

Joshua Wrigley: This is an interview with Wayne Davis here at his house in Wakefield, Rhode Island. My name is Josh Wrigley. I am the project manager for NOAA's Voices from the Fisheries. It is April 17, 2015, around 9:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m. Wayne is a fish spotter, who has been in the business since 1973. Today's interview will be for getting his recollections of his early career, how he got into fishing, and some changes that he has seen in the environment since he has been flying. So, maybe we could just begin with how you got into fishing.

Wayne Davis: Well, I was born in Wakefield and raised in Galilee, Point Judith, Rhode Island. My father was a fisherman. My older brother went fishing before me. He was almost six years older than me. When you're raised in Galilee, the port of Point Judith, I only lived about two hundred yards from the docks. The beach was right across the street. My friends were sons of fishermen. Of course, I said my father fished and you just kind of naturally become a fisherman, plain and simple.

JW: How many people did you know who followed that career path?

WD: I never thought about that but lots of my friends, a lot of the Champlin kids, Westcotts, Websters. I bet if I sat down and put five minutes into it, I could think of probably twenty people or more and get into later generations. That's what a lot of people do around here. They've got excellent examples of what life of hard work could do. These people, even their parents and their mentors, whether they know it or not, they just kind of follow along. Oh, the other great example are my next-door neighbors, the Roebuck boys. I fished with their father, Don, for about twenty years on his boat. His boys, he's got three boys, and two of them are fishermen. So, there you go.

JW: Before, I was fiddling with the equipment here, did you say when you were born?

WD: Yes, 1947. [19]68 years and two days ago.

JW: So, maybe we could talk about how you got into fishing. You mentioned before that you would go on with your brother a couple of times on swordfishing vessels when you were very young?

WD: Yes, right. Well, as I say, when we're really young, five, six, seven years old, starting to hang around the docks, jumping overboard in the summertime, and the boats were always down there, coming and going. The fishermen who were my parents' generation, the Westcotts, the Websters, Champlins, several other families down there, Jones', you just hang around with them and eventually, you want to go fishing. You eventually make yourself available and tell somebody you want to go, and you just go. As aforementioned, my older brother, Walt, who's almost six years older than me, when I was seven or eight, he was twelve or thirteen. And he was already going out fishing in the summertime on poggy boats with Jack Wescott. I just kind of followed along. Then a year or two after that, he graduated on the boats to go swordfishing and I kind of followed along on that too. By the time I was twelve, I guess I'd spent a good part of one summer on swordfish boat with Captain Kenny Gallup. That would have been probably [19]58 or [19]59, I guess, something like that. A kid going out swordfishing, it's really quite exciting even though you're seasick. To start out, it's a whole new world to see what's out there, stuff

you'd heard about before but never seen, and to go jamming around out in the ocean to try to find a swordfish which can be quite difficult at times. But when you finally see one, it really gets your attention. It's like seeing a prehistoric beast swimming around out in the ocean, really captivating, a lot of fun.

JW: How long did it usually take to find one?

WD: I don't think there's any average time to find a swordfish. Heck, there are times when we go out and spend a couple of days out there, I wouldn't see one. Weather is a real determining factor of swordfishing too. You have to have almost perfect weather to find swordfish unless they happen to be thickened fleas, which doesn't happen often. We never did get across them like real heavy when I was on the boat as a kid in the [19]50s. I never did see heaps of swordfish up until after I started flying.

JW: So, when a swordfish was sighted, what would happen next?

WD: Well, first thing, everybody gets all excited, starts hooting and hollering, and then they come around. Depending on where they found the fish in relation to the boat and how the sun's lined up, they would try to get go on the swordfish, steer the boat onto the swordfish by getting the sun at your back. Mostly, so that if the swordfish dips under, which they do a lot – I won't say rarely, but most of the time when you do see them, they're underwater and not making much of a fuss. You can't see them when they're underwater except when they're pretty darn close to the boat. So, unless you're lucky enough to see him with his fins out, you want to make sure that the sun's behind you. Because if he does duck under, you're going to lose him if he's anywhere but directly down the sun.

JW: So, then someone is up on the pulpit, I take it, to harpoon it?

WD: Yes. Here I am giving you all these particulars about swordfishing and not telling you about the most important thing. It just seems kind of natural that the interviewer would know that's the case. Yes. As soon as the boat got close enough within a few boat lengths of the fish, the striker, the guy who's doing the harpooning would get out onto the stand, the pulpit – we call it a stand here in Point Judith. We did for years. A lot of people call it a pulpit or a bowsprit in other places. But yes, the striker would go out there and untie the pole, which was tied down on the stand. As he got closer and closer, he'd take the pole off its resting place on the stand and bring it out in the striking position. When the fish gets within the half a boat length or so, he'll make the pole protrude, stick the pole right out with his arms and point the business end of the harpoon directly at the fish, like place it right on visually and follow the fish right in until the fish is within striking distance. Then depending on the temperament of the fish on that day or that particular fish, sometimes they're totally docile, they don't even know you're there. If you threw out and missed, you might even bump into him with the stem of the boat. These swordfish stands typically in Point Judith were twelve to fifteen feet long. So, they'd follow the fish right in with the dart. A real docile fish will come right under the stand. You don't even have to throw the pole. That's the ideal conditions when the fish just lays there for you and you just jam the harpoon down into him and without letting go of the pole, push the iron all the way through them so that the dart comes out the other side, that's called buttoning the fish. A lot of times, you don't

get the iron all the way through them and then pull the pole out, let the swordfish go. At times, you'll nearly kill them. There'll be a big puff of blood come out of them and they'll just roll right over and sink to the bottom almost. But most usually, they take off rather rapidly after being ironed. They'll swim away with hundred fathoms of line on them, swordfish warp, we call it and throw a couple of floating balls over. Back in the old days, when I first started as a kid, they usually used old nail kegs, oak kegs as floats. I throw that overboard and let them swim around a couple of hours and go back and haul them back then and bring them aboard. In the meantime, while you're waiting for that one to die, you'd certainly be looking for more to harpoon as opposed to harpooning and then trying to pull them right back. That's a waste of time because the fish would be so green, so alive. It'd be impossible to get them. So, you let them swim around and die.

JW: So, what person on the vessel is usually the striker?

WD: Most usually, the captain. I'm trying to think a couple of boats that I went on as a kid swordfishing. Until I got to be an adult, then I struck a couple of times, but that was a couple of seasons before I went fish spotting. There weren't that many swordfish around then. But most of the time, it was the captain. Back when there were half a dozen or eight swordfish boats here in Point Judith, I can only think of one, that would have been Bob and Barry. Barry Wescott who struck and his father was the captain. But all the other boats, all the Vineyard boats, and the Cape Cod boats, Gloucester, and the main boats, almost strictly the striker would be the captain and the owner.

JW: Where would the striker aim at the swordfish?

WD: Ideally, just behind the dorsal fin on the swordfish, the thickest part of the body. It's pretty hard and if you can get the dart down through them at that location, straight down through them, hopefully, you can either button the dart in the belly cavity or get it all the way through the fish and then have it come out the other side. But there are times when a swordfish are far from docile. They're very jumpy in there. They're very hard to harpoon at that time. I can remember one day in particular. It's probably in – I don't know when it was, [19]76, [19]77, or [19]80 or something like that. There was all kinds of swordfish around the southeast part of Georges that they just came on to the bank. It was early in the season, probably down at that location on the south side of Georges or southeast part, mid-June, a lot of blue Gulf Stream water and fish just showing up, just hitting the continental shelf, Georges Bank itself. [laughter] Fish all over the place, and you couldn't get within two boat lengths of them. They'd see the boat coming or hear it coming or whatever, they just wouldn't stay still and you'd throw all day. The next day or the day after, they'd kind of get on the bank and get a little food in their bellies and seem to calm down after that.

JW: So, was the southeast part of Georges in the late [19]70s a well-known place for swordfishing?

WD: Oh, yes. Back then in the [19]70s, all through the [19]70s, any part of Georges, depending on the season, southside early was the place to go. But we would always start depending on the weather. If we got some good weather in early June, we'd go out directly south of Block Island,

out to the Fishtails, also called Block Canyon. From there, as the season progressed, we would work east towards the south of the Vineyard and Nantucket. Also, as the season progressed from early June into July and August, the fish would move inshore also. By the first of August, you could be catching swordfish near the north side of the dump, just south of Nomans, within side of Nomans Island. I can remember as a kid being out there and pretty regularly seeing swordfish and catching swordfish. I was on the (*Betty B?*) with KBeenny Gallup within side of Nomans, which Nomans is not a very high island, so we had to be less than ten miles away from Nomans to see that. Then as the season progressed, especially in the [19]70s, I don't know, Point Judith sword fishermen did go down to Georges, I believe, in the mid-[19]50s, before I ever started. But that was a long way to go. It was a day's steam to get out to Georges. So, we would start around home and work our way down. But then it became apparent to me, anyway, over the years that if you really want to be serious about swordfishing, you could probably do much better by just going down to Georges. Early in the season on the south side, we'd go from – as I said before, from the Fishtails, Block Canyon, we'd work east to Veatch Canyon, Hydrographer, Oceanographer, Lydonia. And then down to – well, back in those days, we could go any part of Georges. But a real hotspot was Corsair Canyon, which is now about fifteen miles into Canadian waters on the east side of the Hague Line. Then as the season would progress, middle of July, we could go over to the northern edge of Georges and fish there all of July and well into August. Then it seems as the season progressed, you'd end up on the Northeast Peak or in the deep water between the Northeast Peak and Browns Bank, which is well into Canadian waters now, and that what they call the channel. The deep water between Georges and Browns Bank was a pretty good area for anybody interested back in the day. A coordinate, not a true lat long coordinate was [inaudible] lines where the two (1900?) lines cross just north of Northeast Peak. It's out pretty close to an area that the Canadian sword fishermen and tuna fishermen these days called the hellhole. A lot of fish out there, very lively spot.

JW: I had a question and now I just forgot what it was. Oh, so you have mentioned that some of the swordfish would come inshore as the season progressed in July and August. Do you know what drew them in?

WD: Yes. Swordfish pretty much hanging out on the edge of both warm temperate waters and the colder shelf waters. I guess that dividing line between the warm Gulf Stream or just the summer warm water and the shelf waters inshore, where it's cooler, is a natural barrier and a lot of feed would hang out on those spots. Then plus a lot of the inshore spots had lots of feed for them anyway, even without the warm water, cold water edge. All south of Block Island and south of the Vineyard and Nantucket, when you get anywhere from forty fathoms into even way up into twenty fathoms in August, all kinds of feed for them there. Squid, whiting, hake, mackerel, butterfish, all those things that swordfish – you always found a lot of those things in swordfish bellies, mostly squid and herring too, yes. Trying to think of what you'd find mostly in there, a lot of whiting, butterfish, and squid, as I recall, dressing swordfish as a kid.

JW: So, you started flying in 1973, right?

WD: Yes. [19]73, I got home, got out of the Army in [19]69, and [laughter] got right aboard the boat that I left when I got drafted. I got drafted in October of [19]67. I was on the *E. Carl Rice, Jr.*, one of the few swordfish boats. One of the few boats in the Point that regularly went

swordfishing with my friend, Joe Whaley, the owner. He was a draftee, probably a dozen years before I was. He's that much older than me. He appreciated the fact that I was getting drafted. As soon as I got back, he offered me my job right back. So, I got out of the Army. I didn't have any plans as I don't have to this day. He asked me to come aboard. So, I right back out swordfishing we went, so that was [19]69, fished that summer with him. What happened then? I guess I quit Joe because I started living over in Point Judith, and I got a chance to go fishing with (Pete Spragg?), who had a couple of fish traps in Point Judith. He had one of my good friends, Dick Stenson, working on there with him, and he was looking for another hand. Fish trapping always looked pretty intriguing to me. I'm getting off the subject here of swordfishing now. But I started with Pete, that put me into the summer of [19]70. I fished with him a couple of summers and a little bit of swordfishing too on deck. I'm not getting anywhere near where I began flying, which is what I'm trying to get to. But, like the summer of [19]72, I was dating a girl who lived down the west side.

JW: I will pause it.

WD: About in [19]72 or a little bit before, I started going out with a woman who became my wife, trying to [inaudible] from the west side here, over in Snug Harbor, which where we are now, the Snug Harbor section of Wakefield. I moved over here. Her cousins, who also guys I went to school with, Don and Dave Roebuck, it was close to home here. All I had to do was walk about two minutes to get aboard the boat. So, I started fishing with them in the summer of [19]72 and went to work hard with them for almost twenty years with them, I guess. In the summer of [19]73, because of some of the swordfishing I did previously and seeing fish spotters out there working, my old friend, Forrest Hoxie, who was kind of my fish spotting mentor, I made a little bit of money with the Roebuck brothers. And I got the itch to maybe become a fish spotter. So, in the spring of [19]73, light winter of [19]73, I had somewhat of a pocketful of money from dragging with Dave and Don Roebuck, I wanted to do something kind of exciting. So, my good friend, (Norman Paris?) and I went away to flying school in Florida in probably February or March of [19]73. A month and a half, two months later, we had our licenses. I came back in the spring, immediately got right back aboard the boat with Dave and Don and fished for probably a couple of more months and decided I better buy an airplane. It must have been late July when I first started flying after I got my airplane. I was still as green a pilot as it could be and I knew how to fly, that was about it, and went from there. So, I got a job flying for Carl Wescott, young Carl, for the Bob and Barry, flying for him. So, [19]73, I stayed flying for Carl until probably [19]84, no, [19]85, I think was the last swordfish I got with him. That's the fall that my good friend, Jim White, and I flew out to California and do some fish spotting out there and ended up selling that airplane out there in [19]85. I came back home in [19]86, had no airplane. What do I do? So, I went out to California and flew another guy's airplane out there for the summer of [19]86 and came home from the fall, realized that I had to have an airplane again. So, I bought (Jeff Westcott's?) airplane in the late spring of [19]87 and immediately figured that was a mistake because we went swordfishing flying for the Ocean Clipper, and there were a few swordfish around but not enough to make any money. The guys out on Georges were doing good. We stumbled along for a few years. When I got to [19]87 to [19]90, I guess I did a little bit of swordfishing. But I got introduced to a tuna fisherman from Maine, from Monhegan Island, Lexi Krause in the fall of [19]87. So, I kind of switched over to chasing tuna fish at that time.

JW: Wayne, if we can go back for a second, who was Forrest?

WD: Forrest Hoxie, if not the original swordfish spotter around here, he was among the originals. There was another guy named (Dick Roland?) from the Vineyard or the Cape, Alfred VanDerHoop from the Vineyard, and I can't remember the other guy's name. But Forrest was among the originals, and Forrest owned a boat here in Point Judith too, The William Chesebrough. Forrest was probably like a dozen years older than me. I can remember the summer being on the boat with Joe Whaley and being on Pete Spragg's boat out in the swordfish ground. Even if we were only dragging, seeing Forrest out there flying around and Ted Malley, of course, from Scituate in Plymouth, it just looked like a fun thing to do, a good way to spend a summer. I had always been intrigued by airplanes since being a little kid. Being a post-World War II kid, you saw a lot of war movies on TV with airplanes. Then there was a Navy Auxiliary Air Base just twenty miles down the road or alas down to Auxiliary Field Charleston, where we used to get down there and watch airplanes touch and go. I don't even know how old I was then but I was very young. That's very intriguing, to say the least. You got an itch to do something like that, it seems like the thing to do. I had a little money in my pocket. I wasn't rich, but, heck, buy an airplane and just do it. I needed more money than what I had in my pocket, my brother, Walt, got a loan for me. If weren't for my brother, Walt, I might never got an airplane. Who the heck knows?

JW: So, in 1973, what was the state of fish spotting at that time?

WD: It was really starting to get going as far as a lot of people or a few more people other than the originals going out fish spotting. They have, right around that time, myself. The next year, Jonathan Mayhew out of the Vineyard, (Winky Andreessen?) out of Plymouth, Tim Malley, Ted's brother, Butchie Downs from the Vineyard. I'm trying to think who else was out there. Anyway, they got to be, at one point, about twenty of us going out there all through from the time I started in [19]73 up until the early [19]80s. Just about any day you could leave the Cape and chime in on the aircraft radio and get a reply from somebody who was either headed out or coming home. So, we all did a lot of chatting back and forth with weather information and where everybody was going, just shooting the breeze, going out to Georges many times. It was a good hour and a half, two hours just to get where you're going. If you're going out to the Peak or the Browns, it was even further, two and a half hours to get to Browns. I can remember flying one day in my first airplane before I ended up buying the plane that Forrest flew. Flying all the way out to the Peak with Forrest on a clear blue day in September with the Canadian high pressure and a nice blue sky. But that was probably twenty knots in northeast. I think it took us like three and a half hours to get to Browns Bank, or at least three hours, a long time but was quick getting home that day. Probably only two hours was the tail wind. What's next?

JW: When did people start fish spotting? Then it is sort of a two-fold question, how did swordfish harpooners locate the fish before fish spotting?

WD: Well, as I said, there were a handful of fish spotters before me and well before me, at least ten years before me. I think before that, the guys had been fish spotting for herring up in Maine in pogies down throughout the mid-Atlantic and the Gulf states. That realization by local

fishermen that you could find fish with airplanes became pretty popular. The fact was that before airplanes, all swordfish boats would have at least a mast and sometimes a topmast, a mast upon a mast, to get up high, fifty feet or more above the deck to look down into the water and find swordfish. It became known that the higher you can get, the more you're going to see. In an airplane, he had the added bonus of covering a lot more ground. You're chugging around out there at sixty or seventy knots covering ground. If you were serious about swordfishing, and you wanted to compete, in the fishing community, you had to compete. If there were guys out there with airplanes catching a lot of fish, and you weren't catching a lot of fish because you didn't have one, the guys catching a lot of fish are going to drive the price down and you're going to be catching less fish at a lower price. So, you're not going to make it unless you have an airplane. The fact is that an airplane made swordfishing efficient enough to make money, that's my point of view anyway. I mean, I'm sure if sword fishermen never had airplanes, there might have been guys with enough skill to go out there and make a living but darn few to go out there and round up enough swordfish to make a living on from the masthead of a boat. It takes some real true skill.

JW: So, what about tuna?

WD: That's another ballgame altogether. Down here out of Point Judith, every now and then we'd see a sea of tuna fish in the end of June or July around here in the swordfish grounds, and we'd iron them if we could. But little ways into my career, I think they became quite restricted. So, yes, I think you could only bring one in a trip or something like that. But tuna were just something we didn't target because there were so many swordfish and we'd all grown up swordfishing. I never started chasing tuna fish until it seemed kind of like I had to and plus the fact that I had met Lexi Krause up in Cape Cod Bay and kind of made an arrangement to try to give it a try. Another of my friends who used to fly for swordfish, a guy named (John Vetzner?). He went flying for Cape fisherman, Billy Chaprales, for, oh, probably two or three years before I even started trying to find tuna. He's a pretty smart guy. He didn't say much about it. [laughter] When I found out the potential that was there, then I switched my effort from swordfish to tuna fish.

JW: What year was that?

WD: I picked my first fish with Lexi or Alexi, ironed the fish that I put them on. First time was in the late summer of [19]87. He was building a new boat, so I told him that I'd fly for him the next year. So, I stayed with Lexi probably from [19]88, all the way up to 2000 nearly, I guess. We had some pretty darn good years way up in the Gulf of Maine, really interesting place to fly, and at times, untold amounts of tuna fish up there. To this day, they can be thickened fleas or they can fly for a week and never see one. It's apparent to me, whether it's true or not, that both those bodies of fish, swordfish and tuna fish, the main body of fish has migrated well offshore. They still come inshore and thick at times. But it seems like they're all offshore now in any amount. If you want to catch swordfish or tuna, you got to go well offshore to do it, if you're going to make a living doing it.

JW: What do you think have been the main drivers there?

WD: Of the population the fish moving, I assume you mean.

JW: Yes.

WD: I don't know. It's hard to say. A lot of the guys up in Maine have had it in for the herring pair trawlers. They have been catching millions of pounds of herring. But I'm not so sure that they mopped them up inshore. Even to this day, there are times when there's a lot of feed around for the swordfish and tuna and there's just not inshore. Of course, Georges is probably much more prolific with the populations of feed fish. I don't think I've seen the water change over the years. The water looks the same. It has the same variability of colors throughout the course of the summer. The only one thing that I can say is, as far as difference in what I've seen over the years, well, of course, the swordfish and tuna aren't here inshore anymore. But the ocean used to be filled with blue sharks. I mean, you couldn't fly half a minute south of the Vineyard or Block Island or Nantucket back through the [19]70s and [19]80s without seeing blue sharks everywhere and with an occasional swordfish mixed in. But now, you don't see that many blue sharks anymore. Up in the Gulf of Maine, when there's good fishing, there's usually blue sharks around. But, yes, something has changed, no doubt.

JW: What are the years when you remember seeing the big populations of blue sharks?

WD: Oh, from my start of fish spotting – well, even before that, when I was a kid on deck out there swordfishing in the summertime, there's blue sharks all over the place. All through my swordfish career, a lot of blue sharks, even out onto the south side of Georges. But toward the early [19]90s onward, I was spending most of my time up in the Gulf of Maine there and there's certainly blue sharks up there. From the early [19]90s onward, I didn't spend a lot of time on the south side of Georges or from south of Block Island, east to south of the Vineyard, and south of Nantucket, and then out onto the south side of Georges Bank in the swordfish ground where the blue sharks would be. But they just said they pretty much generally went downhill and why that is, I don't know. A lot of people say, longliners probably caught a lot of them. I don't know that for a fact, but it makes sense to me.

JW: So, during your early career, you concentrated your efforts from 1973 until you started fishing for tuna in 1988, mostly inshore then. Is that what I understand?

WD: Yes. Also, tuna fishing, you can be a stone's throw or a little more from the beach as when you're down in Cape Cod Bay or up along the shore in Gloucester there and Ipswich Bay and certainly along the shore on along the Maine shore from the south end of Maine, all the way up to Eastport for that matter. Although we never got much farther east than Mount Desert, but yes, inshore early in the season. Then as the season progressed, it seems like if you're go to find a bunch of fish, you had to get further offshore. But that's not strictly true either because all during the tuna seasons, especially through the [19]90s, there were always quite a few tunas on Stellwagen Bank and Jeffreys Ledge, up off the east of the south end of Maine, then southeast of Rockland, out around the mistaken ground, the newfound ground, Jeffreys Bank as opposed to Jeffreys Ledge, and out towards the ground south of Mount Desert Rock. Anywhere from right next to the rock, a mile offshore of it, out to twenty miles from there, and twenty miles southeast of there until you get the Canadian line up there. But tuna fish, I mean, there's very few times in



my years chasing tuna fish where you could depend on seeing them day after day. There were a couple of times like on Stellwagen Bank and Jeffreys Bank and Jeffreys Ledge. But now, the darn things move around so much, I mean, you never know where you're going to find them. You had to cover a lot of ground to find a tuna fish or the body of tuna fish.

JW: You mentioned in the lecture that you gave at the GMRI that there was real upsurge in tuna populations in the 1980s and [19]90s. Could you speak a bit about that?

WD: Well, I [laughter] never got into tuna fishing strictly until [19]88. And then I was just scratching the surface, so I don't know a lot about the history of them. But I know the guys up in the Gulf of Maine had chased them since they were little kids, guys my age and a little bit younger, like Lexi is five years younger than me. I guess they used to chase them right along the beach as kids. They never had to go out far at all. I don't even think that Steve Wiener and his brother, Brooks, coming out of Perkins Cove. I don't believe they ever had to even get out to Jeffreys Ledge. They used to fish a lot inshore. I guess they thought they were going away offshore by the time they ended up going out onto Platts Bank at the end of the [19]80s. What's the question again?

JW: So, during that time, then what drew the tuna so close inshore? Was it forage fish?

WD: Oh, yes. Almost certainly, there was a lot of herring up there all through the [19]90s. There was a lot of fish up inshore Gulf of Maine through the [19]90s. As the season progressed, they'd get further and further offshore. Early in the season, when the tuna fish came inshore, they'd usually be in small bunches until about the end of June when they'd start bunching up. By the time you got into July and especially August, whatever a fish you found, usually found in good schools until they finally got underway headed...

JW: Like the giant bluefin tuna?

WD: Oh, yes, giants, strictly giants. All through the [19]90s, we saw very few small fish up in the Gulf of Maine, just heaps of real big fish. I mean, heaps and heaps of them. I mean, big piles of big fish all through the Gulf of Maine.

JW: So, did the tunas arrival in the Gulf of Maine coincide with their passage through Georges Bank as well, or did those events occur at different seasons?

WD: Totally different thing. The chronology is funny, but you could talk to the guys up in Maine and get much more accurate information about this than I know. But strangely enough, the early season fish in very beginning of June, when the tuna season opens, are usually seen out on Jeffreys Ledge, excuse me, not fifteen miles off the beach from Maine. Also, in Cape Cod Bay, very early June, in small numbers, single fish, four or five or six of them. I think no one has ever started tuna fishing way offshore. I mean, you can't go out there in Maine because the season is not in May because the season is not open. But there is no history that I know of, of people finding tuna offshore in the early summer because traditionally, they always started inshore. The Georges' population of tuna, which has really only been thick, so probably now since 2007 or 2008 that we know of – this is getting kind of complicated. But the northern edge

of Georges Bank, where we swordfished in July and August and September all through the [19]70s and [19]80s, which there were a lot of swordfish out there on the northern edge of Georges. All that time that were out there, I never saw a tuna fish there, never. The only time I had seen tuna fish while swordfishing was once out on the Northeast Peak and now in Canadian waters. It was like six big monsters, a thousand pounders swimming along. But now, back up a little bit to swordfishing in the [19]70s and [19]80s, out on northern edge of Georges, no tuna fish. Speed up into the early 2000s, when I first started flying, it became apparent that the body of tuna fish was moving away from the Cape East. So, we started flying a little further offshore, myself and Mark Avila, Jimmy Avila, (George Piermont?), going offshore in the Wilkinson Basin, out towards Franklin Swell, and the northern edge of Georges and we started bumping into fish out there.

JW: What years were these?

WD: This would have been when we first started seeing some real heaps of fish, which were out towards Georges, would have been like ([20]03?), I guess, and that would have been out like south of Franklin Swell. Then as we got a little more adventuresome and traveled further out from the places where we had seen them, in '03 or '04, I mean, I can remember going all the way down east, all the way down to the Canadian line and finally finding a real heap of fish. I think that was like in [20]06 or [20]07. Then go forward a few years, I guess some northern edge scallop is out and New Bedford reported seeing pretty large amounts of giants right on the Hague Line, on the northern edge, in 2010. It got a lot of people curious about going out there. I flew out there and flew around the scallop presence, saw quite a few tunas there and the word got out. Hopefully, when I was there, a bunch of chum guys, lobster boat type tuna fishermen, hook boats. In 2010, they went out there and absolutely slayed them. They caught lots and lots of big tuna out there. I flew out there at the time when those guys were out there looking, and there was nothing to be seen. The fish were down and feeding on herring, I assume. That body of fish, as we think we've learned over almost ten years now, has probably been out there for a while. They're just kind of like undiscovered because it is probably at least 125, maybe 150 miles from Provincetown, just about east. So, since not a place where guys go readily, especially in September, a lot of bad weather. There's not much good weather out there after Labor Day.

JW: So, have you theorized or has anyone else theorized as to why did you encounter so few tunas on the northern edge of Georges when you were out there sword fishing?

WD: It's not a theory. It's a fact. There were none there.

JW: I mean, [laughter] well, as to why that was. Not the fact that...

WD: Yes. I couldn't tell you. I really couldn't tell you. I know that all those years that we were out there swordfishing when there were a lot of swordfish there, the swordfish always had their bellies full. I think mostly hake and squid, although I was never on the boats to see what was in their bellies, but hake and squid, haddock and cod fish, I guess, probably mackerel. But the northern edge has always been a prolific place for feeding all during the swordfish years out there. I don't know whether that tuna population burgeoned, or they just changed ground from the area where we had been catching them thick in the offshore waters of the Gulf of Maine. A

place that I have yet to mention in this process here is from late August through September and into October, east of Nantucket, out in the Great South Channel. It was the most regular thing I'd ever seen in my fishing career where the giants would congregate late July, out in the south end of the Great South Channel, be out there and huge amounts, all great big giant fish. I did watch that body of fish. Although it wasn't apparent at the time, they slowly year after year, they'd get a little bit farther away from that Great South Channel as they worked out towards Georges Bank. At that time, no one ever went out to the northern edge proper. We got out as far as the south end of Franklin Swell, over towards Cultivator Shoal which is on the west edge of the northern edge of Georges – west end of the northern edge of Georges. To this day, at times, there are still quite a few tunas out there. A matter of fact, I only flew offshore one day last year to go out and photograph tuna. But my good friend, Mark Avila, who was flying for the one lone saner out of New Bedford now, he was out deep in the Gulf of Maine and out towards Franklin Swell last year. He said he'd never seen so many. They weren't all giants, but he said there was untold numbers of bluefins out there of all sizes.

JW: Wayne, if we just pause for a second here.

[end of transcript]