

Joshua Wrigley: This is an interview for the Maine Coast Oral History Initiative, to be shared jointly by the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association and the Island Institute. The date is September 11, 2013. My name is Josh Wrigley. Today, I'm interviewing Gary Hatch of Owls Head, Maine, about his experiences purse seining herring and scalloping. Today's interview also includes his thoughts on federal regulation, closed areas, and the environmental impact of midwater trawling.

Gary Hatch: Okay. Gary Hatch. I live in Owls Head, but I grew up in St. George, down in Port Clyde. I was born in 1954 down on the ridge road in Martinsville, and my father was a local mechanic and fisherman. Of course, growing up in fishing, probably have been part of the fishery all my life. My first recollection of when I started enjoying or going after fishing – I was probably four years old or so, and I always used to run away from home. My mother could always find me. I was at one end of the road or the other, and all she had to do was just call a neighbor to see which way I went.

JW: What were you fishing for?

GH: At that time, I was just enjoying the water – going down and playing in the mudflats and swimming and such. I enjoyed the people because there were friends in Martinsville that, of course, I saw most every day that were my father's friends that came to the house for coffee, a hearty cook and [inaudible] would cook. So, I'd go down to their fish house, which was at Martinsville Harbor.

JW: Is Martinsville close by here?

GH: It's in St. George. Well, it's in Martinsville. Just before you get to Port Clyde, there's a little bridge you go over, and to the left, there's the harbor. That's Martinsville Harbor. Basically, at that time, it was all eelgrass and mudflats at low tide. It's not a deep harbor. It's barely enough water to float lobster boats quite a ways out, really. But it was an excellent place for exploring. I guess when I was around five or six, an old fellow that was – I believe he was a retired Seabee [and] had a yacht out in the harbor. That was like a 50-foot Criss-Craft that he went to every day and just sort of pattered or something – you know, his project. So I used to row out and always talk with him. Of course, he had plenty of time. Sam Crittenden, I believe his name was. Anyway, he gave me a little – it wasn't much more than a cement mixing box, but it was like a skiff. I had hours of fun with that because it was flat-bottomed and sort of like a little scow, so I could pull it up in the mudflats and then ride it down through the mudflats down back into the water. That's when I first started being a scientist, I guess you'd say. With all the eelgrass, you had all the different things to explore as far as crabs, lobsters, and fish and things. Of course, back then, there was all of those species readily available to catch. Flounder fishing. Just a hook and a little bit of herring, you could go fill a five-gallon bucket full of flounders in the morning. My big thing was on Fridays, the lobstermen – (Hardy?), (Sherwood?), and Captain Chadwick would all run to Port Clyde with their boats to take their weekly catch down to sell. They had their crates of lobsters. So, I built a little crate of my own, which probably held fifteen lobsters, and I would work all week to fill it with my rig. I soon realized that lobsters lived in holes, and I'd put a piece of redfish on a long pole dip net, and I could sit there, and the lobster would come out and grab the bait and just flip him in. That's how I caught my

crate of lobsters for the week until a few years later when I started lobstering with traps. But that's when I was a little guy.

JW: How long did it take to normally catch your amount?

GH: It would take me all week. I'd catch two, three, four lobsters a day some days. But it was a patience game. It wasn't one of those things that you just – but it was fun as a little fellow to sit there. Of course, you could hold yourself right in place in front of the lobster's hole until he decided to come out. There was a knack to it. You couldn't get him too soon because he'd shoot back into his hole. You had to wait until he got out and got comfortable and was eating before you nabbed him. Of course, it intrigued me the way it all worked, and it was fun and time-consuming, which was good. But by the time I was – oh, I guess seven or eight, I fished my own traps. I'd go to haul with my father, and then when I came in, I'd take the skiff and go haul my traps.

JW: How many traps did you run back then?

GH: Oh, I didn't have many – five, eight, ten traps, something like that, just out of a skiff. But it was my, so to speak, spending money at the time, and I enjoyed that more than going with Dad because it's repetitious. When you go full time, and you're just a little kid, by ten o'clock, I was ready to come home. Of course, we couldn't because Dad had to make a living. So, it got boring. I enjoyed my own rig. I saved up what money I could and bought a beautiful little double-ender from an older fellow in town there. I think I was nine then. I fixed that all up that spring and got it painted and ready for the water and started lobstering out of Port Clyde – rowing. I guess it was the middle of the summer. An old fellow that owned Hupper's Island, (Jerry Bena? – he noticed me rowing around. It was a particularly blowy day, so he'd seen me having quite a hard time. So, on his way into town from Hupper's Island to Port Clyde, he come over, and he said, when you get a minute, come over to the shore. So I, that afternoon, see him down there on the wharf, went over, and he took me into his outboard shop. He had a little shop right there on the wharf. He just sort of pointed at four or five outboards sitting there on the controls and says, "Pick any one you want. I'll trade you a few lobsters for one." So I picked one out, a nice old Champion outboard. It was like five horse [power]. It didn't have any shifter – you know, straight ahead. But it was a lot better than rowing. [laughter] That's sort of where I began. My family was all – I'm the youngest of the whole family, and the whole family was sort of grown up. My mother was going back to school to be a teacher because my dad started having a lot of health problems. He had diabetes bad. So I had sort of free reign to myself.

JW: Were you going to school in Thomaston at the time?

GH: No, St. George. I was in elementary school. I always kept myself busy and working around the shore. I enjoyed the people around the shore. I, at a young age, hooked up with Forrest Morris – his name down there was Crow Morris – and I sort of was his sidekick helper. He was an older fellow, and I helped him with his lobstering. Of course, he owned a big seining outfit, so I always went seining with him in the evenings. That's where my seining career started.

JW: Was this purse-seining?

GH: At the time, no. There was hardly any purse-seining back then. It was all stop-seining. There was a couple, three outfits around – the Davises [inaudible] Davis and Ned Stone and Ronnie Stone, and then there was the Morrisises. Of course, at that time, Port Clyde Packing was a big employer, a big thing. For you people to come down now and see Port Clyde, it's a quaint little lobster industry. But it used to be quite a booming town at one time. It had a big fish factory which packed sardines. And then, down past the store, there used to be the cold storage, which took out all the groundfish boats and shrimp boats. In winter, that was a big thing – shrimping. We had quite a few lobster boats rigged over, but we had a few big boats that came in and supported a pretty healthy packing process.

JW: Did you sell your herring from the stop-seine fishery to Port Clyde Packing?

GH: Yes. That was the thing with the herring fishery – most all of that generation, everyone was tied to one of the several factories. There was factories in Rockland and Port Clyde. We were tied to Port Clyde. They had the gear in many instances. You'd have a skeleton amount of gear, and then if you found a big bunch of fish or a big shutoff, you needed more gear, they had a gear building that you could go get gear out of. Of course, painting dories – that was something that I did a lot. Between eight and twelve, eleven, something like that, I painted a lot of dories for them. Because up to the ball field above town there, there'd be anywhere from twenty to fifty dories in there every spring that had to be scraped and painted. A fond memory of Sam Zwecker, who was the father of the fish factory, in his big gray Cadillac coming up with the cases of [inaudible] to get me to paint. If you had ever known the man, a short Jewish fellow that always really dressed well, a suit, presented himself well, white hair, real wavy, like Elvis hair, but a sweetheart of a man. I can never forget as we unloaded the back of the Cadillac one day – he talked with sort of an accent, the Jewish accent, and he said to me, "I got plenty, Gary, but don't waste it." That stuck with me all my life as a little saying I always like to use. A fond memory of growing up. I will say that I probably had a unique life because I had free reign. I can remember one summer – I got out of school, and other than, I think, twice, I never went home all summer and went to the island and just hung out on the island. I was maybe ten, something like that, at that time.

JW: Was that Monhegan?

GH: That came later. That was Gay's Island over on Cushing side. But later, like I said, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, later fifteen, I guess, I used to go to Monhegan in the spring and go cod fishing with my outboard. I had a nice Novi with a Johnson outboard by then. But the seining was just a fun thing to do. I used to row the double-ender around with Crow in the bow to find the fish in the coves and stuff.

JW: How many people were on the crew back then?

GH: Usually, there'd only be like four of us that'd go looking at coves because it didn't take but two of us, really, to shut a cove off – just tie the end of the shore and then run the twine across. Then we'd get five or six guys together in the morning. He had guys that were always on

standby, so to speak, that if we got a shutoff, they'd be ready to go. Of course, back then, we had two weirs, one at Cranberry Island at one at Gay's Cove on Gay's Island. So that was a lot of work in the spring, and I had to be the one that probably got elected for a lot of it – cutting brush and putting it on, hanging it on the weirs.

JW: How does a weir function?

GH: It's like a big P that you put on the leading edge of a cove so that what happens is the fish will come into the cove and run up against that brush, which acts like a net. But it's the old way of herding fish, as we'd say. The fish would run along that into what would be like the inside of the P, which has just a small opening at the connection part.

JW: So, similar to a pound net?

GH: Yes, similar. This is way back, the ancient style of doing it. And we'd just hang twine inside of it, and when the fish get in and fill it up to the point where they start to force themselves back out, you'd just shut them off, and then you've got them.

JW: Was there a preferred type of wood for the brush, or could you just pick at random?

GH: Bushy brush – your sapling oaks. But white birch was preferred because it was light, easy. For quite a length of the pole, you'd have a lot of brush on it, where you wouldn't have just – some styles, you'd just have a brush on top, and that's it, where the white birch had a brush, so to speak, on the whole length of it. So that was sort of the preferred, I think. Anyway, that's what we used a lot of. Of course, those are all gone. And the herring industry sort of dried up in, I'll say, the mid-'60s, something like that. That was the transition time to the purse-seiners. I think – oh, I would say '62, '63, '64, right in there – yeah, '63 to '65, I'd say in that era, Port Clyde Packing started to expand into the purse-seining. Sam's boys – Saul took over the plant, so to speak, managing it. That was the new generation coming in. They built the *Ocean Delight* for Junior Morris. There was the *Eva Grace*, (*Elliott Wharton?*), and the (*Lou Anne?*) for Clyde (*Teale?*). Those were both Stinson boats.

JW: Where was the Stinson company?

GH: The Stinson company – they had one in Prospect, and then they also had one here in town in Rockland. But the big one was out of Prospect. Then they had one in Bath. I forget just how many they did have. I never really researched it. Their big one was – Clyde was a good friend of my father's, and he was a really nice fellow. He got the biggest kick out of me. I can remember getting out of school on Friday and running to the factory as quick as I could get there so I could go on with him for the weekend. I think I was in the sixth grade at the time if I remember.

JW: That was on his purse-seiner?

GH: Yeah, on the (*Lou Anne?*). I went a couple of seasons off and on with him. In fact, the second season – he, in the spring had asked me, "Well, what are you going to do this summer?"

Because he knew I always had gone lobstering. But by then, he had taught me enough, so he, I think, really wanted me to stay with him for the summer because I had worked myself – even though I was twelve, I guess, at the time, I could handle the seine. I could run all the hydraulics. I’ve always had the mechanical knack that I picked up from my father. I paid attention to the engineering part. That’s something that has helped me through my whole career in jobs, and everything is that not only can I manufacture stuff well and all that, but I can engineer stuff. That’s been a help. Anyway, at that time, I told him, no, I just got my new Novi, and I was going to go lobstering. So that was the last time that I ever worked for him. He went on later to get the *Calvin Stinson*, which was one of the first big European-style seiners that Stinson built – way ahead of its time, and nobody really understood all of the new dynamics of it.

JW: What made it so new?

GH: Number one, it was big. It had refrigeration. At the time, it was rigged for midwater trawling, which was just unheard of on this coast. I remember one day, he come and got me and tried to – they had stove up the midwater trawl, and they had had a guy come from Norway to help them try to put it back together, which he could. But they needed help, and of course, they knew I knew how to mend twine because, at the time, I was groundfishing. So, that was one of the first encounters with the midwater trawl and the progressive meshing and stuff that I had a chance to get a hold of.

JW: When you say they stove in the trawl, does that mean that the net was ripped?

GH: Ripped, yeah. Yes. They call them midwater trawls, but there’s a knack to turning and stuff, and that’s where a lot of guys that fish them get in trouble is when they go to turn, the net falls down and gets on bottom, and they snag it. They don’t keep the strain right and stuff. Of course, the other is if the fish are close to bottom, they’re close to bottom. Anyway, I tried to go with him there, but he flat right come right out and said no. He says, “This isn’t going to work. You’ve got a young family. You’ve got to stay where you are. This isn’t going to make enough money to feed a cat.” And he was pretty much right. The technology was way ahead of them at the time, and the boat ended up going to the West Coast, pollock fishing.

JW: Had it been built right here in Maine?

GH: No, the boat was built in Mississippi, I think, if I remember right. And it was 134 or 135 feet long – for the area, a huge boat. Because about everything around here was sixty-five to eighty-five feet at that time, and that was about the time that the purse-seining took off. With the purse-seining, well, I think what it did – it disturbed the way that the fish moved and their actions and broke up the schools so that they stopped coming to shore. They were being – how do you say? – disturbed before they got in their natural cycle of coming to shore and running through the cove, feeding, and whatever. That was when the fishery changed. Probably in the late ’60s, they went to purse-seining.

JW: Is that when you stopped stop-seining?

GH: Yeah, that's pretty much when I stopped. I think the last shutoff we had was maybe in the '67-'66 area. That was the last time. And then went purse-seining for a bit there, but I, of course, graduated from high school in '73 and had a new lobster boat built and went lobstering until – oh, I guess the late '70s, and then I went scalloping. Just one of those things. I went lobstering in the summer and scalloping and shrimping and groundfishing in the spring with my lobster boat, sort of multi-fishing. It was in the late season scalloping, I think of '79, that I blew the engine in my little boat. A friend of mine, Doug Anderson, who was from Port Clyde, was fishing big boats out of New Bedford at the time. He had a chance to get one of the premier scallopers out of New Bedford, the *Sea Trek*. That's a picture of her out there in the water coming over the bow. Anyway, he needed an engineer, so I said I'd go for a while, at least make enough money to get my engine put back together and made more money that one trip than I had all winter scalloping. So, I sort of had to rethink my career, I guess, at that time. I did like scalloping, even in the wintertime because our season was from November 1st until April 15th – and I did small-boat scalloping in state waters. But now, this was the big league, so to speak, and I fit in. Again, my engineering skills made me worth having aboard. Plus, I could fill in as a mate if he needed someone short order. All he had to do was – “Yeah, Gary, you're coming up here this trip,” and that was that. That's how it ended up, is when he got done with the *Sea Trek*, I took her for a little bit. Still, it was working for other people. Being the independent sort that I am, I ended up coming home, getting my own boat, and going scalloping.

JW: How far offshore did you have to go to scallop?

GH: Oh, in the big boats, we went all the way to Georges, all the way out to the northern edge, and really southeast part way out to the east, to what now is Canadian waters, in fact. A majority of my books that I had through the years of fishing big boats are all on the Canadian side of the line now. We can't even get to them. Another aspect of that fishery, or all of our fisheries, is when that Hague Line was decided, it really split up our fishery and was probably one of the major facets of destroying the Gulf of Maine because all the big boats that had either ran to the Grand Banks or fished the eastern end of the Georges ended up in the Gulf of Maine trying to scratch out a living to pay for themselves. Like the O'Hara fleet – it's five or six 120-odd-foot boats that were designed to fish on the tail end of the bank or Flemish, and now they're here in the Gulf of Maine, just beating it right to death. That's what happened. They had boats from Portland, Gloucester, Boston.

JW: Are those midwater trawling vessels?

GH: No, those are all draggers. Midwater trawling didn't really take off here for sardines probably – oh, the late '80s, early '90s, before I think Peter (Mellon?) and a few of those guys came here from Ireland and brought that technology with them. They had it perfected. It wasn't like what the Stinsons – the Stinsons had seen the writing on the wall of how the fishery could have gone or did go, and they just didn't perfect it. They spent a lot of money.

JW: What year was Stinson looking into midwater trawling again during this experimental time?

GH: I would say that was the early '80s – late '70s, early '80s. Yeah, from '77 to '82, right in that area – '83, something like that that they was in that. They put quite a valiant effort into it.

Of course, they gave up on the midwater, and Clyde went purse-seining. But again, it was big equipment, and I don't think he just could adapt to that big of equipment and handling that many fish at one time. It's a knack to handle fish. The big one is if they smother, you've got a hundred ton of fish that sink, and it's going to take you with it. I know one night down outside of Isle au Haut – I think it was maybe the fall of '82 – he made a big – like over a million pounds sat, and they smothered on him. I listened to it on the radio. I was right there at the time groundfishing in my boat. But it was a lot going on, and I think –

JW: Was that a purse-seine sat?

GH: Yeah, that was a purse-seine sat. But that was a big purse-seine. I think it was like a 400 by 60 seine. Anyway, that was the last time – pretty near the end of his career, too. He pretty much gave it up.

JW: So when the herring smothered, were they able to extract them?

GH: No. No, they had to tap – it blew the net apart is what happened. Trying to get them up, they just couldn't lift the weight, and that blew apart, and that was it. They got the net back, what was left of it, and it was a mess. It made a mess on the bottom because when you've got that many fish laying on bottom, it sort of stagnates that area. The fish are there for – it seemed like a couple of years before that really came back. I was bottom trawling right there in that area, and it affected it. Whether they say it does or doesn't, it did. Most of us fishermen that go fishing around for our livelihood know that that's sort of something we try not to do is dump a lot of fish because it does that. We've found that some of the new fishermen that have come here don't care about that. I think maybe that might have been why their fishery in their country went to pieces on them is they were more intent on catching fish than what they was doing to the environment. That's something that – the science in this country is lousy, [laughter] to put it blunt. A lot of people that call themselves scientists aren't scientists at all. They're just number-crunchers, and that's it. That seems to be what NMFS [National Marine Fisheries Service] is right now, just number-crunchers. But I guess getting back to where we were, the end of the sardine fishery probably was somewhere around the late '70s when the factories started closing. I know Port Clyde – I think it was '74, the fall or winter of '74, right in there – I can't remember the exact date that it burned. That was the end of the sardine fishery for stop-seining in Port Clyde, and that was the start of the end of Port Clyde for several years as far as anything other than draggers, which Eddie Thorbjornson had a wharf that we all took out, most of us, for our groundfish and shrimp.

JW: Where did you stop-seine around Port Clyde?

GH: A lot of the coves – Drift Inn [Beach] over there by – well, it's what would you say is the back road to Port Clyde when you go down – right just before you get to (Jerry's?) house, you go down that back road was one of the coves. The other one was over to Doughnut Point in Martinsville. Deep Cove up around the corner from Port Clyde Harbor, going up into the St. George River. Quite a few coves over around Gay's Island. Hornbarn [Cove] which is up in towards the Friendship/Cushing line, way up in the river there. Cranberry Island. he big shutoffs were over to Greenland [Cove] over in Bremen. Then you had another bunch that were

over towards Boothbay Harbor, Linekin Bay. In fact, that's where my outfit that I own now is, over in Linekin Bay at Boothbay Harbor. It seems to be one of the spots they still come to.

JW: So there's still stop-seining going on there?

GH: Yeah, but I'm it. There's a couple of guys who got setups down around Cutler, down that way – Bailey's Mistake. But as far as in this area, I think it's the Zacadelli boys over there to Bremen. They've got a few shots of twine. And then myself and Mike Brewer – we fish out of Linekin. He's from Boothbay. His family's always done stop-seining in that area. So, he fishes for me, and he has all my gear over there to stop-seine. I had a shutoff a couple of years ago pretty good, but this year, we had another shutoff probably similar, but with the new regulations on the river herring, we had to let them go because the percentages were too high. It turned into kind of a fiasco this spring. That's what it continually becomes. The regulations made for one industry, which the river herring, bluebacks, the midwater trawlers, have quite a hard time with them in the spring down off of Martha's Vineyard towards Montauk and that area and another place outside of Cape Cod.

JW: You mean the midwater fleet is catching river herring?

GH: Yes. Of course, they make laws for that, and when they do that, our sole stop-seiner just gets left in the dust. That's where I'm at. And it seems like I keep ending up there – is when the council comes up with ideas, they're all not of the fishing family, so [to] speak, so they just look at the numbers and the major precedent of what's going wrong at the time, and not knowing, well, jeez, if we do this, it could be affecting something that we don't want to affect. They have no clue. Of course, the majority of the council – if you go to the council and say this is what you're doing, they don't really care. You've got a couple from Massachusetts that just – you know, we're going to do just what we got to do for this situation, and the fallout isn't our problem. The fallout happens to be the whole New England fisheries. That's what's happened in there, as far as they've built the whole system around big boats, and the small boat fishery, the communities they support, and the lifestyle that everybody – tourists – come to see is going away because they don't know how to manage the fishery. Being an advisor to NMFS and having been part of the process since the mid-'70s, that's the biggest thing I see is that we started out with the fishermen on the councils making decisions to a politician sitting on the council, filling a void with number-crunching and white papers, so to speak.

JW: What was the transition, then, like from stop-seining to purse-seining for you? Like after the decline of the stop-seining fishery.

GH: Well, at the time, the older fellows were seeing this was going to be the decline of this fishery, which is the stop-seining. They were right. And that seems to be what has happened through the future history, I guess you could say, of seining in general, is every time we change to a different type of fishing method, it brings a whole host of different problems, and it affects the fisheries. The fisheries sort of adapt as far as, yes, we lost the stop-seining, so to speak, but the purse-seine fleet has adapted to catch the product out in deeper water, which at this time is a better method because of the amount of lobster gear that we have to contend with. In stop-seining, it's not so bad. But with the purse-seines, you just can't get up in and around all this

lobster gear. But the midwater trawlers just decimate the lobster gear when they open it up on the 1st of October.

JW: How close inshore is the midwater fleet fishing?

GH: Well, right up to three miles. We've had an incident where a local in-town fleet, the pair of boats, towed right up through gear inside three miles, and it created havoc as you read about, and basically, a slap on the wrist and away they went. The lobstermen took the brunt of the loss. It happened again this last year – same thing. They come up into the lobster gear, and they have absolutely no respect for the other fishermen. Their only thing is to load the boat with fish, and that's it. They don't care who they walk over, or what they do. And that makes it hard for all the fishermen that try to respect each other to see that happen. Like most fisheries now, it's turned to such political – but the purse-seining that really dominated through the '80s and '90s didn't have too much trouble. Once in a while, there'd be a bunch of fish up inside, and one of the big seiners would try to sit on them and get kind of in a mess, and it would be a squabbling match. But it wasn't anything like what the mobile gear boats can get into.

JW: What's had the greatest impact on the herring fishery since you started?

GH: Oh, probably the biggest impact would be the loss of the packing companies. And then the next would be – with the transition of the stop-seining to purse-seining is the size of the fish caught. Because as it is – well, like what we're seeing now with the fishery is that you're getting that mix of fish, where you have your large spawners, then you have your sardines. And they sort of coexist but are segregated as far as the sardines come ashore, and those big spawn fish stay out in the deeper water. Of course, in the – I would say the late '70s, early '80s, in that area, the large offshore fish had been just decimated by the big midwater trawlers from away. That was the big thing about the two-hundred-mile limit was that we had Russians, Poles, whatever right outside the three-mile line fishing on these big spawn fish, so we didn't have the sardines from the big spawn fish. So, they broke the cycle up. They caught up one segment of that cycle, and that's what killed the sardine factories, stop-seining. Of course, the fish changing sizes that they caught was probably one of the biggest things that changed from stop-seining to purse-seining you didn't have the stop-seine fish because you didn't have the small fish because you had the big fish that had been caught up. And the few small purse-seiners were right in between. You'd get a fall fishery – that used to be when we'd catch our sardines for stop-seine. Well, now you had a mixture of sardines and spawn fish, which are bigger fish.

JW: So you had generations of spawning fish that disappeared?

GH: Right. When they disappeared – because you didn't have the offspring from them to generate – for the sardine fishery. So that was sort of what started the purse-seining in the Gulf of Maine was that transition from no stop-seining and the factories needing fish, so they went purse-seining. Because that way, they could catch that in-between fish, so to speak. But at that time, they went from packing sardines to more like what we call stakers, which were the bigger fish that they would stake. Instead of packing the whole fish, they'd just cut them – you know, filleted them.

JW: How big were the stakers?

GH: They was anywhere from ten- to fourteen-inch fish, which is a fairly large sardine. A sardine is like – six to seven-inch is ideal. Seven inch is four to a can.

JW: Is that for packing?

GH: Yeah. And that was the transition period, right in there. That's when the factories started failing and stuff. The whole host of negatives that had happened from that large offshore midwater fleet cleaning out Georges, cleaning out of the Gulf of Maine, deep-water fish, and then the lack of predecessors from those large fish coming to shore. Now, after we've been through – again, the host of ignorance that we've allowed up until like five years ago, where we went to purse-seine only in the Gulf of Maine, and the midwater trawlers come in October and have a little bite at it, and it's been a mess every time they do it. Last year, we had the mess down off of Cape Ann, where they was catching huge amounts of spawn fish. Then we had the mess with the lobster gear up here. I'm hoping that the council someday will get it through their heads that you have a place for each fishery, but you have to put them in their place and manage them there. The big thing I'm seeing is that we're seeing a huge biomass of sardines again. We have a nice biomass of what we call spawners outside. Hopefully, they don't get decimated this fall because they are congregated quite tight. And when the midwater boats come in, it could very well put us right back – it could put us back twenty years in two months. The amount of pressure that those 165-foot boats can put on the biomass of the Gulf of Maine is just tremendous.

JW: How far offshore is the majority of the biomass that you're noticing now?

GH: About twenty miles and it's congregated in just a couple areas – one right outside of Matinicus Rock and the other one outside of Seguin, outside of Small Point, that area.

JW: Are they feeding, or is it for spawning purposes?

GH: Spawning, yeah. We've watched them all summer and worked – we've taken what we've been able to sell as market, and there's a huge biomass there. Every week, you'd see it sort of spread out more. Of course, the tuna boats came in, and they fished one area of it. But as the fall has progressed or the late summer, they stop coming up. That's a good indicator that they're getting ready to spawn. In the last few weeks, they wouldn't even come up into the water column hardly at all. They'd just come off bottom and settle right back. So, we all knew it was time for them to start spawning. Of course, then they closed it for spawning.

JW: That's what they normally do when they're about to spawn? They'll stay at the bottom of the water column?

GH: Yeah, they'll stay down deep. But the big one for us is that we've got this huge biomass of sardines up against the shore that have nothing to do with the spawn fish. They're not spawning. In the past, we've had a percentage that – well, if you catch a large percentage of spawn fish, then we've got to shut that area down. But now, they've gone to zero-tolerance. So, they just

shut the whole area down, and it's creating a lot of havoc for the seiners because they've shut us down when we could be still fishing up inside on the sardines. That's what my boats fish on, pretty much, are the sardines because the customers that I have want sardines. They don't want those great big offshore sea herring.

JW: Do the offshore sea herring, the large ones, come inshore ever?

GH: Not necessarily ashore like the sardines. They'll come up to inside the three-mile line, but they don't come right into the coves very often. It's usually always the [inaudible] It starts out in the spring with the [inaudible], which are the two- to four-inch fish. Then, as the season progresses, it moves into what we call the sardine, which is the five- to seven-inch fish. That's what we have a majority of right now at this time of year. We've got a lot of right around seven-inch fish that are just filling the coves and filling the bays and the close near-shore waters.

JW: Are they gradually moving deeper as they mature?

GH: Yeah. As they get larger, they just stay off in the deeper water. When they become sexually mature and become spawners, they sort of congregate in the deeper waters. They don't come up in the shore waters. That's sort of how Mother Nature's got them. The small fish will come ashore. The [inaudible] will work along the shore east, and then they'll work back to the west in the fall.

JW: To what extent do you think there's mixing in this area between alewife, blueback, and Atlantic herring?

GH: Oh, I don't – the alewives – I have no idea where they come in, other than in the spring when you've got the large shift of fish, you can have mixing, I guess you'd call it – your blueback, your alewives, and stuff. Alewives are a spring fish coming up into the fresh water to spawn. And what I've always seen – unless you had a shutoff or something up in the early part of the spring, you never see them in the sardines in any amount. Again, we're back to that mixing part – is when they're offshore, you can have a pod of alewives, a pod of bluebacks, and some herring mixed in, and you get a midwater boat that tows up.

JW: What about pogies?

GH: Well, pogies are kind of a seasonal prospect, I guess you'd put it. I've seen years in the '70s where the bays were teeming with them and then go five, seven years, never see another fish up this way. Like three years ago, we had just a small biomass come up into New Meadows, up that way, and we had a little fishery on it. There was like three or four of us that fished it, plus there's a few lobstermen that have small seines they'll grow for their own lobster bait. It sort of gets everybody enthused there's going to be some sort of a fishery again because it's sort of a cyclical-type fishery. It depends on the variables that bring them north of Cape Cod.

JW: What do you think usually brings them north?

GH: A dry, hot spring. And we haven't had them for – like you said, a few years ago, we happened to have one. We had that year that it was so mild all winter, and then by March, it was eighty or something. That sort of was a sign, and a few fish came this way. But the weather didn't hold, and I think that just a little bunch came. I think there's variables to the biomass from down in the mudhole, I guess down off New York, New Jersey shore. When they have a huge biomass, I think they spread out more. That will have a factor in how many fish come up this way, too. Again, it's all variables that sort of dictate how that fishery works.

JW: Are there other trends that you've noticed when the pogies do come up north here?

GH: Not really. Those variables that I just spoke of are the two big ones. The big one is if there's a huge biomass, they'll spread out more and come up the coast. If you go back into history, Narragansett Bay used to be huge into it. They had fish meal plants there and stuff. Of course, now it's maybe for a couple weeks, then it's over, and a handful of fishermen get a little shot at them. I know three or four years ago, I went to a meeting in Jamestown that the local fishermen –

JW: Jamestown, Virginia?

GH: No, Rhode Island – that they had a meeting about the pogies. Of course, environmentalists have their stand on what the pogies do and how valuable they are to be left in the water. That's what that area is fighting right now – the commercial fisheries probably you won't see there again. Maybe very small scale. But the sport fishermen –

JW: In the Narragansett Bay area?

GH: Yes, there in that area, it'll be all sport fishermen that want them for the bluefish, etc., and for feed for their sport fish. Unless there was a huge biomass coming back up through, I doubt you'll ever see any fishery in the Rhode Island area. What will happen here – I mean, the same thing in Casco Bay back in '95-ish, I guess – '96 was the last year I went down that way – was the last few years of the big fishery that we had in this area when the Russians came with the processing boats. At that time, you had a lot of sports fishermen that didn't like us being there. That whole mindset just keeps spreading. Of course, they get more momentum and more sponsors, so we'll have to fight that should there ever be a fishery back here. We'll have to try to figure out a way to work together to make it commercial fisheries and a recreational fishery, too.

JW: When you sell herring, how much of it goes towards packing and also bait and then reduction?

GH: No reduction. That's the law. Nothing goes for reduction – or nothing should go for reduction, we should say. Again, back to the big fleet out of Gloucester, the midwater fleet, they freeze a lot of product through the year because they can't sell their product. They just overwhelm the market. And then in the middle of February, you see the big processor trucks – I mean, the retention trucks from Canada down there picking up truckload after truckload of herring to take up for reduction in Canada. That happens, even though they say, well, they're selling them to foreign countries. That's what's going on. But we don't sell anything that I

catch – everything goes for lobster bait. We can't keep up with the market, pretty much, just for lobster bait.

JW: Who are the big suppliers that you deal with for lobster bait?

GH: O'Hara somewhat. Northeast Fishing Company from Portland is who we sell a lot to. And then, of course, the fishermen. We sell a lot of stuff to just small fishermen that there might be, so to speak, two or three fishermen that have one wharf, and they need a hundred barrels a week or whatever. So that's what – I guess you'd say niche markets, where I'm a small independent. We try to sort of get to them. But the way the fishery's going, it's becoming more corporate. And you need a place not only to land your fish, process them, and salt them into barrels of Xactics or whatever. You need a place to store them, a big cooler. That's, again, getting big, getting expensive, and it's taken the small community fishery right out of it again because it always used to be that small rigs like me did just what I just said. We all had people that we dealt with that had wharfs, and we'd just go in, take out our product there, and each wharf would take a boatload once a week in the morning, or two or three would split them up. Now, we've got these big companies that have come in with the big coolers, and they catch large quantities of fish at a time and put them in the cooler and dole them out as the fishermen need them, and it's done away with the small local community fishermen, so to speak. It's a shame because – like the family farm. We did away with them in the '60s, and now we realize that the big corporate farms are poisoning us with all the processing that they do, and the small farms are trying to come back. Of course, the big farms are trying to get rid of them again. That's the vicious cycle of the politics of it. But that's where we are.

JW: Have you seen many environmental changes in the Gulf of Maine during your careers in herring and scallops?

GH: Yeah. You see things happen, and there's two sides to it. One would be the warming of the planet, which we all know is happening. And the other is with the huge amount of building on the shore, the way that the cycle of life, so to speak, works is being diminished by killing all the nursery grounds that the majority of all of our fish come from. That's something that you can't seem to get across to National Marine Fisheries is they keep wanting to say, well, we got to close this area for habitat and that area for habitat, but the minute you say, well, let's close these meadows over New Meadows for habitat – oh, no. Our buddies are building their multi-million-dollar home over there. You can't do that. But that's where they need to close because if you don't have a cycle of life, you're just hodge-podge, trying to make something work. And as we can see with the groundfishery, they aren't making it work.

JW: What are the species that depend most on estuarian habitats?

GH: Just about everything we have. And it's back to your sardines. We decimated the spawn herring, the large herring offshore, in the early '70s – late '60s, early '70s. We no more than did that and tried to counteract it with the Magnuson Act, and then in '76, when we got the Magnuson Act through, you had all these politicians coming in – oh, now we've got rid of them. We can build our own fishery. Well, sorry, guys, but we're already in trouble. We shouldn't be building our fishery. Well, they built a fishery – all these tax incentives to have doctors and

lawyers build longliners and big draggers. Of course, then they realized, well, I guess we shouldn't have. (laughter) But we had all these boats. I know at the time, Regional Director Peterson – at one of the Maine fishermen's forums, I brought that subject up to him, and he had quite a hissy fit over it. He knew – he was the regional director of National Marine Fisheries, that these boats didn't have any impact. And the whole crowd laughed. We had a packed room, and we all laughed at him and said, yeah, and you're running us. At the time, another fisherman, Marshall Alexander from Portland, who was my age – we would fit as fishermen, he and I, I felt like. Anyway, we were good friends, and he sort of defended me. Marshall's a good spokesman and well known in this area – you know, the Northeast – for being part of the management of the fisheries. He explained it to Mr. Peterson what really was going on, and he just couldn't believe it that those boats that were built in the '70s still had any impact. We tried to explain it.

JW: What year was this?

GH: That was probably '85, '86, in that area. Yeah, I was groundfishing, so it was in the mid-'80s because I went groundfishing from like '83 to '86, something like that, I guess. Pretty steady – I'd just got married in '82 and wanted to be home more. So that's about the timeframe it was in, because I was fishing right out of O'Hara's, groundfishing. Went back scalloping about '86 or '87, somewhere in there – went to the Cape and fished summers, fished out here in the winter and stuff. But anyway, back to what we was talking about, the fact that the cycle of all the fisheries start as an inshore product of small fish – nurseries. They're in protected, sheltered waters as small species. And then, as they get bigger, they work off into the deep water. I wouldn't even want to say how many scientists I have tried to school on that theory is that you protect the nurseries, then you have a fishery out through. But if you don't have a nursery, you can't have that fishery out there. Of course, with the groundfishery, they've come up with these small areas that might be spawning areas. But they can't understand why after spawning, they don't see the reproduction of that fishery. It's because when the fish come ashore, they get killed by – you think about it. The little pollution plant over in Thomaston dumps 84,000 gallons of chlorine down the St. George River every year. It might look good to a scientist – oh, the water's clean and everything – but they don't realize that they're killing everything as that goes down there. The clams live in the mud. I guess they're surviving. But years ago, when the St. George River, so to speak – my area of life as a youngster before I got out of high school, so this is the late '60s, early '70s, scalloping and down that river, you'd see handfuls of small flounder when you hauled your drag up. Now, you go up there, you might fish all winter and see one. Those are the things that are happening. That's why we'll never have a fishery back, because the general public don't understand. National Marine Fisheries and the science that we supposedly have don't understand. And nobody wants to do anything about it because it's a big political button. So, the Earth takes it on the chin, period. That's what's happening. Every evening on the news, you can see, well, the country's doing something wrong as far as Mother Nature's doing this or doing that, and we just keep doing it. She will be the reckoning for us all when it's over. Those are the things that I've seen, is that whenever we get to a position where we're starting to get the cycle back to what it should be, Mother Nature's intent, somebody can see a monetary gain in that fixture, and they're more worried about how much money they're going to make out of that fixture than if that fixture might be better left alone to multiply to get them to the point that they really want to get to, but in a different area.

JW: When did you start fishing for scallops?

GH: Okay, scalloping. Again, I was probably – oh, eleven or twelve. Just got my new Novi boat, which was an eighteen-foot Novi with a twenty-five-horse Johnson. I was twelve years old. And a friend of mine, Johnny Armstrong, and I took one of his father's hand drags, and we went fishing all winter right there in Tenants Harbor, up in the little [inaudible] around the islands, just enough to at the time make spending money for Saturday night burgers at Farmer's. But that was when I really started scalloping. I still enjoy scalloping. It's the thrill of the chase in finding the product. And all through high school, same deal. In the winter, it was something we could all do on weekends at the time, vacations and stuff, and you could make pretty good money. It wasn't like it is today, but back then, to get a couple hundred bucks on the weekend was good money – real good money.

JW: How large were your catches when you started out?

GH: When I first started, a couple gallons a day was big. We'd get like six or eight quarts and peddle them around to the local people – you know, going door to door, so to speak. Or we had a little clientele. And on the weekends, if we got a Saturday or Sunday when it was a pretty day, we sold to William Atwood. Somewhere in my mess, I've saved a couple of the slips from back in – I guess it was like '67, I think, or '66 or something like that we sold scallops to Atwood Brothers. It was minimal. I can't remember exactly. It was twelve pounds or something like that.

JW: Where's Atwood?

GH: Down at Tenants Harbor. Just before you come into Tenants Harbor, there's a place called Wildcat. It's a lobster company down in there. It's one of the prominent names in lobster buyers in the area and worldwide, really, now at this point. Then, after high school, it was a winter thing between shrimping and scalloping into the '70s. Like I said earlier, I guess it was in '78 and '79 that I finally went offshore scalloping and went more than just in the winter – I went full-time.

JW: Was that out of New Bedford?

GH: Yeah. Well, Portland, really. It was New Bedford, then we immediately went to Portland, because the owners of the boat wanted the boat in Portland. And I fished out of Portland for, oh, three or four years there between the *Sea Trek*, and then I went on the *Bountiful II* for Addison Love. Then, I came home in '82 and went winter fishing for scalloping and groundfishing through the summer. Then I think it was '86 that there was a big biomass of scallops close to shore down off Cape Cod and off of Gloucester, so a lot of us small boats went down there and fished because it was lucrative. That was the time when the price changed in the early '80s – it went from \$2.65 to \$3 to \$5 or more a pound. That changed the whole –

JW: What caused the price to jump up so much?

GH: I think just the marketplace opened up. More people were selling them. The small fryer restaurants wanted them small scallops. That's what they were. They were in the fifty count per pound range. Anyway, we fished down there – oh, I guess until – I had a new boat or I built a new boat in '88, '89, and we sort of went full time scalloping from like '86 on. We fished the state waters in the winter or close to the state waters, and then in the summer, we'd go anywhere as far south as Block Island and fished out of there. '88, '89, '90, I guess we fished out of Block Island or Point Judith. Again, a fifty-foot boat, fishing small, and fished until – oh, I guess '93. Then I finally – I bought the *Ocean Clipper*, which is the eastern rig here, and we fished that a couple of months, and then I put [inaudible] in it. And that's what it's been ever since. We just sort of muddled through all the things that have happened through the years – a boat sinking. We had one sink at the wharf here in town. (inaudible) broke and went through her and sunk her one night. That led us to the *Shearwater*, which is my latest one up here, which is the big boat of the company. We've just transitioned through all the different developments as far as going to ITQs [Individual Transferable Quotas] and what have you – you know, the new management process. I've been part of the advisory council since '84, I guess, for NMFS in some capacity. Same here in the state. I was one of the leading members of the Maine Scallops Association for a while. We had a fishery here. Same thing – just lack of management with the fisheries is what's led us to our downfall, so to speak.

JW: Is the scallop season in Maine similar to the scallop season in southern New England and offshore?

GH: No, not at all. There is no season, so to speak, offshore. The State of Maine – we used to have a season from November 1st until April 15th. And with the transition of the lobster biomass, they've changed it now. I guess this year, they're going to open December 2nd, I think it is, and weekends off and on – a whole host of stuff that they've changed. But again, we don't have any kind of a fishery now compared to what we did in the '80s, and it's all because of, again, the circumstances of the events. We had the divers come in. Again, they dive up inshore water and take the spawning biomass. We were sort of semi-fighting that at the time, trying to educate the people but not making much headway. Then we had the sea urchin industry bloom, and that was devastating.

JW: When was that?

GH: The early '90s – late '80s, early '90s. It just brought in everyone that dared to jump in the water with a dive suit on, people that had no idea about the ocean and water and boats. I could tell stories all day of some of the horror shows that we've seen out here in the bay – guys from Aroostook County diving off around the islands and finding huge amounts of sea urchins, and they were in these little makeshift hundred-dollar outboard rigs, and they'd be so laden with urchins that they'd swamp themselves coming across the bay – in the middle of the winter, to boot. On several occasions, I've saved them. And the first thing you'd say was, "Start throwing some of that stuff overboard." Of course, they're realizing that they were throwing hundred-dollar bills overboard, wouldn't. They'd rather drown, I guess. That showed you the mentality. They just didn't understand the mess they were in. They were just fortunate that a big steel boat came along and saved their rears.

JW: How long did the urchin boom last?

GH: Into the mid-'90s, and then it sort of fizzled out. Again, overfishing – just immense overfishing. Of course, with that left all these guys that were divers to make a living somewhere else. So they scoured every inch of the coast of Maine inshore water for scallops, and it just decimated the breeding stock. So, fisheries pretty much died. And now, we've got it sort of – the divers have all gone on, found other jobs, and sort of given up because there wasn't anything to go for. There wasn't enough to make a living. So now, we've got a fishery started back, and the few people that are in the fishery now are just trying [by] hook or by crook to get rid of everybody. It's quite a show as far as – like this year, I've been to more meetings for the state waters than I've been to since – I'll say the mid-'80s, just trying to straighten out the fishery and get it headed in the right direction. Of course, we changed commissioners, and the past commissioner didn't even realize that – again, he was from out of state, came here, didn't realize that we even had a commercial fishery for scallops. That tells you how bad management is in this country for managing our fisheries. Here's the head of managing our state fisheries didn't even realize we had a fishery. But George is a nice enough guy, just didn't really understand his job, and he made a lot of crucial mistakes. Now, we have a new commissioner who openly says he doesn't have a clue. This is just disturbing to me. Nice guy, and he's trying hard. But he's running the fishery as political, not as a management. It's just the political system running the fishery.

JW: Can you describe the process of scalloping offshore and what equipment is involved?

GH: Well, of course, the biggest thing offshore is you have bigger equipment. The difference between the state water fishery is you're only allowed a maximum of one ten-and-a-half-foot drag. In offshore fishery, the majority of the boats, which we call full-time boats, usually have two dredges which range anywhere from eleven to fifteen feet, and they're considerably heavier than what we use in the state. In the past, like when I first started, we had a union out of New Bedford. So you only fished eight days, thirty-two watches, and the watches were six on, six off. It was an organized fishery.

JW: What was the name of the union?

GH: New Bedford Scallopers Union. I can't remember the union number. We're talking back in the late '70s, early '80s that this happened. It had a host of things – your health insurance and stuff. It all cost, but it made it more of a business than it was just a helter-skelter, go-for-it type fishery that it is now. And again, in the, I will say, early '80s, one of the big companies [inaudible] up here, and the O'Hara's and their counter company – Eastern Fisheries in New Bedford – decided that they were going to break the union and get rid of it because it put too many restrictions on them. There you go again – the restrictions are off. You had them and a handful of other companies or boat owners that went wide open and just devastated the industry – 120-foot boats going back-to-back, or three crews, two boats going – you know, the boat would come in, take the product out, a new crew aboard, right back out. There was no rhyme or reason to it. Like when we had the union, you had five days home. By the mid-'90s, the fishery was depleted to the point where there was no fishery, really. I've seen trips where we've fished for seven or eight days with our small boats and only got twenty-five/thirty bags, whereas a

hundred bags was pretty normal for us with one ten-footer. That led to the management regime that we have now. It really started in '89, I guess, and was fully developed – Amendment 4 in '94.

JW: This is scalloping in federal waters, now?

GH: Yes, this is the federal water scallop fishery. Of course, in that timeframe, we had – I think it was somewhere – '83 or '84 that the Hague Line went through, and that closed off a large majority of where we all fished on the big offshore boats away from us. So that hurt our industry considerably, too. There's more than just one or two actions that really devastated our fishery.

JW: And the Hague Line cut through the northern edge of Georges Bank?

GH: Yes. That cut basically the whole northern edge right off. Like I said earlier, I've got books and books in there that I've saved that were all on the Canadian side – all the tows that I had. They're all on the Canadian side of the line now. Some here. So, that brought them in.

JW: What was the difference in the bottom substrate on the Canadian side?

GH: Well, the Canadian side – I think what it was was a softer bottom and more congealing to the scallops, versus where we have is the shoalier water, and it's harder bottom rocks. Of course, it's shoal. On our side, there's places that at a low, low tide, there's rocks that stick out. People don't think of it – well, you're a hundred miles offshore. What's that? Oh, it's a rock. You have to stop and think about it for a second. So a lot of our bottom was taken away from us, or the bottom that we always fished. Of course, with all these big companies – or the handful, I should say, of companies devastating our whole fishery from the northern edge all the way down to New Jersey, it wasn't long that we didn't have a fishery. We had, so to speak, a boo-boo that worked to our favor. When the groundfish committee closed these certain areas for spawning groundfish, they also were very heavy spawning areas for scallops. In '98, we started realizing that – you know, this biomass of scallops growing in these closed areas. '99, we sort of tested the waters with – I think it was ten-thousand-pound trips, and most of us got one in these closed areas. Of course, in two or three days, we had our 10,000 and was home. That's what has led us to the fishery we have now. We sort of did well at the beginning because the fishery was so depleted, I guess you'd say, that we didn't over-harvest. Now, we're to the point where many of these big companies have bought all the permits up. That's what NMFS wanted. Well, between NMFS and the Environmental Defense Fund and all these, so to speak, environmental groups that want to turn it into stock options, basically, is what they're trying to turn the whole fishery. Groundfish, every fishery should be a stock option that they can sell or buy and make money on. We're not community-owned, not local, person that owns a fishery or a right to go fishing. Now, it's a privilege, and you have to buy that privilege through the quota system. Again, same thing. You've got the big guys always constantly trying to get the little guy out because those are our scallops. They're not yours. I've been in this fishery for, what, forty-five years, and I still haven't earned my place in the fishery. It's disturbing to people that are normal people to see your country pull that on you. Well, it's turned into political – money and political. There's no common sense at all. Every year, we get closer and closer to that.

JW: So the groundfish closures inadvertently helped juvenile scallops –

GH: Yeah, grow.

JW: – to mature?

GH: Yeah. And then, of course, with that, you had biomass that was spawning that created your overall fishery. Now, that's what's happening. As we go through – now, we've been in it for going on fourteen years, I guess – that the fishery has changed to the point where we're overfishing the closed areas, and every time we do, our fishery declines. Now, our managers have realized this. Fisheries Survival Fund semi-acknowledges it. So, we've gone into the next couple of years where we've slowed our fishery way down, and we're seeing the effects almost immediately, where we're getting these big biomasses of small scallops sprouting up everywhere, which is good. That's proper management. The downfall is that you have these handful of big companies that want it all to themselves, and they don't want the management; they only look at the dollar signs. Beat it to death. When we're done, we'll go on and do something else – move our boats to the West Coast, whatever. That's what we, as independent fishermen, are constantly fighting is that regime to get rid of us. We've got it coming again in November. We've all been informed that one of the big players in New Bedford has got lawyers and going to fight it again. I'm just hoping that the council – this is the fourth time that he's tried it – that the council immediately are just going to say, "No, Ray, we're not going to play this game. It's their fishery as much as it yours. Enjoy it." [laughter] He's just a greedy old man. He's in his late seventies, and he just owns five or six huge, 125-foot boats, making millions of dollars a year, but I want more.

JW: Who is this again?

GH: Ray Starvish from New Bedford. It's a shame. It just shows you American greed, I guess you'd call it. Of course, the first ones he wants to jump on is our small boats. That's what I'm considered because I chose the fishery that was in the State of Maine. I fish with one ten-and-a-half-foot drag – conservation-minded, environmentally minded, and we take observers, and they're just flabbergasted at the way we fish and produce the same amount of scallops as these huge, big, devastating (D-8s?) that go just destroying the habitat and not really making any more money than we do. When it all is said and done at the final line, my crews make more money than the big boats' crews because we just don't have the expenses. That's the name of it. So, that's where we are in the scallop industry. But as far as me and my history in the scallop industry, again, I've been a big part of it. When we wrote Amendment 4 to the scallop plan, I introduced what is the general category scallop plan at that time. Now, they've changed it. I won't even go into how much time, effort, expense that I went to try to stop that. But again, it was big boats trying to take away from the small boats. They won.

JW: What did Amendment 4 establish?

GH: Number one, it was limited access. Amendment 4 established whether you qualified to be in the scallop fishery and at what capacity – whether you were occasional, part-time, or full-time. Then it also set the guidelines that you qualified under. So, it determined the size boat you

qualified in and what class you qualified in. In doing that, it set up the perimeters for different classifications of boats. That's where I fit in is that the different categories for different areas – like us with the Gulf of Maine fishery, we set the guidelines for that, which was the small dredge permits, which is what I'm in, is basically a small boat fishing one dredge. Then whether you were occasional, which only gave you seven or eight days, versus part-time that gave you like half of a full time, and then we have like me, which is the full-time small dredge, which was a fisherman that fished year-round with that capacity. That's what's being challenged right now, is these big guys think, well, they aren't full-time boats, because full-time boats should have two dredges. When we set the perimeters in Mystic in May of '93, the qualifying aspect of it was hashed out, and they realized – and this was the big thing that I pushed for – was that you have people that don't qualify as you've got the qualifications written that are full-time fishermen that fish with small boats and small gear that need to be addressed because you're telling them that they're only part-time fishermen, and they're not. They're full-time. Again, we determined that NMFS had to change their qualifications to the point where, okay, you have to fish with the gear you've always fished with, but you qualify as a full-time fisherman. Again, twelve years down the road, they keep trying to change – or they try to input different pieces of the Magnuson Act and different pieces of the Management Act into it to say, well, see, this one here and this – and negotiate the path they want to go down to say, okay, they don't qualify to be full-time fishermen.

JW: Has it been resolved in any way?

GH: No. I mean, it's been resolved as far as the two times before, the fishermen have won at the council – is that, no, they qualified, they're legal, and everything's fine. That's how they qualified. But now, again, the political aspect of it is this guy is just trying to keep bombarding us with that same thing with more pressure, bigger lawyers, more money, and more political push to get their way. It's sort of like the big kid in the sandbox, and he wants to throw everybody else out so he's got it all to himself. I hope that that mentality right there continues – is that the real people in management just say, “No, that's not going to happen.” But it makes not only me and all the fishermen in the industry, but the bankers, everybody, kind of leery of doing anything. So it sort of hogs you, so to speak. You go to the bank and say, “Well, I'd like to have a new boat.” “Well, jeez, we don't know what's going to happen. We can't do it. But we'll give you a little money to fix your old boat up.” Of course, at my age, I just don't want to take on that big bullet because a new boat to replace, like what I've got, is probably two million dollars. So, we fixed her up, and we'll go for the next five, six years, and I'll be done, and I'll leave it to my son to figure out what he wants to do. He's already entrenched in his own business, so I imagine it'll all just get sold and be done, and that will be done. Because once it's gone, it's gone. Whoever pays the big money for that permit don't care so much about the boat, even though I do have a nice boat. The permits have become so valuable that really the normal person can't afford one.

JW: What did they cost when you started out?

GH: Oh, it was just a piece of paper issued from National Marine Fisheries. Once you qualified, that's when they became valuable – when they went to limited access. Once they went to limited access, there was four or five years there that everybody was – again, NMFS played that part.

People don't understand what's going on. We're going to play that part to get rid of as many as we can. Like me, by rights, I should have four permits. But because my questions that I asked directly to NMFS – in fact, I went to the office in Gloucester and sat down with one of their specialists and said, “Okay, here's all my paperwork. Tell me ...”. “Oh, you can't do that. You can't do that. Of course, you take it to a lawyer five years later, and they say, “Why didn't you do this?” Well, because he said ...”. They lied to you, right? Open-faced, they lied, and they knew they were doing it. You go back – “Well, it's too late now. You should have done it then. You should have known.” That was their exact quote. “You should have known what we was up to.” And I said, “Well, I came to every meeting, and I didn't know. And I came to you and asked you the questions, and you didn't know.” I said, “What do we ...?” “Well, that's too bad. Get a lawyer. Fight us. You lose.” That's the thing of it, is no matter what you do against the country, unless you've got millions of dollars, you lose because you just can't fight the fight because they'll just drag it out until you're dead. I've got a good friend that did try to fight, and he had a big restaurant and a couple of boats. [By] the time he was done, he lost everything. He won two rounds in court, and then the third round, they just waited until they got the judge they wanted to give them their settlement. That was the end of it.

JW: Did the resurgence of the scallop population coincide with the move to a limited-access permit system?

GH: Yeah, because all of that was taking place at that time. Of course, the groundfish boats were in limited days at sea. That facet of the management was dealing with their problems. The scallop industry was trying to streamline itself into this new process of limited access, so to speak, IFQs, individual fishing quotas, and such. So, it just all sort of snowballed. The groundfishery died, so to speak, and the scallop industry flourished out of it.

JW: What year was that?

GH: The closed areas for the groundfish was like '95, or in that area up through – still are in effect. But it was like '98 and '99 that we realized – I think it was '98 that we realized what was going on with the groundfish closures and what they were doing for the scallops. And, like I said, I'm pretty sure it was 2000 that we had our first shot at going scalloping in these closed areas. They gave us one or two closed-area trips. That's when we bought what was the old (*Sailor?*), which was a big southern rig, because the old *Ocean Clipper* had caught fire down outside of Gloucester, and I just had my little groundfish boat there for a couple years. Again, we was transitioning into the scalloping thing, and there was no scallops. The boat was fishing – you'd go fishing for a week at a time and get twenty-five, thirty bags, which would just about pay the fuel and maybe give the guys five, eight hundred dollars for the week. It just was really slow going. But we sort of held on because we still had our inshore fishery. So, in the winter, they'd sort of get caught up.

JW: What were the bad years of the offshore fishery?

GH: Probably '95, '96, '97, '98, right in those years. Yeah, '97 and '98 was the worst. They were really bad. Again, those closed areas, I think, were starting to get a little bit of fishery outside. If you go back into the archives, you'd see that's where the New Bedford boats are

having all the, so to speak, problems with people fishing around the closed areas and getting caught inside because some of the guys would say, “Well, jeez, all we got to do is get inside, and we’ve got a whole trip if we can get four or five tows in there.” So they’d be fishing right next to the closed areas all the time and then jump in and raise a lot of devil. And, of course, NMFS crucified anyone who did it. That was that era of our fishery – the change and all the hassles that NMFS threw at us in fines and lawsuits, etc., if you go through the archives of that. Now, it’s pretty well settled down. I think there’s 324 of us full-time fishermen that do it year-round, or when they give us so many days. It’s like we’ve got thirty-four days outside of the closed areas and two closed-area trips this year. A couple of years ago, we had five closed areas and forty-four days outside. That was a huge year fishery for us – for a small boat – because it just gave us that opportunity. The way the biomass is coming back now, it looks like that opportunity may come again in a couple more years because we’ve slowed our fishery down. A lot of the full-time guys are sort of – well, we’ve had few good years. It’s better to just let it be. You’ve got one or two, like we’ve spoke of, that – well, this is a good time to get rid of everybody so I can have it to myself because these guys ain’t making the money, and I’ve got all kinds of money so I can afford lawyers and political payoffs to get what I want. That’s why we’re going to see it again in November. Again, it’s already been written on the wall. But as far as the fishery, it’s being fairly well managed – not by NMFS, but by the Fisheries Survival Fund that we, as scallopers, pay into a percentage of what we get, and they represent us. Without them, we would have been put out of business because NMFS would have continually run the industry like they run everything else – into the ground. That’s what they’ve done to the groundfishery, and now they’ve tried starting on the lobster fishery by coming up with schemes, because that’s what I see the environmental groups doing now. They come up with a scheme that this one fish – if we can shut this one fish down, it will shut the whole fishery down because they can’t catch that one fish, and they catch that one fish all the time. That’s what I see. I could get into that a long ways, but we won’t. But that’s what I see the scallop fishery doing right now. It’s been a good ride. I’ve made basically the majority of my money in life through the fishery. I enjoy the herring fishery myself. The scallop fishery is a young man’s game because it’s manual labor – a lot of manual labor, a lot of tedious work, a lot of hours. Not that seining isn’t a lot of hours, but at least it’s not backbreaking work. It’s more a gentleman’s fishery. You just put time in. That’s what I’ve sort of done basically, my seining now is just the offset of me being home and wanting to do it. So, I’ve sort of built a little business out of it, and that’s where it’s going to stay. I got people that keep pulling at me to make it a big business, but I don’t want to. I just don’t want to get that big. But again, I’ll probably shoot myself in the foot because sometimes you just have to grow to stay in business. That’s the unfortunate part of the way the management is, is if they’d factor in the little guy when they factored in the big guy, probably the whole fishery overall would be in a better condition than they are. But they don’t seem to understand that. That’s basically fisheries management; it’s managing the whole fishery, not just one little piece of it. That’s a big job.

JW: Well, thank you very much for talking with me today, Gary. Appreciate it, and safe travels to you.

GH: Yeah. Well, I hope somebody gets some insight out of this, anyway.

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Reviewed by Molly Graham 1/9/2023