?

Buster McKay: I sold the last boat three years ago.

Matt McPherson: Three years ago, okay. But you still have your quota?

Buster McKay: I still have my quota, yeah.

Matt McPherson: So, you are able to make some [indiscernible] [0:51:54]?

Buster McKay: What the government doesn't seem to understand. I know they got people who are supposed to be businessmen, but what they don't seem to understand that anytime you put a restriction on something, and a limited amount of licenses or permits to catch it, and a limited amount of fish, the price of the permits and the price of the damn quota is going to go up. And they can't understand that. [indiscernible] [0:52:26] no that's not what happens, but they're not in business. And if you want the price of the fish [indiscernible] [0:52:40] to charge this much for allocation, if it does, and they are just not making all the money they want to make off of it.

Matt McPherson: Right. So, anyway, how is the allocation right now, is it pretty good?

Buster McKay: Allocation right now is \$4.00 a pound.

Matt McPherson: Four dollars a pound? Oh wow.

Buster McKay: The price of the fish, depending on where you go, is anywhere from \$5.00 for red snapper to \$6.00.

Matt McPherson: Wow. So, are the people who are leasing making money if they are paying \$4.00? Why are they paying so much because I mean they are getting hardly any...?

Buster McKay: Another thing everybody's pushing now, total catch, [indiscernible] [0:53:20]. You can't throw anything back. If you can't throw anything back, you going to have to have a permit for every different fish you catch. [indiscernible] [0:53:28]. If you get bad action, [indiscernible] [0:53:32] size fish and put you out of business. Right?

Matt McPherson: Earlier before we started taping you had talked about the red tides and you had said you thought they were tied to phosphorous mining or something like that. Can you talk a little bit more about that...?

Buster McKay: The big [indiscernible] [0:53:54] they have a bunch phosphate mines up there. They do their open pit mine [indiscernible] [0:54:00] and they put the [indiscernible] [0:54:05] in these ponds. So, as they dig so deep, they hit the water table to pump, and you put it in a pond, put the [indiscernible] [0:54:15] in a pond. And they build up these ponds. That's why when you get a heavy rain, like the one we had this morning, and break the dike. And all that pond water goes down in the river. I remember about three or four months, you got red tide. But [indiscernible] [0:54:35] say there's no connection. [indiscernible] [0:54:41].

Matt McPherson: And you think that that water sort of moves up into, that phosphorous reflooding moves up into this area with the red tide?

Buster McKay: That and a number of other things. You got, oh I don't know. On the east coast, you got all of these [indiscernible] [0:55:00] farms. But you know lots occur over there. The Gulf stream disperses it.

In the Gulf, you got a circular current goes around, and if you keep dumping them in one spot, pretty soon that's all the way around the Gulf. And that circular tide, as it comes up to more [indiscernible] [0:55:28] river, it's breaks up in two sections, one of them comes back around this way, the other goes to the west one. Well the one that's western it doesn't have seem to affect anything. But the one, I think, that comes this way is [indiscernible] [0:55:47] up there.

Female Voice: So [indiscernible] [0:55:54] we discussed earlier, but the red tides you see up here, do you think those are a local phenomenon or do you think they all come from the south?

Buster McKay: I don't know.

Female Voice: Okay.

Buster McKay: Thing about see, I figured, everybody seems to think that the [indiscernible] [0:56:13] came up from the south and come up here [indiscernible] [0:56:20] in the Spring. In the Fall, they said it goes back down. But we've tagged [indiscernible] [0:56:25] offshore and they caught them off Texas, and they didn't go down around the coast there. [indiscernible] [0:56:41] they tagged are Texas we call here. So, obviously there's a current going back this way.

Matt McPherson: So, have you noticed, do you think – I mean we talked about different red tide events starting in the mid '70s and then sort of the mid '80s and then I think early in the '90s that kind of extended out to Dustin. And then in more recent years everyone that kind of got up into the bay here. Has the frequency increased?

Buster McKay: Yeah, the frequency has increased, it sure has. Like I said, that one in the early '70s, that's first one I had ever remembered seeing.

Matt McPherson: And you started fishing in the late '40s, right...?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: ...yeah so. And the first one you ever or the first time you ever experienced [overlapping conversation].

Buster McKay: Experience since I was down south. I was fishing out of Fort Myer's Beach. That's the first one I ever saw.

Matt McPherson: And when was that, more or less?

Buster McKay: Oh Lord. That was in the '60s.

Matt McPherson: In the '60s, okay. Do you remember, more or less, where you were while you were fishing at that time?

Buster McKay: It was between Fort Myers and – oh Christ where was it? Cape [indiscernible] [0:58:13]. It was a shot Fort Myers Beach.

Matt McPherson: What were you fishing for at that time?

Buster McKay: King mackerel.

Matt McPherson: Oh, King mackerel.

Buster McKay: Yeah, right down there [indiscernible] [0:58:27].

Female Voice: Okay and you said 1960s?

Matt McPherson: And was that close, is it...

Buster McKay: Close to the beach.

Matt McPherson: Close to the beach. So, it was inshore also.

Female Voice: Inshore.

Matt McPherson: Cape Fomenko. And do you remember, did you have to fish that one?

Buster McKay: Well it was closer to shore from what I remember. We got to where we were led 12, 15 miles offshore. And you run out of it, then we get back inshore you were always king fishing.

Matt McPherson: So, you know mostly king fish is a little bit closer to the shore?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Female Voice: The shore 12 to 15 minutes out?

Buster McKay: Well to get out of it.

Female Voice: Get out it in 12, 15 minutes?

Matt McPherson: And that was more or less the same with these, too, right? These were sort of eight miles to...

Buster McKay: Yeah, seven or eight miles off the beach.

Matt McPherson: Seven or eight miles off the beach, yeah. And did you frequently go down and fish down south at that time?

Buster McKay: I used to for the winter.

Matt McPherson: Every winter, okay. And is that only time that you remember a red tide down south?

Buster McKay: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: Yeah. That was in the mid '60s, so it wasn't a frequent thing that happened all the time down there if you remember?

Buster McKay: No. It happened more often down there than it did up here for the last four or five years.

Matt McPherson: Now, do you know was that something you experienced in the '60s? Do you know the fisherman down there been experiencing that in the '50s, the '40s. I mean is that a regular.

Buster McKay: [indiscernible][1:00:10].

Matt McPherson: You don't know about that. You just know the one that you... And when did you stop fishing in the winters down there for king mackerel

Buster McKay: When I got... well.

Matt McPherson: You fish for a lot of different things all over the place.

Buster McKay: Well I started commercial fishing [indiscernible] [1:00:28] charter fishing business, and I started commercial fishing full-time. Some of the rules and regulations it got till where the boats were more less restricted from moving from one area to the other.

Matt McPherson: Oh, okay.

Buster McKay: It used to be nothing unusual for boats from as far as Mississippi would come in boats from Panama City would all go down there either to Fort Myers Beach or to Marathon to fish.

Matt McPherson: And because of the regulations it just became more and more difficult?

Buster McKay: It got more and more difficult and more regulations and more lack of dock space.

Matt McPherson: Oh, lack of dock space. So, you used to actually go fish there and then you would dock there and stay down there during the winter?

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [1:01:20].

Matt McPherson: And you would sell the catch down there as well. I know a lot of people, a lot of fishermen that would do that.

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [1:01:30].

Matt McPherson: Okay. And that was when you were still charter fishing as well?

Buster McKay: Charter fishing.

Matt McPherson: Okay. Interesting. Let me see what else. Have you noticed any change in fish distributions or spawning aggregations in this area over time?

Buster McKay: Not really.

Matt McPherson: No? That's all pretty much the same? And these areas, when they were affected by the red tides, I mean, do you remember how quickly they would sort of come back to the areas? Do you remember any permanent or dead zones that lasted a long time?

Buster McKay: It didn't generally take too long before [indiscernible] [1:02:21] nobody was being bothered by it and the fish just started hitting a bunch of the fish again. That hadn't been any real big bunches of red snappers, [indiscernible] [1:02:35] in years. It used to be that you'd find or every couple of years, somebody would have a place where you'd get 20, 30, 40 thousand pounds of red snapper. [indiscernible] [1:02:51] full of those. I haven't seen that in a long time. I've seen fish with a [indiscernible] [1:02:59] in them, not that big.

Matt McPherson: And that was closer to the shore here, in the past?

Buster McKay: Well, within 20 miles of the beach, yeah.

Matt McPherson: That's in 20 miles of the beach, wow. Have there been any other things in the ocean that has changed that you noticed over the years besides like red tide events, have there been other kinds of...?

Buster McKay: Well, I noticed, we don't see nearly the amount of [indiscernible] [1:03:34] we used to see. I don't know whether that's Gulf wide or what. But it used to be that all through the summer, July, August, September used to be a time when we had a heavy tide going on, the [indiscernible] [1:03:51] form out there. There are always be three or four [indiscernible] [1:03:53] and you just count on it. There's [indiscernible] [1:03:56].

Female Voice: That's interesting. [indiscernible] [1:04:01]

Buster McKay: You could count on them, yeah.

Matt McPherson: Now they're not there anymore?

Buster McKay: No, you don't see them.

Female Voice: Do you think that's a shark producer. You know sharks like eat them, right? [indiscernible] [1:04:12].

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [1:04:20].

Female Voice: Yeah.

Buster McKay: There's [indiscernible] [1:04:25].

Female Voice: I'm just curious because sharks have come back if that had something to do with it. [indiscernible] [1:04:34] on the east coast because the [indiscernible][1:04:36].

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [1:04:45] from right here. Go out and take a helicopter ride down the beach. Just tell them you don't want to go offshore, you just want to go maybe a couple of hundred feet off the beach, just outside the Green Ridge they call it. And take a ride from sort of past down to Dustin and come back.

Female Voice: What are you going to see?

Buster McKay: You'd probably catch, I'll say, not less than a hundred, two hundred chartered boats.

Female Voice: Yeah. [indiscernible] [1:05:18] can spring for that.

Buster McKay: You will see 10- and 12-foot sharks between people that are swimming in the beach.

Female Voice: Yeah.

Matt McPherson: Oh really.

Buster McKay: Yeah. And they don't even know it's there.

Female Voice: Yeah

Matt McPherson: Should we call our family right now and tell them to get the kids out of the water?

Buster McKay: [indiscernible] [1:05:39]

Matt McPherson: Oh my gosh. I mean there would have been some attacks recently, right?

Buster McKay: At least these kids sell fish at night. They catch you know big tiger sharks hammerheads [indiscernible] [1:05:55].

Female Voice: Some of the satellite tides hadn't come in real close to shore, they are there. [indiscernible] [1:06:00].

Matt McPherson: Do you have any questions?

Female Voice: No.

Matt McPherson: You don't have any questions?

Female Voice: No, I mean I really enjoyed hearing about the yellow head grouper, how you didn't even know they were there until... ?

Buster McKay: We didn't know they were there. We'd catch one, big. Once in a while a fisherman wanted to do one of those, but know they were there until we started catching them. [indiscernible] [1:06:39]. That's another thing the government changed the name of the fish. All over the world what we call gag grouper here, everybody calls it black grouper except down on the Keys. On the Keys you got a true black grouper.

Female Voice: Yeah. That's a major problem, all of this.

Buster McKay: That's been a big problem. [indiscernible] [1:07:08]. We used to call them the yellow, big grouper, we called them yellow [indiscernible] [1:07:12] for the first 8 or 10 years we catch them. That was a big [indiscernible] [1:07:17] problem.

Female Voice: Yeah. [indiscernible] [1:07:23] right.

Buster McKay: Well we catch two kinds of [indiscernible] [1:07:29]. You catch one it's [indiscernible] [1:07:28], and you catch another one that's got the long fully tail. We catch another one that's got a heavier looking tail, and he's almost black. But he's got the yellow mouth just like [indiscernible] [1:07:43] does.

Female Voice: Like a yellow mouth grouper.

Buster McKay: That's the yellow mouth grouper.

Female Voice: So y'all have the yellow mouth?

Buster McKay: That's a blue tail grouper.

Female Voice: I don't know that one.

Buster McKay: Well a blue tail grouper we catch this up there in two or three hundred pounds.

Female Voice: [indiscernible] [1:08:00].

Buster McKay: Yeah [indiscernible] [1:08:10] because it looks like shark. A shark is seen, you know sharks.

Female Voice: Interesting.

Matt McPherson: I think that's the main questions that I have. I mean I don't know what other biggest changes that you've noticed in the fishery, in fishing just in general in this region over the whole span of your career. What were the things that most impacted the fishing?

Buster McKay: Well, one thing I noticed is some of the fish that the government seems to think they really restrict seem to do really well when they don't restrict them. Like the great trigger fish. [indiscernible] [1:08:59] they put a big [indiscernible] [1:08:59] on them. The trigger fish came back within a year just tremendous how they were missing. The [indiscernible] [1:09:08] see them everywhere you go. Sharks everywhere you go.

Matt McPherson: So, you are saying the restrictions, at least for a short period, have worked in terms of [indiscernible] [1:09:20] the population?

Buster McKay: I don't know if it worked or whether there's [indiscernible] [1:09:22]. The lion fish showed up, nobody wanted to admit that, but we had a problem with them. We could tell them from six or seven years we would catch them [indiscernible] [1:09:40] down in the middle ground, and they said, no you're mistaken, that's a [indiscernible] [1:09:46]. No, we're not mistaken, that's a lion fish. But now they have [indiscernible] [1:09:51] to

eating, the big sharks are eating them. So, I don't know if that's going to help any or not. [indiscernible] [1:10:04] or something.

Female Voice: Do you think [indiscernible] [1:10:06] impact any fisheries?

Buster McKay: Oh yeah.

Female Voice: Take them a while don't they?

Buster McKay: They eat everything.

Female Voice: They eat everything, yeah.

Matt McPherson: Well, great, I mean thank you very much. This is super, super helpful and very interesting.

Buster McKay: I may see you tomorrow.

Matt McPherson: And tomorrow, yes, I hope so. Tomorrow we'll get more into more of the details of like the things we were just talking about here at the end.