

Karen DeMaria: Is PO Box 1270 Homestead, Florida your current mailing address?

Ed Davidson: Yes.

KDM: What is your occupation?

ED: First of all, I'm Captain Ed Davidson. I have been in the Keys since Christmas of 1967 when I came back from Vietnam, which is now, I guess, twenty-five and a half years. Since 1969, I have been operating boats in the Florida Keys, in all of the recreational capacities. I have run sport fishing charters. I've run headboat fishing operations. I have commercial fished to the mortification of Baltimore fishermen who don't understand the necessity of regulated fisheries, sustainable yields, and all of that. I actually held two lobster licenses for many years, which involved commercial lobster operation. I commercial fished, like (I do?) handlines to dragging the wheel and all of that. I spearfished. I commercial spearfished. Then diving and snorkeling charters and environmental – what we now call ecotourism, I've been doing for the bulk of that time.

KDM: Yes. I have a copy of the article that was on the (traffic?). That was you. This is the follow-up.

ED: That was the follow-up. The original was the...

KDM: Yes. What areas of the Keys do you have the most water knowledge?

ED: Well, probably the unique thing about my knowledge is that I've covered the whole length of the Keys. I originally started in Key West. Then I moved to the Middle Keys, to Sunshine Key, Ohio Key there. I was there for seven years, probably from [19]72. [19]77, I then went to Marathon for a few years, for another seven years, basically. In that seven-year-period, I operated charters that ran from Islamorada to the Dry Tortugas. I had the first multiple-day, overnight excursion boat in the dive industry. Now, they have many dozens of them all over the Caribbean, but I had the first one.

KDM: Did you do the gulf side and the oceanside?

ED: Yes. I spent a great deal of time in the back country when I ran up to Sunshine Key for seven years. It was my favorite place for that whole period.

KDM: What about after Marathon?

ED: Then after Marathon, I started the tour operation for Biscayne National Park, which was the 20 miles of islands and reefs from Key Largo to Key Biscayne, which is after all still the Florida Keys. Although the politicians tried splitting into two counties. [laughter] Functionally, it is the Florida Keys. There's forty-four more Keys and 20 miles off reef. But most importantly, is a comparative, the Florida Keys is basically the [inaudible] because there's essentially [inaudible] islands. I'm the only charter operator licensed in that 20 miles, instead of someone from off-reef where all this – responsible for a lot of the degradation in the Keys.

KDM: You graduated from high school, right?

ED: Yes. I spent five years in college in engineering and science, so I have a science degree.

KDM: You graduated from college...

ED: I was trained in the sciences, five years, did some graduate work. Then I went in (blue jet?) fighters in the navy. So, I've got current knowledge about (streaming?) and knowledge with additional technical training.

KD: [inaudible]

ED: Well, see, my point is I was trained in the sciences with one of the very best and the most expensive science and engineering schools in the country.

KDM: Which one?

ED: The Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute? Did I send you the resume? I was training rigorously in the sciences. First term in junior year, I had [inaudible] ] labs a week. [laughter] So, the point being that I am a scientifically kind of observer [inaudible] fishing.

KDM: Basically, let us not talk about Biscayne Park right now.

ED: Right.

KDM: Let us talk about the other stuff. What have you observed? The first question I always ask people is, what is the first thing that you have observed? What is the first thing that comes to your mind?

ED: Over the years, the steady decline in water quality and clarity, and the steady decline in the populations of all the basic popular marine critters.

KDM: Invertebrates, fish?

ED: Yes. I watched the lobster disappear. I watched the big harvestable fish disappear, watched the average water clarity logbook for years and years and years, watched the average water quality and visibility diminish steadily over the years.

KDM: When did it first start becoming noticeable, and where? What areas?

ED: It's pretty much a steady process. For seven and a half years or so that I operated at Sunshine Key – well, I can tell you, for instance, the benchmark here that I always use as a (reference?). In 1975, we averaged 100-foot water clarity at Looe Key for three months in the winter, averaged for three months, if the wind is [inaudible] 100-foot visibility. They have not seen that in years. [inaudible]. There were many days that I can remember with 125, 150-foot

visibility. [inaudible]. Interestingly enough, there were occasional localized algae blooms in the summer, on the reef. But they weren't blowing through from the back. They were somewhere on the reef. It was just the [inaudible] next to the green, yellowish kind of discoloration, which would reduce the...

KDM: In the water?

ED: We're talking about reduced visibility. I'm not talking about the six inches. Now, I'm talking about visibility going down to 25 feet.

KDM: Which nowadays is a good thing.

ED: No. I mean, yes. [laughter] That reduced the visibility then. I can remember in those years, the annual tarpon migration. I can remember one occasion, counting more than 300 tarpons schooling on Looe Key in a single event.

KDM: When was that?

ED: In that same year period, about [19]75-ish. They would circle the wagons and vertical cylinder with the younger ones inside. Because you could see 150 feet. I couldn't remember on limited visibility days. I had been in the Bahamas on occasion and noticed [inaudible]. The 200-foot visibility [inaudible] days, we used to get those on Looe Key. Nobody has seen water clarity like that in decades or more, for sure.

KDM: This is a list of every species [inaudible].

ED: I will tell you anecdotally that when I began to charter Looe Key in the early [19]70s, I used to guarantee money back that you would see at least a half dozen of free-swimming black grouper in the thirty-five-to-fifty-pound range. Guarantee your money back and I never had to pay it. We would always see fifteen or twenty schooling black grouper. I have to admit, I bagged a number of them myself. I have one on the wall. There were hundreds of them all the time. I watched them all disappear. I watched all the Nassau groupers disappear.

KDM: Were there really ever a lot of Nassau groupers down here?

ED: Tons of them. Nassau grouper always entered the region because they're so stupid. They'd sit down, and let you poke their eyes out. I've actually eased up on them and grabbed them by hand. That was the trick. But I used to do that to show off from time to time. There were lots of them, and they were stupid. The same faith became of the jewfish because they're big and dumb and didn't fear very much. They were all shutout with powerheads and...

KDM: [inaudible] annoyed and have to go and check it out.

ED: Because it's not fearful. Because in the state of nature, what the hell would bother a jewfish except a really big shark?. Even then, the triple scale, essentially [inaudible] fish there, but that layer there and not very susceptible to other critters.

KDM: Yes. Basically, to close that, did you have any comments you would like to make, basically, to help spark memories for people? Population decreases, size decreases or any...

ED: No. The population and size decreases across the board to all species. In the mid-[19]70s when I was chartering Looe Key – and that was in the old days. Yes. When I started the charter business, people didn't have insurance. They had never been in the water again for the Florida Keys charter flight. I used to be able to go out, set the boat, set the people up, get in the water and say, "There is your second tank. I'll keep an eye on you." I wouldn't scuba dive, but I would go snorkeling and free diving and spearfishing. Just keep an eye on the boat and watch. Because nobody was paranoid in those days. Now, I never get in the water anymore. But I used to shoot 25 to 35 pounds of mangrove and yellowtail snapper per day in a couple hours on Looe Key. Wild schools of snapper, almost continuously in sight.

KDM: All snappers or...

ED: Mangrove and yellowtail primarily. But I'm talking about [inaudible] yellowtails, 24, 25-pounders, and 24, 25 pounds of mangrove snapper. Muttons commonly, the bigger muttons tended to be in the deeper water on the drop-off [inaudible]. But the big black grouper was [inaudible] all the time. But then [inaudible] you can see a hundred feet. [inaudible] you can see, 25 feet. Of course, the sea urchins, we all know about the sea urchin [inaudible].

KDM: Was that a real rapid dial for that?

ED: Yes, it was. Remember, I founded the marine advisory council in Florida Keys with the late Dr. Rick Warner. We did the initial population studies of, basically, commercially valuable species before there were national fisheries councils. We pioneered all that stuff, really. Rick Warner was a PhD. He had done some really pioneering stuff [inaudible] bird research and Hawaiian councils, species that are about to be extinct and all that. He's extremely well-qualified and talented guy. Alas, died of cancer way before his time. So, we pioneered all of them. We studied the basic. Now, we have the national fisheries council management plans. Before, when we did rudimentary versions of those right here.

KDM: Sea urchins, what was the first thing you noticed next, or did you actually [inaudible]?

ED: Well, it just died off. We heard about it happening in Panama. Then it moved right up the system. Normally, whenever identify a pathogen or a toxin or anything, but they just all died en masse. Before that, every ledge and crevice on the reef was just packed. They were a major hazard if you were into grabbing lobster and spearfishing. You got stuck all the time because they were just everywhere. At night, on the next dive, they'd be closed out, walking around, shucking down on the reef. But it was a major consideration.

KDM: That was in the middle [19]80s, right?

ED: Yes. Well, [inaudible] and stuff like that when that happened. Migrating jacks would come in on the reef all the time, cero mackerel, Spanish mackerel on the reef. Commonly, I shot many

of them on the reef. We'll note for history there, I remember people were good enough to [inaudible] mackerel. I used to shoot yellowtail. I used to spearfish mackerel.

KDM: I hate the mangrove snapper. I try [inaudible].

ED: Well, they're fast and nervous. But you could actually calculate that [inaudible].

KDM: I think they just sit there, and they wait. Right before you're just about to hit them, they just jump around.

ED: Well, they're fast. [laughter] Just for the historic record, my record was nineteen snappers and twenty shots with [inaudible] gun in a period of two days. But I have to admit that I missed twice. One of them was a double. It was a snapper under [inaudible]. I shot through them as they turned against each other. I got two for one.

KDM: [laughter]

ED: But they're everywhere. You could just hang back and just hang back behind the schools. They would go under the ledge because they were used to being pre-moving. In those days, they never stayed under very long. You could actually get a sense and time them by watching the level of activity. Pretty much since, when some of them would be peeking up from under the ledge again and then top down and [inaudible].

KDM: Do you think that they have gotten smart or wary?

ED: Yes. No question, they're much wamer than they were because of the numbers of people and all of that.

KDM: Have you noticed any [inaudible] or thoughts or anything on fish?

ED: Well, see, I haven't been spearfishing now in ten years.

KDM: Well, back then, did you notice mangrove snappers [inaudible]?

ED: No. There practically were no abnormalities observed in those days. I can remember shooting, when I was running the side bay Tortugas trip in the late [19]70s, [19]80-ish. I can remember shooting forty-four snappers in the Marquesas. Between my other captain and I, we said we could fish all the time. I can remember him on one bed and myself on one bed. We shot forty-four snappers off of – I stopped shooting groupers because [inaudible]. There's so many of them. They're so easy, and they're so stupid. So, I'll only shoot snapper and mackerel.

KDM: More of a game?

ED: Yes, like shotgun pumping.

KDM: Do you know any of the locations of any spawning aggregations, or do you remember the

locations of spawning aggregations?

ED: Well, there are periods when you take fish [inaudible] and that sort of thing. But I haven't been sport fishing and headboat fishing in so long. I don't fish recreationally or anything (in the region?). I haven't for quite some time.

KDM: When was the last time you were at Looe Key?

ED: A long time ago.

KDM: Well, it would be interesting to see your reaction, or it would be interesting to get you down [inaudible].

ED: I thought about going back someday and recording it, a reassessment. I know where every single coral head on the Key is. I've been in Looe Key more than a thousand times, on the deep and shallow reefs and patch reefs. I'm sure it would be terribly disappointing. This is one of the reasons I haven't been back there. But the reason I nominated Looe Key for National Marine Sanctuary status, originally, was because I was concerned about the increasing pressures and the decline of everything that I was looking at. The people pressure is adding to the natural stresses. I think that it would survive without some more protective regulation. Then any idiot could go sport fishing and catch lots of fish in the [19]70s. I did all of that stuff in the 24-and-a-half-foot (office?) board. My original boats were a 26-foot twin inboard, a 30-foot twin inboard. Then I've got a 24-(office?) board. In 1975, I was on the reef for twenty-five days in August, in a twenty-four-and-a-half footer. The weather was not nearly as windy then, which is [inaudible] if you look at the weather patterns, as I'm sure most meteorologists [inaudible]. In the [19]70s were some of the most subtle weathers in the last couple of hundred-year cycles. In the [19]80s, it got more and more chaotic. Then it just gets more and more chaotic than the average, windier and windier, almost every year in succession. Because that does that have an effect on something like water quality and so forth. The windier it is, the more you resuspend certain sediments that's been up, [inaudible] and all that kind of stuff. The more sediment transport and nutrient transport you're getting, and all of those. That's important. That's not something that I ever hear discussed because there are a very few people with the length of personal memory. But in 1975 – again, the last great bay storm – in 1975 – I might be off about a year [inaudible] have to check – well, it might not be. You're going to have to check the records. We had only four northern fronts reach the Florida Keys between Christmas and Easter. Not two a week like we have now. Four fronts that used to simply dissipate before they got here. It has to do with just [inaudible] magnetic anomalies, but that was common. I think until that time, that was the weather pattern. The winters were common by far than the summertime now. The summers were absolutely unbearable, and a breath of air for a week. Five nights, it was just unbearable. I can remember midnight in August, paper sticking in my arm. It was just miserable. There wasn't anybody here in the summer. There wasn't a summer season up here. It totally shifted. The winter season was the season because it wasn't windy for a month. There wasn't a summer season. Now, of course, in the winter, it's so windy so often, everybody goes to the Caribbean [inaudible] for their sailing. It's now windier there than it used to be here in 1970, early [19]70s. So, I ran all small boats, and I wouldn't consider having a small boat anymore, not for the last fifteen years, because it's just too windy. So, that certainly has an effect on water quality. It's

just windier and windier, more and more often, for longer stretches of time. But I have [inaudible] in Looe Key in 25 knots of wind with 125-foot visibility. So, the visibility wasn't all directly related to the wind. Over a long period of time, I'm sure there are biological and chemical effects because of it.

KDM: With everything else on top of each other, too.

ED: [inaudible] But again, in those days, I've been in Looe Key in very windy weather, 20, 25 knots of wind and still have the visibility being wonderful.

KDM: I have had a lot of people tell me that – how they described it is, back in the old days, it would get windy. You would get some of the sediments suspended in the water [inaudible]. But then the wind would stop. A few hours later, it would be clear.

ED: Oh, yes.

KDM: Yes. It did not take weeks or days.

ED: No, it didn't take weeks. In a day, you're back to an eighty or a hundred-foot visibility. So, it's not just the wind, that phrasing. In fact, on a gradual transport of sediments and that kind of stuff, the transport of nutrients.

KDM: [inaudible]

ED: In those days, there were times when the blue water would come right in under the bridges.

KDM: The stream?

ED: The gulf stream. We have blue gulf stream water. Much closer in, it would be clear with some frequency, not certainly all the time. But in Hawk's Channel, you could see the various humps and stuff in Hawk's Channel, and stuff coming near...

KDM: I do not think I have ever seen the Hawk's Channel clear.

ED: Yes. Even then it wasn't very – Because in those days, since I started the marine advisory council, I was just trying to remember, we interviewed all the commercial fishermen. I can remember that people like Robert Felton whose family was an – I can remember talking about them making a living with fifty to a hundred lobster traps, and people making a living with a couple hundred lobster traps. The lobsters were [inaudible] then. We used to be able to just get in the water, along the highway, in the rocks and stuff, and catch a lot of lobster. Of course, they're long, long gone. The lobster just disappeared in all the shallower, more inshore areas and then gradually severely diminished all the way out into deep water. The stories about the lobster migrations and stuff were common then. They weren't commonly happening then, but everybody remembered them as a common occurrence, the older fishermen at that time.

KDM: Yes. I had one tell me about a lobster walk right off White Street Pier one night.

ED: Yes. But all the old fishermen talked about it as a common occurrence then. We're talking now in the mid-[19]70s. Again, you could catch 300 pounds of snapper handlining at night. You could make a living handlining commercial fish and running a few hundred traps.

KDM: The gentleman that I was sitting and talking with inside, Peter, he is a handline fisherman out of Key West, him and his wife. I was like, "You could still do it. It just takes more work."

ED: [inaudible] But again, now the lobster beds are, what, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000 traps. The cost per unit yield has just gone up astronomically. We've allowed it all to happen and done nothing about it. It's just amazing. We still have, basically, unregulated fishery, which is a colossal mess and colossal abusive. [inaudible] one of the small ones. They made them in all different sizes. I always wanted one of those, but I [inaudible] myself. [laughter] I spend all my time doing all this environmental stuff and public stuff.

KDM: Let me get a glass of water.

ED: I have actually [inaudible] blue water coming in. I have seen – I was telling this to (James Shannon?) and Bill Hudson last night – I have seen a sailfish jumping under the Seven Mile Bridge, just on the outside of the Seven Mile. In those days, when blue water came all the way in, the wave lines were going under the bridge. I saw it jump four times. It came at forty-five degrees and stopped sideways. Nobody believed me.

KDM: I think somebody else.

ED: When the blue water used to come in close, I've seen lots of what are normally, even then and now always, only pelagic and offshore species in the hatcheries in New Hawk's Channel. Lots and lots of snapper [inaudible]. Of course, everybody saw the decline in turtles and –

KDM: Do you think they're coming back?

ED: Yes, they definitely are. Well, in Biscayne National Park and where I live now, they certainly are, because we have a nesting there, all three species.

KDM: I will get a glass of water.

ED: What else? All of the typical, residential, tropical, were everywhere in enormous abundance. It's just everything has basically decreased across the board because of the horrific – I don't know what the shark did.

KDM: [inaudible]

ED: – (presentation is?) in Looe Key. But it was common to have a couple of bull sharks just cruising around while I was spearfishing, occasional lemons, occasional tigers, occasional hammerhead. Sharks were commonly there.

KDM: Are you talking about bull sharks being there on the reef area?

ED: Oh, absolutely. I've given them fish when they [inaudible].

KDM: .Wait a minute. Have you given them fish, or have they politely taken it?

ED: Well, it's sort of a mutual agreement kind of an arrangement. [laughter] Lemon shark has taken a bag away from my spearing partner. I had a 10-foot hammer takes one mutton snapper.

KDM: I hear stories like that and...

ED: But say, in a hundred-foot clarity, it wasn't a nervous thing. In 25-foot of clarity, I'd be scared to death. That was the point. The water was gem clear, then you could keep track of all the stuff. There were schools of between thirty and sometimes fifty barracuda schooling on Looe Key. They would actually make me nervous because there are too many of them if we keep track of them. I've had them take the spear off my arm. There used to be a school of four to six, four-and-a-half, five-foot monster barracuda [inaudible] at that time. They were always there, schools of huge barracuda. I've had them take a snapper off my spear.

KDM: Have you ever heard anything about monster jewfish?

ED: Oh, I've seen them in the Keys in the days.

KDM: How big?

ED: The biggest one I ever saw, I estimate it at 500 to 600 pounds. Two of us saw him. He was sitting on a patch reef in the bottom of Hawk's Channel on a day when, believe it or not, the visibility was 25 or 30 feet. See the coral formations on some of the humps, the ones I'm talking about, are between Seven Mile Bridge and Looe Key. There are [inaudible] formations and [inaudible] the ocean. They aren't/ the spherical [inaudible] kinds of formation. They were humpback ridges of overlapping plates of brown and star corals, which normally was growing in the [inaudible] formations. But these were overlapping essentially dimpled, flat plates, sort of a plated hump. He was just parked [inaudible] there, and we just went along. My dive partner grabbed me by the arm. He was a totally fearless, unreactive guy. He put a death grip on me. All I can think of was, we're dead. Something 15 feet long is going to hit us. I turned my head around, and we're in this coral bridge and eyeballing. [laughter] He was bigger than we were. I mean, longer than we were. He was absolutely huge. He just sat down and ignored us. We swam right up. Then [inaudible] he did that boom, boom, boom, that they do that makes your head hurt.

KDM: Especially that big, I imagine.

ED: It was just...

KDM: The reason I asked is that people have been telling me stories of monster jewfish.

ED: Those were common stories in those days.

KDM: So, I keep asking people about it.

ED: Common stories. All of the fishermen had many stories about a big jewfish. I saw many of them back in those days. I had friends who hunted jewfish. The powerheads didn't come in until, I think, in the mid-[19]70s, to be commercially made. You could check with some suppliers to get that date. But in the early days, they used the big spear guns with detachable tips and riding handles). We actually had riding harnesses, and bunch of guys would team hunt them and stuff. You're really nuts to do it by yourself and in riding handles. It would tow you around for hours. That's how you hunt a jewfish. It was a real primitive, one-on-one, mano-a-mano kind of a thing then. Riding hunters and you could expect to be towed around for hours. We had a couple of people trying to get the spear, and they would tow more than one person around, because they're big. They had this armor-plated, basically, three layers of scales and fat layer. They're pretty tough. I've had regular [inaudible] spears just bounce harmlessly off of them, just bounce off them. In that [inaudible] what you're talking about, back in the big Spanish [inaudible] and everything. I can remember, it was in the early [19]70s before that went to hell because people discovered it all at once. Well, maybe it was in the mid-[19]70s. But in those days, lobster season just opened, and the serious people would come down either the first week or second week or third week, to take their vacations. They would come down, and the busloads of people coming – I've seen people take well over a thousand pounds of lobster. I've had groups of people come down as a serious group adventure and take a trucksful of lobster too.

KDM: During the two days or regular...

ED: There wasn't a two-day [inaudible].

KDM: That is just a regular...

ED: Because I tried to tell the board of fisheries commission last time at the hearing. Before the two-day season, that impact would spread out over the course of three weeks. It wasn't a matter of shifting the impact. We should never have gone into the three-day sport season. We should have gotten rid of it a long time ago because of the compressed impact on the resources. It's just devastating. It was common to take many hundreds of pounds of lobster with any couple of serious – people could do that. I can remember going to the Content Keys with two experienced free divers and two people just jerking around, taking a 149 pounds of [inaudible] lobster, from sunrise to noon. Unfortunately, the next year, it was 20, 25 knots of wind for the whole first week of lobster season. The people sitting in the marinas noticed a few boats coming in from the backcountry, full of lobster, including mine. They found out about it. Before that, I always did it by myself. There were only a couple of boats from the Content to the (Florida?) Key. The next season, there were over 300 boats there on opening day, gunnel to gunnel. With four inexperienced divers, took 40, 50 pounds of lobsters, and I never went back. It was over. There's some [inaudible]. One guy there I saw, 150 and a 250-pound jewfish, and he had a whole group of college divers lying next to him, taking pictures of it. [laughter] Those are all long gone. Turtles are [inaudible].

KDM: Do you think they are coming back?

ED: Well, with the outlawing of powerheads for taking jewfish, they should regenerate somewhat.

KDM: Well, there's a zero-catch on them, too.

ED: Yes. But see, why do we let things get so bad? The whole problem with our approach to endangered species, we wait until there's a couple of them left. If we did that with human healthcare, everybody would just be dead. The way we manage our public resources, we wait until they need the priest with the final –sprinkle little holy water on them, and maybe some of them will miraculously get better. We let things go so far. That's because, in the Florida Keys, like many other places, nobody in the power structure and nobody with [inaudible] longevity here ever really listened to the first word and the phrase "public resources." The bulk of people opposing the marine sanctuary now still consider that these resources that we're sitting here and looking at, belong to them. They don't, damn it. Right there, as soon as your feet get wet, it belongs to the citizens of the United States of America. This is not the [inaudible] preserved to be poached and disposed as they damn will see fit. But that's the way we treated it, and that's the way many people still earnestly feel about it. I'm sorry, they're wrong. These are and always have been public resources. We've allowed them to be debauched and degraded and depressed to the point of population collapse, over and over and over again. We haven't done a damn thing about it. We still have an unregulated fishery, which is colossal nonsense. Ask me some more questions before I get too rowdy.

KDM: [inaudible] invertebrates, the same thing.

ED: Oh, I thought [inaudible] getting a glass of water. I can remember taking what was acknowledged – in those days, we never had [inaudible] with the development of the marine scientist doctor, (Alfred Antonias?) [inaudible]. Alfred and I were involved together in the Florida Reef Foundation, I think when we did the original biological assessments at Looe Key and stuff like that. In that period, just about the time I was running Looe Key, I got what they all acknowledged was the first picture they'd ever seen in black [inaudible]. I had the first picture. Nobody has seen it then. Now, any idiot with a Kodak throwaway can get all the pictures they want [inaudible].

KDM: When was that, [19]75 or early [19]70s?

ED: It was just for the first time they'd observed – let's see, when we nominated Looe Key, that would've been in mid-[19]70s. I remember [inaudible] that was, but it was right about that time. Then because we're talking about publishing it, because it was a rare thing, and I had a picture of it. I had the first close-up shot and stuff, what we used to then call [inaudible] algae. Now it's standard bacteria. I don't know the name for it. We would take the stone crab by hand. That was somewhat of an [inaudible].

KDM: [inaudible] [laughter]

ED: We pulled lobster traps by hand. But all this stuff, it was everywhere.

KDM: You had lobster traps, right?

ED: Yes, I had traps. I had [inaudible] because...

KDM: Where did you put...

ED: – I used to pull them by hand, and I used to just dive my own traps.

KDM: Where did you put them?

ED: Not anybody else's, not ever.

KDM: Where did you put them ? In the oceanside, gulf side?

ED: Well, in the gulf side. Mostly in the gulf side because it was clearer up there.

KDM: Did you ever have anything growing on the traps, something like that?

ED: No. They didn't use to load up as much as they do now. Because, again, I actually didn't pull many traps. I left them there and free dove them. I had a lot of them in [inaudible] shallow water and stuff like that. [inaudible] and more productive. It was so clear in the bay, you could (work them?). They didn't get all covered. We used to scrub them from time to time. But we didn't pull them out and scrub them down hard like they do now.

KDM: Did you ever have barnacles on it?

ED: Yes, I'm sure, overtime. But it didn't foliate nearly as much as [inaudible] than they were. Everybody knows that.

KDM: Did you ever dip your trap?

ED: No, as a matter of fact. As a matter of fact, I didn't.

KDM: [inaudible] trap coming in now.

ED: Well, I would say, one of the other questions I asked years ago was, excuse me, did anybody calculate how many thousands of gallons, how many barrels of this [inaudible] plastic, heavy metal, awful shit going into the water [inaudible] from soaking lobster traps and then letting – I mean, Jesus.

KDM: [inaudible]

ED: I knew it was eventually done. For years, nobody listened to me.

KDM: Yes. Florida Keys Grant did a study.

ED: [inaudible] contribution to the water. Awful. That's why.

KDM: There is a comment that was made, but the guy who did the study said, "When done right, with all these variables..."

ED: Oh, yes. I remember that. [inaudible]

KDM: Yes. The comment made was, "There is more oil being dumped by recreational boaters and the builders on a weekend than lobster traps.

ED: Yes. But the point is about the species argument like that, it's in addition to. See, what we never do is real accumulative total of stressors. We talked about one thing at a time. Of course, the guy keeps track of aggregate.

KDM: Singularly, things might not be a problem [inaudible].

ED: Singularly, none of these things would be a problem. Singularly, the hurricane wouldn't be – the problem is the hurricane comes along after years of stress and abuse and accumulating impact. So, then a single event or a single additional stress would make it – scaling [inaudible].

[end of transcript]