

MARITIME & SEAFOOD INDUSTRY MUSEUM AND  
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

AN INTERVIEW WITH SINKEY BOONE  
FOR THE  
NOAA VOICES ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED  
BY STEPHANIE SCULL-DEARMEY

DARIEN, GEORGIA  
APRIL 22, 2010

TRANSCRIPT BY  
FANTASTIC TRANSCRIPTS

Stephanie Scull DeArmey: I'm going to put this ID tag at the beginning. This is an interview for the Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum and the University of Southern Mississippi. The interview is with Mr. Sinkey Boone, and it is taking place on April 22, 2010, at 10:00 AM in Hattiesburg, Mississippi on my end and at 11:00 AM in Darien, Georgia, on Mr. Boone's end. I'm the interviewer, Stephanie Scull DeArmey. First, I'd like to thank you, Mr. Boone, for taking time to talk with me today. I'm going to ask you, for the record, could you state your name, please?

Sinkey Boone: Sinkey, – S-I-N-K-E-Y. Boone, B-O-O-N-E.

SSD: When were you born?

SB: One-thirty-seven – God, let me think. I'm seventy years old.

SSD: Okay. Seventy-three years old in 2010. Where were you born?

SB: Tattnall County County. Not in McIntosh. I was in Tattnall County.

SSD: How do you spell that, Mr. Boone?

SB: I have no idea.

SSD: That's in Georgia.

SB: Yes, in Georgia.

SSD: Are you still working, or are you retired?

SB: Retired, still working. I'm tired.

SSD: [laughter] What would you say your current position is?

SB: Self-employed.

SSD: In a net shop?

SB: Yes. I do the jumpers – the turtle excluders.

SSD: Let's jump right into these questions that the museum wants to have answered. The first one is, what were the challenges faced in first inventing and then developing TEDs [turtle excluder devices]?

SB: Being a shrimper – see, also, I'm a machinist/designer. That's what I do, you know? So as a shrimper there, I thought I was catching too much bycatch there, so I did it to get rid of bycatch.

SSD: What kind of bycatch did you have?

SB: We're talking about large fish, sharks, turtles, and things like that there.

SSD: Some people had a problem with jellyfish. Was that ever a problem?

SB: Oh, that was one of the problems, too – the cannonball jellyball. That was one of the major ones there because [in] five minutes, you'd fill your net up.

SSD: Is that right?

SB: Yes, you couldn't even drag your net whatsoever.

SSD: How big was your net? How many pounds would it hold?

SB: My net could close up. Let's put it that way. It'd just fill completely up.

SSD: Yes. Do you remember about the length of those nets?

SB: Back then, they ran from thirty-five feet to up to seventy-five feet, and you couldn't even drag them but just a few minutes. That was it.

SSD: Did you make the first jellyfish exclusion device that you used?

SB: I made it for bycatch. It wasn't called anything. It was strictly for bycatch. So it got rid of so much bycatch, we could catch almost thirty percent more shrimp than any other way. But we could drag from a few minutes to we could drag up to three and a half hours, four hours.

SSD: Gosh.

SB: Yes. I still have my first jellyball jumpers. Yes, we still have those. In fact, I still have all of that stuff.

SSD: Do you have any photographs of those things you could email to the museum?

SB: I can look through my stuff here.

SSD: I know they would love to have some photographs of those.

SB: Yes. I'll see if I can get somebody to help do this. Or you can send somebody here to take photographs of them.

SSD: Right. So did your early TED models change much in later years? Did you modify them?

SB: No. It only changed a small amount of shape – just a small amount of shape.

SSD: And why was that?

SB: Because it just did better. Well, it didn't actually do any better. It just started fitting all the nets. It started working out a little better.

SSD: So there was a modification to make it more adaptable to different nets?

SB: No, there weren't really that much. It was just a touch larger, and the hole was bigger. That was the main thing that changed is the hole got larger, so it could get rid of large leatherbacks, and it could get rid of large debris, like stingrays and stuff like that – there is what it could do. The hole went from – I'd have to look at all my records, but it went to a larger hole, is what it went to. A lot of people were scared of it because they thought that the large hole wouldn't work. But they'd come to find out it worked better.

SSD: They thought it wouldn't work because they'd lose so many shrimp?

SB: They thought they would, but they gained shrimp.

SSD: Really?

SB: Yes, they gained shrimp.

SSD: That's great. It worked for letting those other fish go and getting a bigger –

SB: Well, they didn't load your net down, so your net shrunk up in size – the width of it. It eliminates the net shrinking up in width is what it did there. Yes. It changed that total criteria.

SSD: Can you paint a verbal picture of what the TED looked like? What does it look like, exactly?

SB: You'd have to see some pictures of it. It's all over the world now, just about.

SSD: Well, I was just wondering if we could get it in your own words.

SB: All I have to say – it just works better, you know? It just works better. Yes, a lot of fishermen you can call that use this large TED. I'll tell you what. The National Marine Fisheries [Service] – it beat the crap out of theirs.

SSD: What was theirs like?

SB: They tried to copy mine is what they tried to, but their hole size was not near as big. It's not near as big. Because that's what it takes to get rid of a leatherback turtle and stuff like that there. Mine don't try to jam up. It's like a free runner, you know?

SSD: A free runner? I'm not sure what that means.

SB: That means when something goes in that's real large, it can escape very easy. See, the hole in mine can go up to two-hundred inches.

SSD: Is yours installed on the bottom or the top of the net?

SB: Mine has always shot out the bottom.

SSD: Did you find in your experience that it was better – it worked?

SB: That's the only way I've ever built it. I've never built it no different. I tried the top for [inaudible], but it jams too much. A lot of your debris don't go out the top. A stone won't float at all, will it?

SSD: No, that's right. Some stuff doesn't float. It sinks to the bottom.

SB: Yes. That's what happens there. I had people try to shoot it out the top because National Marine Fisheries said, "Oh, it works better at the top." Well, crap. It don't work that way. I never even tried that whatsoever. But other people tried it, yes.

SSD: Do you remember about what year it was you built your first bycatch excluder?

SB: 1969.

SSD: That was the year that men went to the moon.

SB: Really? [laughter]

SSD: Yes. We had Hurricane Camille here in Mississippi. It was a memorable summer.

SB: I invented it in – you got me confused now. My mind has got real bad. So I may be telling you the truth about a lot of things.

SSD: Well, my mind's not so good some days myself.

SB: Oh, yes. No, I invented it in 1968 and started using it in '69.

SSD: How have TEDs affected the sea turtle population on the Atlantic side where you live?

SB: It's becoming very, very good. In fact, we can start eating sea turtles now.

SSD: Are you? [laughter]

SB: You didn't like to hear that, did you?

SSD: Did you ever eat sea turtles when you were growing up?

SB: Oh, yes. Yes, I've ate it one time. They're very delicious. Very, very good. Yes. In fact, before it become a dang law, we'd eat them.

SSD: I understand there was a market for them, yes.

SB: I think so. I'm not sure. Because once you have a law against them, you don't get caught one, and you learn not to eat them.

SSD: Sure. Yeah, it's against the law now. But before the Endangered Species Act, down in Miami, there was a place where people brought the turtles to sell.

SB: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I remember all of that stuff. Yeah, I remember that. In fact, I went to Miami – no. God, where was it at? God, I can't even remember now. I can almost see it. The string of islands that goes up – Key West. I saw the holding pens down there.

SSD: Yes, that's right.

SB. The holding pens down there where they had them, like a museum (inaudible) or something like that there. That's where they held the turtles in those pens. Sure did. And hauled them out by the trucks because they would catch them and bring them in and haul them out by the trucks.

SSD: I guess they were used a lot in the local restaurants in Florida.

SB: Oh, yes. It was sort of a famous food. I think they're coming back real good now. In fact, I wished I had one now.

SSD: [laughter] Really?

SB: [laughter] I don't know why. I could eat one now. I don't know. It's very tasty meat – very tasty. I don't know how many you was allowed, or if you're allowed anything to have. No idea.

SSD: I had an interview with someone once who talked about eating a land turtle.

SB: Oh, the land turtles? Yes, the gopher turtle.

SSD: He was someone's guest at lunch, and he didn't really want to eat the turtle, but he felt he had to, to be polite. He said the more he chewed it, the bigger it got. [laughter]

SB: Oh my God. I've eaten gopher turtle before. Very good. Made into a stew, it's very, very good. But they almost destroyed all those gopher turtles, land turtles.

SSD: Really?

SB: Yes. When I was small, we used to play with them. You'd get on one's back and stand on it. The darn thing could tote you. Darn sure could.

SSD: Take a ride? It was a slow ride, though, huh?

SB: Yes, but they could carry you. They was just that powerful. Their hind feet was almost like elephants – the feet was, you know? Very powerful. They're very powerful.

There used to be a lot of them, but people just about destroyed them. You can find some on the Sandhills – what they call the Sandhills. You'll find some there. I don't know if people mess with them now or not. They probably do if they get one.

SSD: Yes, I haven't seen one in a long time.

SB: In a long time.

SSD: Well, what was your initial opinion of the turtle excluder device?

SB: Actually, it weren't a turtle design. It was a bycatch excluder. It got rid of large – in fact, I still have my first ones here, two and three-eighths inch bar spacing. That was my first one. That's only [as] big as the space was between the bars.

SSD: Do you know what the spacing is now?

SB: Two inches. I build mostly two-inch. I build two-inch and a three and a half. That's the only two that I build. But a lot of people get used to the two-inch, and then they just settle for the two-inch.

SSD: But the three-and-a-half-inch would let in bigger shrimp, wouldn't it?

SB: No, no. The two-inch – you'd be surprised what size shrimp it'll let in there. In fact, it's becoming the choice because it keeps out so much small bycatch. That's the reason they're choosing that. In fact, I'm building fifteen right now. Yes, that's what I've been doing. In fact, I just walked back to the house – just drove back to the house. I don't live that far from where the shop's at.

SSD: Mr. Boone, how much do they cost?

SB: Because the steel, the material's gone up so high right now, I'm having to charge four-twenty-five a piece for them. They last for a long time.

SSD: They're made out of steel?

SB: These are made out of stainless.

SSD: Stainless steel?

SB: If you don't lose the grid, God, they last a long time. The webbing still lasts right on and on because it's made out of nylon. So if you don't lose the grid, you still got them for a long time.

SSD: How would somebody lose the grid?

SB: Pardon?

SSD: How would a shrimper lose the grid out of their TED?

SB: Get hung up or something like that, or the webbing wears out. Then they have to change webbing. Other than that, the grid – I don't know how long the grid lasts. I have no idea. The webbing lasts about five or six years.

SSD: Oh, that's a long time.

SB: Yes, it is. Then you have to re-sew them in because they get very fragile. But other than that, they last for a long time. And the grids – I don't know how long they last. No one's ever wore one out.

SSD: Right. They just lose them sometimes.

SB: Yes, that's the only way – what happens. They just lose them – get hung up and lose the whole net. (inaudible) someone drives one up, and then they'll use them themselves.

SSD: Wow. Have you ever lost a net while you were shrimping?

SB: Oh, yes. Yeah, you're going to lose one every now and then.

SSD: Wow. Do you know when it tears off? Can you tell on the boat?

SB: Oh, yes. Your boat pulls sideways. Sometimes, you'll lose all two nets on one side or lose two nets on the other side because you pull four nets.

SSD: What do you think it gets caught up on?

SB: If stuff is hung on the bottom.

SSD: Just debris, maybe, from a storm?

SB: Debris that's down there, yes. Something [inaudible]. Because the current, the way it changes and everything, if somebody dropped something heavy overboard, it starts [inaudible]. Sometimes, it won't drag it. Your lead line may pop up off the net. But then it'll grab your webbing, and it tears the whole – we call it the codend of the net. It'll just tear the whole thing off.

SSD: For the record, the codend of the net – that's where the shrimp accumulate, right?

SB: Exactly. Yes, that's the back end of the net.

SSD: That's where your catch goes?

SB: Yes, because sharks sometimes get ahold of your net because fish hang up in there, and sharks bite real big holes in it. All kinds of things can happen.

SSD: So what happens when a shark bites a hole in the net? How do you deal with that?



SB: Well, you just have to fix it. You just patch it up, you know?

SSD: Is that like sewing?

SB: It's like sewing the webbing. It's (inaudible). It takes a while to sew. Sometimes, a shark gets ahold of a net, and it pretty well bites a lot of big holes in it. Because fish hang up into the webbing, and they'll just grab the webbing to tear a big hole in it.

SSD: Because they're after the fish?

SB: After the fish, yes.

SSD: Well, Mr. Boone, what was your opinion of the TEDs requirement when they first enacted it?

SB: It didn't bother me at all.

SSD: Were you already using them?

SB: I was already using them. I was using them well before National Marine Fisheries Service required it. I was using them a long time ahead of them. Then they tried to claim the credit. They was up crap creek. I was using them way before they ever was.

SSD: Now, when you were using those before there was the requirement, were any other fishermen interested in using them?

SB: Our whole family and our friends would use them. I had one guy who'd come in with more shrimp and other fish. He says, "How in the hell do you drag so damn long?" He said, "You got a hole in your net." I said, "Sure, I do. I have a hole in my net." The hole was big in the bottom. It's big in the bottom. They couldn't understand it. Finally, they went that night and found out what he was using. They couldn't believe I was using a hole in the net that darn big. The guy still lives here, too. My kids was using them for a long time, too. We used them way before anybody else did.

SSD: So have you been shrimping all your life, Mr. Boone?

SB: No, I started when I was about nine years old.

SSD: [laughter] So for nine years, you did not shrimp, and then you started shrimping.

SB: No, I was too young. My dad had started off the boat way back yonder. They had about the biggest shrimp boats in this area that there were at that time. It's just one of those things. I didn't start – the first boat I went on was on my dad's boat.

SSD: Do you remember about what year that was?

SB: No, I don't. It was in the early '50s.

SSD: Then you continued shrimping, and your children also started shrimping?

SB: Yes. I have three sons that shrimp. Well, one of my sons is a veterinarian. My daughters just married rich people.

SSD: [laughter] They were smart.

SB: I guess so. Yes, it's just the boys that liked shrimping better.

SSD: So that's three generations of shrimpers.

SB: Oh, yes.

SSD: You guys must know a lot about shrimping. You must know everything there is to know about shrimp.

SB: They're good eating. Yes, I can fry shrimp. I was in Costa Rica one time – and I probably already told you this – but I'd fry six tails to the pound. Six tails, that's the tail of the shrimp. I fried those in a few seconds – twenty-two seconds.

SSD: Those are big, aren't they?

SB: Very, very large. Yeah, very large. Big as a doughnut. They're very tasty. You get your oil pretty hot. They look like a doughnut when you get through with them. You use peanut oil or oil that's equal to peanut oil. They fry real fast. But they're very tender, very tasty. You don't want to lose the taste of them. You don't fry them like peanuts. You go to a restaurant, and dadgum, you have to take a hammer to soften the peanut up. But they're very, very good that way. They're very tasty. Very, very good.

SSD: Were those shrimp that are caught off the coast of Costa Rica?

SB: Yes, I was down there one time. Well, I've been down there several times.

SSD: Were you shrimping?

SB: I went down there to take those jumpers down there.

SSD: Oh, can you tell me about that? What was that like?

SB: The people was nice down there. Certain areas, there's super-nice people. One guy got so mad with me until – he wanted to kick me out of there.

SSD: What was he mad about?

SB: Because I brought some down there to get rid of the fish and stuff, but it didn't work too good. Before I left there, he was one of my best friends there were.

SSD: Good. So did they decide to start using the TEDs after you were there for a little while and showed them?

SB: Some of them would. Some of them wouldn't. You know, a fisherman is pretty hard to change. But once you change them, once you prove a point to them, then that's good enough.

SSD: What did you tell them about the TEDs that was good?

SB: I didn't try to tell them anything. I just told them they could catch the prettiest shrimp. You can catch everything much prettier, and you won't catch near as much big catch whatsoever. And you can drag longer, too.

SSD: Why would the shrimp be prettier with a TED?

SB: There's nothing there to bang them up and nothing to bruise them or nothing like that there.

SSD: So by keeping those bigger things out of the codend, those shrimp don't get damaged by –

SB: They don't get damaged or anything like that there. Our shrimp up here turn so pretty – not bruised or nothing. It used to [be] we couldn't drag no time hardly whatsoever, but now we can drag a long time. You don't destroy large bycatch. You don't destroy anything.

SSD: How did you come up with that design, Mr. Boone?

SB: Catching bycatch.

SSD: Did you just –?

SB: I decided I'd build something that could do it because I always liked to engineer, designing stuff like that there. I always liked to do that.

SSD: Probably because you were a machinist, you were better at –

SB: Yes, I design a lot of stuff.

SSD: What else have you designed?

SB: Well, I designed not to stay married.

SSD: [laughter]

SB: Ever since I was a kid, I always designed. Ever since I was a small kid at (inaudible) – daddy's pocket knife, and he says, "You cut your finger, and I'm going to

tear your tail up.” I learned not to cut my finger. It don’t hurt near as bad when you don’t cut your finger, and your butt didn’t hurt either, you know? [laughter]

SSD: [laughter] That was two good things.

SB: Yes, yes.

SSD: Mr. Boone, how do you think TEDs have affected the shrimp industry?

SB: Well, it affects it a lot because I can see many different ways how a TED – when the bycatch is (inaudible) high – it’s a lot of ways that it can help it. So you don’t destroy too much in that ocean.

SSD: So it preserves the –

SB: The shrimp and other fish feed off one another, is what they do. You take a fish that dies or something like that, the shrimp, and he can eat like I don’t know what. It helps a great deal there.

SSD: So it helps preserve other animals.

SB: Exactly right.

SSD: Can you think of any other ways it’s a good thing? I know you’ve already said that the shrimp you catch aren’t harmed as much.

SB: No. Well, there’s food for other fish, too, because they die, too, and other things eat off of them. One species feeds off another species. It’s a chain reaction. It’s like the land. The buzzards – if something dies in the woods, they eat it. Many things can happen there. Roadkill – look at the things that feed off of that there. Sometimes you have to scare the buzzards off to get them off the road, so you can get by.

SSD: I read about a man who came to the United States from Europe, and it was probably in the early part of the 1900s. He was very poor. He came into New York, but he wanted to get to California. So what he would do was walk during the night, and he would take roadkill that was fresh, and he knew how to skin it, and he would build a fire, and he lived on that. He walked all the way to California.

SB: Pretty sad, isn’t it? But it works.

SSD: Well, it was good for him. That’s a good skill to have.

SB: Oh, yeah. A lot of people kill raccoon – you know, that’s fresh-killed. They take it home with them. Raccoon is very good eating meat. It’s very good. There’s a lot of things you can do to survive. There was a guy – I was talking this morning about turtles. We’ve got what’s called a gopher, and we’ve also got another turtle that we eat here. It’s a river turtle. It’s called a soft-shelled turtle. Very, very good eating. I think it’s illegal to even kill those right now because people almost killed them out because they’re such

good eating. There are so many things that you can survive off. It's unreal. You don't believe me – I can do that, too.

SSD: Did you eat a lot of seafood when you were growing up?

SB: Well, we didn't live on the ocean during that time. We lived about sixty miles away. But oh, yes, at a young age, we'd eat a lot of freshwater fish.

SSD: Where did you grow up?

SB: In Tattnall County, Glennville, about sixty miles from here.

SSD: What was that like, your early life? What do you remember about it?

SB: Oh, we always had a garden. We always had stuff like that there. We had plenty of food. We had a garden. We had places like that there. Oh, my mother could cook extremely well.

SSD: Did your father move to the coast to become a shrimper?

SB: He also was a designer, and he loved to do things. That's where I got my stuff from. He was pretty good at it. He designed boats and stuff like that. Ever since I can remember, he was always designing something. He was always doing that.

SSD: He designed boats?

SB: Not only boats, other types of stuff he designed.

SSD: Like what else did he design?

SB: I don't remember all of it. When I asked him for his pocketknife – if you cut your finger, I'm going to bust your tail. [laughter]

SSD: [laughter] Why did you decide to become a shrimper?

SB: Because my dad started back into it, and I went from there.

SSD: Excuse me. I'm sorry. I didn't hear you. You said because your dad was a shrimper?

SB: Well, my dad was a designer all of his life. I think he went to the third grade or something like that. He always loved to build things. He'd always build different types of things. Then he was a fisherman – a freshwater fisherman, catching catfish out of catfish traps. He made a living. He made enough that we did pretty good. We was never rich or anything like that, but that's the way he was.

SSD: So did you eat out of the garden and eat a lot of the fish?

SB: Oh, yes. We had all kinds of vegetables.

SSD: Did you eat a lot of the fish that your father was catching?

SB: Oh, yes. Yeah, we'd eat freshwater catfish, perch. In fact, when I was seven years old, I remember catching so many perch, we had to drag them home. So we was good little fishermen. I mean, we were back then. We could catch fish out from underneath our feet if we wanted to.

SSD: Now, were you fishing with a pole and a line?

SB: With a pole and a line.

SSD: What did you use for bait?

SB: We'd catch our own bait.

SSD: What was it?

SB: Crickets and worms and stuff like that. Somebody's stepping on a log, or somebody's standing out in the water, trying to catch fish – we could actually fish underneath our feet.

SSD: They weren't catching, and you were.

SB: And we could. We'd catch many freshwater fish until we'd have to drag them home.

SSD: What was your secret to success?

SB: Patience. That's the main thing about any kind of fishing – to good fishing. Patience is what it takes.

SSD: Mr. Boone, you said your father used catfish traps. What does a catfish trap look like? How does it work?

SB: It's a long built – in fact, you see some of them now, some old ones that people still – in fact, one of my older sons have still got one here, I think. It has a front muzzle that's a little larger hole than the back muzzle is. So they get in there, and they want to run and go through the back muzzle, and they can't get back out. You bait with shrimp head or cut-up fish or stuff like that.

SSD: So you put the bait inside where you want the catfish to go?

SB: Right. In the latter part of it, yes.

SSD: What else do you remember about growing up?

SB: Just got older. I mean, what else you can remember, you know? I still like my life pretty good.

SSD: What's a typical day for you now? What is it like?

SB: Just still thinking about things and designing and doing things like that. I even go to bed every night – sometimes, something hits my head right quick like, and the next morning, I try to put it together.

SSD: That sounds very exciting and gratifying.

SB: It works out pretty good. You never get too old to keep on doing something. I mean, seventy-three years ain't much to me, you know?

SSD: Really?

SB: No, not much at all.

SSD: Well, Mr. Boone, what kind of turtles have you seen in the Atlantic Ocean?

SB: I've seen the leatherbacks. I guess I've seen all of them.

SSD: Do you see them swimming?

SB: Yeah, sometimes when you're out there, you see them. I don't go out that much right now. I'm going to redesign my little boat. It's only forty-two feet.

SSD: Forty-two feet?

SB: Yeah. And I'm fixing to – almost doubling my horsepower that go in the boat. I'm going to try to design a super-mini trawler, is what I'm fixing to do.

SSD: A super-mini trawler?

SB: A super-mini trawler.

SSD: Can you explain what it is?

SB: Well, I'd be able to pull like a knot and a half faster, and I'd redesign the nets where I can work with it in that manner.

SSD: If you're pulling faster, does that mean you catch more shrimp?

SB: Well, you've got to have the nets built in a certain manner in order to do that. Nets only pull like a knot and a half, two and a half knots. I want to go up to three knots.

SSD: Okay, three knots? What's the advantage in going up to three knots?

SB: Cover more territory.

SSD: Do shrimp tend to congregate in different parts of the sea?

SB: Much better in certain areas, yeah. Certain areas, well, there ain't that much shrimp and everything. But if you travel at a knot faster, then you can cover more territory, so you can catch more. The way the fuel price is now, you got to do a little better.

SSD: Right. Fuel prices are much higher now than when you first started shrimping.

SB: Oh, God. Well, we was used to paying ten, twelve, fifteen cents. Now it's almost three dollars.

SSD: That's a big change.

SB: A big change, yes.

SSD: What are shrimp prices like right now?

SB: Over here? Wholesale is – I think it's – I don't know. You know, I have no idea right now because it changes so bad. But you still get a mess of shrimp for a couple of dollars – I mean, six, eight, ten shrimp, something like that.

SSD: Would that be a retail price?

SB: That'd be wholesale.

SSD: That'd be the wholesale price? When your sons shrimp on their boats, about how much shrimp do they usually catch?

SB: Well, they can't go out and use more fuel than they're catching shrimp.

SSD: Right, because then they'd be losing money.

SB: Yeah, they'd be losing money. So we have to be very particular going out shrimping. And our season's closed right now. It won't open up until about a month or so from now.

SSD: What size boat does one of your shrimping sons have?

SB: Two of my sons – well, one son is a veterinarian, so he don't shrimp. They're about eighty-five, ninety feet – something about like that there.

SSD: Do they each have one, or do they share the boat?

SB: No, no, they have one apiece. One is sixty-two feet, I believe – something like that. And the other one – actually, one has about eighty, and then they're almost ninety feet, the other one. They have four boats.



SSD: So, on a ninety-foot boat, how many pounds of shrimp would they usually catch?

SB: It's hard to say. It's according to the season.

SSD: What would be a good catch.

SB: Oh, four or five boxes a day – four or five-hundred pounds of large shrimp. You can't fish off small shrimp. Small shrimp, you don't get no money for them.

SSD: Okay, five-hundred pounds? How big is a large shrimp?

SB: Two times a year, they get up like 26/30s, 21/25s. That's per pound.

SSD: So there would be about 26 shrimp in a pound?

SB: Correct.

SSD: Well, that's very interesting.

SB: You have to come over here one day, and you can see it. They do the same thing in the Gulf over there. They probably shrimp further offshore than we do here.

SSD: I don't think our shrimp are that big.

SB: I think so – further offshore.

SSD: Further offshore? Yeah. Mr. Boone, can you tell the difference, do you think, if you eat a wild-caught shrimp or an aquaculture shrimp?

SB: They're a little sweeter, more tastier.

SSD: So you can tell the difference.

SB: There's a little difference. A person that never ate – freshwater shrimp is much different than the saltwater shrimp. But they're destroying too damn much land now by flooding places with saltwater – destroying too much. They have to re-dig that bottom and every dang thing to get it regenerated.

SSD: Because the saltwater kills everything.

SB: It kills everything, yeah. It does. It kills everything. In fact, they had to re-dig the bottom out to get the crud out of it and start the other way.

SSD: Right. Is there very much shrimp aquaculture that goes on in the area that you live in?

SB: Oh, no. South Carolina – I think there's some there. But down here, they're not.

SSD: Do you think that that will be a way of having shrimp in the future?

SB: No, no. It's strictly trying to conserve.

SSD: Conserve on fuel?

SB: No, conserve on territory. Like in Key West, they've got a lot of places down there. And there's a lot of places in South Carolina the same way – if you flood the area with saltwater, it kills the area. Like the mangroves there – it destroys a lot of that stuff.

SSD: You know, we still have oak trees on the Gulf Coast here. Five years after Katrina, the oak trees are still dying from being covered with saltwater. It's so sad, too.

SB: But there's nothing you can do about that now. I mean, what can you do when nature destroys something? What can you do about it?

SSD: Well, replant is all. But these trees, they're 100, 200 years old, the ones that are dying. Yeah, it's very sad.

SB: That's something we can't help.

SSD: No, can't do a thing about that. Well, Mr. Boone, why do you think sea turtles are important?

SB: Sea turtles are like food for anything else, you know? But you can destroy them so fast if you're not careful – destroy them too fast.

SSD: What would be bad about having a turtle species go extinct?

SB: One, have anything to – what about the dinosaur? If people could feed off a dinosaur way back – way before we was ever born, you know? Everything you got to protect as much as you can. That's the way with anything. Like a leatherback turtle – you got to protect as much as you can. But if you got to have it for food, you can't get it for food.

SSD: Yeah. Well, is there anything else you'd like to put on this record that we have not talked about?

SB: Not really. I'll think of something later on here.

SSD: [laughter] Okay. Well, I want to thank you so much, Mr. Boone, for taking time to talk with me today.

SB: Maybe we did some good. If we didn't, we'll try again.

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Reviewed by Molly Graham 7/21/2021