

Oral History Collection – Fishing and Fisheries
Martin Bartlett Oral History
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Interviewer: RL – Robert Livingtone
Transcriber: NCC

Robert Livingstone: Okay. This evening, I'm having a conversation with a friend of mine, Rocky Bartlett. What is your correct name?

Martin Bartlett: Martin Rockwell.

RL: Martin Rockwell Bartlett. Absolutely. Martin Rockwell Bartlett. In the continuing series that I was working on in most of this year up until the end of July, when my life changed. It has to do with the history of the fishing industry of Woods Hole. I am a retired fishery biologist from the National Marine Fisheries Service of Woods Hole and have been collecting this information, talking to a number of fishermen from different fishing backgrounds and whatnot as part of this history. We're sitting in my home in the TV room. We each have a rub in our hands, and we're going to simply have a relaxed conversation about some of Marty's experiences fishing and a little bit about some of his thinking. So, we'll play this back. Okay. We're in business again. It doesn't make any difference. This has an automatic mic thing and it certainly makes a difference. Marty, could you begin by saying when you were born and where you were born, I'm not sure if you're originally from New England. I have a feeling you are.

MB: Just over the border, Mount Kisco, New York, [19]33, year of [19]33.

RL: 1933, Mount Kisco, New York.

MB: My mother's family was from New York.

RL: Oh, I didn't know that.

MB: The old man was from Webster. They did schooling there. They all went to that private school, Western (Connecticut?) Private School. My brother still lives out in Connecticut. The family went to the town of (Cape?) for the summer.

RL: Down the [inaudible]?

MB: Right. Well, the [inaudible] for the (Wellington?) and throughout the same time the Bartletts work for setting up in East [inaudible] more or less settled in that direction, sort of spread out.

RL: But you're from East [inaudible] gathered down the (Patnam?) River.

MB: Yes, over that direction.

RL: Okay. So, did you go to high school in [inaudible]?

MB: No. At that time, you couldn't go to the school with your father.

RL: Was your dad a teacher?

MB: Yes. He was the headmaster.

RL: That's right.

MB: Kind of the likes, I guess.

RL: This was what?

MB: I think they started at twenty-three, something like that. Actually, I was a foreign school dropout and went right into the Coast Guard.

RL: You went to the Coast Guard?

MB: Yes.

RL: What year was that?

MB: That was at [19]52.

RL: In [19]52.

MB: [19]52 to [19]56. I don't know exactly.

RL: When did you first come to woods?

MB: Around [19]56, right after the Coast Guard came to Woods Hole, I went on to Crawford.

RL: You went out on the Crawford.

MB: Yes. This was with just training in the Coast Guard in buoys and rescues and so forth.

RL: Did you go on to college after that or no?

MB: I went right with Frank Mather after four years on the most, five years with Frank Mather.

RL: You spent five years with Mather?

MB: Yes.

RL: What years were those?

MB: Those had to be – let's see, I left the ocean of [inaudible], I guess, [19]68, I guess. So, that's the previous –

RL: Okay. That's when we knew you were [inaudible]. So, you were working with Mather on the tuna migrations and tagging.

MB: Those were the tough years, right, when everything hit the fan in [19]52.

RL: Yes. You started with him at sixty, that's right around [19]60. Did he have anybody else with him now?

MB: (Dolly Rogers?) and (Margaret Walker?)

RL: Margaret?

MB: Yes.

RL: Th one who was a graduate student at the University of [inaudible].

MB: Right.

RL: But when you spend a lot of time at sea, did you?

MB: The International Geophysical Year, basically, Crawford stuff, we were always at sea. The time with Frank was shorter and shorter.

RL: Was the [inaudible] you weren't doing, any biological –

MB: No, sir.

RL: Okay. Then after you work with Frank, that's when you lived on (Middlefield Street?)?

MB: Yes.

RL: Okay. Then where'd you go?

MB: I went to Pascagoula.

RL: You want to work for fish and wildlife service for the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries.

MB: Yes.

RL: What were you down there? Okay. This was down in Pascagoula. Now, what were you doing down there?

MB: Well, that was after we started with swordfish thing up here with Henry in [19]62 more or less, and by][19]65 everything was pretty well run down.

RL: You mean this was with a (Captain Bill?)?

MB: Yes.

RL: Okay. When you started with Henry, how does this begin? What happened?

MB: Frank was interested in the tunas still as a biological thing. I think the bureau had more or less dropped it as an economical proposition with the tunas, right? So, he kept borrowing the gear running cruises with a Crawford and running cruises with –

RL: In the (long line?)?

MB: Yes, distribution and studies of the blue fin, just the bluefin. Of course, we were catching everything else too occasionally. I think, on one of the cruises in the [19]60s, I think we had a couple of swordfish that was an interesting sideline. I think it was [19]62 when we made a rather extensive cruise from south of Woods Hole, Bermuda, then down to the Caribbean across South St. Croix. I think in Miami, Frank got off the boat and we were supposed to bring it home. That was my great taking-off point there where, I guess, we made a couple of sets on the way up. Around the time we got to (Charleston?), we set a bunch of gear and that's when (Cyril Baskets?) had his fingers off in the air conditioning system.

RL: (Cyril Baskets?)

MB: Do you remember Cyril was chief engineer on the Crawford –

RL: I remember Cyril but I didn't know him.

MB: It was one of those catastrophes, you know. I mean, you had to set the gear in the Gulf Stream and had to leave it and go to Charleston and take the [inaudible] inside. We did it. We got back there in the middle of the night, of course, and there was no gear there, right? It was gone. So, I don't know what we have. We have, maybe sixty hooks left, which was amounted to about six baskets a year, which is probably maybe two-thirds of a mile in a year. So, all we had was a couple of (BTs?) to identify the water that we set the gear. We kept taking BT trying to get the same trace and we kept setting the gear. Following the gear then we take more BTs get in and out, set the gear.

RL: Were you looking at certain temperature for distribution?

MB: Yes. So, three days later, we found the gear up off Cape Lookout.

RL: This is the gear you lost.

MB: Yes. In the meantime, of course, we've been fishing at night, and we started to catch swordfish. Occasionally, I think the best catch probably was one fish every – I think we had six or eight fish [inaudible].

RL: This was down off of?

MB: Between Charleston and Cape Lookout.

RL: Cape Lookout.

MB: Then when we finally got the gear off Cape Lookout, we had rotten swordfish on there too. So, we were pretty –

RL: Did this get you? Did you get a bug in your [inaudible] over this?

MB: Oh, well, yeah, everyone did. (Pete Wilson?) was on the boat.

RL: Was he?

MB: Yes.

RL: Maybe he comes from [inaudible]?

MB: He came from [inaudible]. He has a big cruise.

RL: Pete Wilson, oh god. He was all fired up too.

MB: He came down with [inaudible] a few months after that and tried to fish in the dumping ground, south of –

RL: The dumping ground? What time of the year was this when you first made this?

MB: That was just May.

RL: This was in May. So, you were in the southern.

MB: Yes, just about.

RL: They really hadn't moved up as far as –

MB: A bunch of small fish.

RL: They were small fish?

MB: Yes, half of them. The little ones survived and the big ones all got [inaudible]. We were inside. We were too close to the bank. They were getting a lot of yellowfin and a lot of hammerheads. After we got that little fifty – we set something like fifty-three sections of gear, which in those days was 530 hooks. After we got it back, we got thirty-seven back out on the fifty-three which is pretty damn good.

RL: Thirty-seven.

MB: So, while we were straightening that out, we took a transect south and made sort of a triangular three set deal south of that and got bluefin on every one of those stations on the south

side of the spring.

RL: This was on the Crawford?

MB: Yes.

RL: This was on Crawford and while you guys on your way and taking your curve back to the home base. It's a real trip, isn't it?

MB: He was all sore. He was all [inaudible]. We continued the night fishing on the Eugenie and we took him out. I forget what year it was. It was [19]61. I think it was [19]61. Anyway, we were bringing him back from a leg of the Eugenie cruise from New Jersey to Woods Hole on the night of October 1st. We put some gear right in Block Canyon.

RL: Block Canyon?

MB: We had four of the biggest kind of swordfish. We took three aboard, tagged one. But he was, "Well, we didn't have four of the big, long guys aboard. If there was a chance to tag and we should have."

RL: When you say it was tag each time –

MB: Another drunken swordfish. [laughter] He kept on saying that, "Another drunken swordfish." He wanted them all tagged. It was one of those things.

RL: Was that the first time a swordfish was tagged?

MB: I really don't know.

RL: Who was that, [inaudible] or something?

MB: [inaudible] was the guy that gave the boat.

RL: Who was the guy down the University of Florida that tagged first time the swordfish?

MB: The [inaudible] is the guy who was supposed to be in [inaudible]. He went to Peru with [inaudible], I guess. Was that Yale? Did Yale have a study down there at one point?

RL: But certainly, down there is where people are pretty much aware of the swordfish. This was before you were down to work at Pascagoula.

MB: Right.

RL: You went to work at Pascagoula. Did you work on the big pelagic fish still?

MB: I did a lot of things. You just did what you were told. But the primary reason for doing it

was that the swordfish had been pretty well locked down. There were only maybe two or three or four boats left. There was a fleet of thirty-five there in [19]62 or [19]63.

RL: Fleet of thirty-five fleets.

MB: Me and Mather [inaudible].

RL: Is that so?

MB: Slowly but surely, it got depleted. But I went back way back in the 1870s or 1890s. I mean, there were quite a few boats that used to switch fishing sources. The swordfish was [inaudible] if you can't do it without wiping up what's available completely. Because you are fishing, they always complain about the small fish. But it's a question of if you're fishing, half the fish are males and you never touched the males before.

RL: You mean, you wouldn't fish on a lot of males?

MB: It's all females.

RL: The flood [inaudible] on the surface are all females?

MB: Yes.

RL: Is that so?

MB: There's a few that are males.

RL: You mean it's as much difference as you get with dogfish, shark where you got all females one way, or males in one way.

MB: Yes.

RL: Is that so?

MB: A lot of them are females. It's like anything else. As long as you don't overdo it, it works fine. I think the good ones roll out that's for sure. The good ones weren't taking that much money. It was an obvious addition to the range. It would have been this winter fishery in the Gulf, and that was my primary reason for getting out. I couldn't do it on the Frank's side.

RL: Okay. No. I remember years ago in your house on Middlefield street, you had, I would say, a significant collection of books dealing with maritime, sailing, fishing, and so forth. Didn't you have quite a library to do it? You had a tremendous following towards maritime, fishing, sailing, boating, everything ever since you were little boy. Isn't it?

MB: Well, it could be. The things that happened during the summertime were much more impressionistic. Impressions gave me better impressions than anything I did in the other nine

months. But that was spent with the Coast Guard and everything else right around there in east.

RL: But the thing that got you thinking commercially was working for a few years and exploratory fishing and going on and seeing where things were.

MB: Right. Well, it happened to me when I was working with Frank, really. But Frank was scientifically inclined. He would frown on any application of our work for the commercial end of it. There were times when there was no bonus about that. He'd say it was not the thing to do. I got along with the commercial guys quite well. I enjoyed applying what the ocean graphic had to offer to the commercial end. That's something that was ignored or frowned upon when it came to continuing what the [inaudible].

RL: Did you break with Frank over Martini? Was he upset when you turned to commercial fishing?

MB: Well, it's hard to tell. I don't believe so. I believe we're the best friends now,

RL: Yes, I would think so.

MB: There was a little bit of edge on it at the time.

RL: Because you were kind of a right hand man.

MB: Yes. It was a matter of fact that I didn't want to pressure him into doing my own thing, because I didn't have the credentials to do it at the ocean graphic. So, it would have been unfair of me to say, "Well, I demand this and that or the other thing." Because I knew I could do it if I just got that job at Pascagoula, whether they liked it or not. It ended up, I went down and made my own gear. [inaudible] I knew we could do it. By then, I was hooked on swordfish.

RL: So, where did you go in the Gulf?

MB: Right off the mouth of the river.

RL: Is that so?

MB: You can catch shrimp out of there, the marble stuff was there. There were plenty of mine.

RL: Okay. So, you put this all together.

MB: Yes. I had done that before I decided to go.

RL: When did you decide to get it? Where did you get the one of the most beautiful [inaudible] that floats in the North Atlantic Ocean? I mean, the *Penobscot Gulf*. Where did you get this?

MB: This happened after I've been with the Marine Extension service in Georgia for three years.

RL: Was the Marine Extension service in Georgia?

MB: Yes.

RL: Was Dave down there?

MB: Yes. Dave Harrington.

RL: Oh, Harrington. Oh, my god.

MB: Sure. [laughter]

RL: Was Miller –

MB: Harrington. Miller,

RL: I used to [inaudible]. Dave was down there too and Miller?

MB: Yes.

RL: [inaudible] a whole bunch of all the people from (Anderson's Lab?) too. I remember the guys that used to bring the attaché case into the airport filled with (rubber balls?) [inaudible] all through the airport drive everybody crazy.

(laughter0

What do you do in Georgia?

MB: Well, in Georgia, they wanted me to call over do the same thing I've done in the Gulf, but we'd had a crack at it, you know? Just the time I got the job in Georgia, that is when the FDA came down and struck us in the [19]70s. They came in and after the tuna flail and they couldn't find anything to fight the tuna industry. Then they came after the sword fishermen who were thinking of high stuff too. So, they wiped us out in the Gulf. But one of the last things we tried to do was take one of the boats in the Gulf and get a bunch of samples as he came out of the Gulf. Did you see if there were any places we could fish where we could get to a .5? What did the FDA do? Well, they came out with a .5.

RL: The mercury?

MB: Yes. Everything around the river was really high. It was 2.5 around the river.

RL: Was it 2.5?

MB: Yes.

RL: All that [inaudible] to me was to figure [inaudible] down.

MB: If you're away from the river, it gets down to 1.5.

RL: All these good feature was coming down to the city.

MB: Yes. I think so.

RL: From all the way wherever.

MB: Yeah. That was critical, because the FDA can act as long as it's a man-made level, right? But if we could prove that it was a man-made level, the 1.5 was natural. Then the FDA theoretically, wouldn't have any –

RL: So, in other words, if you went back and see and looked at back [inaudible], you could find and determined that 1.5.

MB: Yeah. That's sort [inaudible]. But that was the base, that was the nitty gritty anyway. While the guy did was looking for these samples, he also made some sense off Brunswick, and he didn't think that much of what was going on. The guy that was there was one of the people that I thought the most of was (Dick Paul?) with the old [inaudible] which was the same boat that got broke down in Boston Harbor and [inaudible] originally. They invited her. They brought her up south and tried to start it again. I'll think of the name a little while later. But he was a super guy. He looked at it and he say he didn't think it was that good. I could see where it would take a yearlong study, continuous fishing, and nobody was about to put out money for that. It was going to – and I looked at the boats in Georgia. I said, "Look, you might have two boats in all of Georgia. They can go onto the Gulf Stream and fish." We went forth and back a couple of times.

RL: What were the boats in Georgia? Are they ship boats?

MB: Pine tree navigation.

RL: What do you call them?

MB: Pine tree navigation.

RL: Pine tree navigation. (laughter)

MB: They will line up the pine tree and [inaudible].

RL: Those all-time navigators. They really know those landmarks and what not.

MB: But the hard part of it is [inaudible] fishing and that was lose but it's a different kettle of fish. I mean, you're [inaudible].

RL: Did you get the *Penobscot Gulf* down there?

MB: No, that was after. Let's see what happens. It was after the mercury thing. We could see the mercury thing was going to let go. The guys were going to continue fishing. The FDA, the states were beginning to fight the FDA. In other words, if your fish didn't go across the border, the FDA couldn't ravel, right? The FDA kept saying, "Well, if they came in two, three mile," whatever that means they came through a border. But they were having trouble making, making the stick. Everything they did was questionable. So, I could see that, "Hey, this thing was going to be all right. If you wanted to make a move, now the time." So, I looked around for a boat. She's been a good boat.

RL: Where was this? This was –

MB: Well, I came back up here. I looked around. I looked around in mobile. I looked around all over the south – well, not all over the south but Mississippi.

RL: You did?

MB: Yeah. Finally found *Penobscot* in the Hyannis.

RL: You found her in the Hyannis?

MB: Yes.

RL: Who was the former owner?

MB: A guy named (Roshan?).

RL: Roshan.

MB: Leonard Roshan, (Delta Crane?), He got her in Maine from a guy Stevenson. Stevenson had gotten her from the oil company because she couldn't pass the surveys anymore, couldn't carry oil. She's getting too –

RL: Is that so?

MB: – some portions which was a (forward copper dam?) was the worst place and they have neglected it, I guess. What they ended up doing was putting plates from the water line up and cement underneath, and that's still there.

RL: Is that so?

MB: Yes.

RL: So, when you when you saw the *Penobscot Gulf*, you knew that this was what you wanted?

MB: Not really, no. We looked at her for quite a while.

RL: [laughter] [inaudible] I think.

MB: I couldn't find anything wrong with her. Then for eight years, I still can't find anything wrong. [laughter]

RL: That's beautiful. What year was this?

MB: That had to be [19]73.

RL: When you got her?

MB: Right.

RL: You've been fishing her for eight years.

MB: Yes.

RL: You can't still find anything wrong with her.

MB: No.

RL: Beautiful. I mean, she comes back.

MB: She's so solid. They really knew what they were doing.

RL: Okay. Now, when did you first start basing your operation in Woods Hole?

MB: Well, we came up every summer.

RL: We were talking about coming to Woods Hole. I wanted to know when you first came to Woods Hole before you came into the town dock there. Would this have been that you picked up your vessel in Hyannis? What did you do?

MB: We fitted her out here. The winter of [19]73, [19]74, we worked hard. Most of the critical stuff was done. We got her masked.

RL: This was in Hyannis?

MB: Yes. The fish hole was pretty well cleaned out, or what turned out to be the fish hole was, of course, the she had six tanks, two large, four and a half, two small and [inaudible]. We just returned that right into fishing and put in the insulation and put in some firewood, Styrofoam and all that good stuff. The bank okayed the loan in June. I think we got our money just before Christmas, that sort of thing.

RL: What kind of loan was this?

MB: This was a PCA, one of the first ones on a black [inaudible].

RL: Is that so?

MB: It was our hard road to hoe. That was back and forth and babysitting those boats and going to the bank. I was quitting my job.

RL: You made the administrative crap that you had [inaudible].

MB: It was wild. It was really wild. I got paranoid and it was bad. It was a bad scene. I had some good friends hanging by. It was pretty intense. I loved it because I knew more or less what was it to have –

RL: Was your first fishing trip out of here?

MB: No. We took all our (gear boards?) here. There was a lot of stuff we didn't have done yet. We didn't have the main line on. We didn't have the hydraulic setup. We took off in the worst gale I've ever seen.

RL: You're down to the [inaudible].

MB: No. We did a little dogleg.

RL: A little dogleg.

MB: A little dogleg toward Hudson Canyon. By then it was screeching. We were right South [inaudible]. We idled her so she keeps the tail into her. We were doing seven knots but she had a pretty [inaudible] respect for her when you get through this. That's amazing. That really is because – I wouldn't have done it again. I didn't do it on purpose.

RL: You'll get caught.

MB: I called my mother, and I was, "Well, mom, we're going." She said, "You better not got now." Well, she didn't say that. She said, "It's going to be kind of a hard weather. There are two storms coming –

RL: Where was she down?

MB: She was in Connecticut.

RL: In Connecticut.

MB: She rarely comes to the TV. [inaudible] I hadn't done anything. We compensated the compass over into Bedford. We took on fuel, and we left. That was it.

RL: You went right out [inaudible].

MB: Yes. That was beautiful. They came up in the Northeast early, early the next morning. It just was crystal, beautiful, clear. We had a couple of sales up. I didn't turn on the radio with the weather report. That night, she's off real bad up in the northeast, and then she came around the northwest. We just ran before the whole time, had a wonderful – relatively. Then nothing went wrong, nothing at all. Well, we had to get the sale offer. I felt I should have left the main up. It just came down. [inaudible] backed off. All of the stuff that was loose –

RL: You had a rig for sale.

MB: Yes. We had a couple of sales.

RL: You did? This was in 1973?

MB: Yes.

RL: Over these (button legs)?

MB: They were two sales that were identical. One fits the floor triangle perfectly. That was a good [inaudible]. Then we use the same sail for the main sort of a storm.

RL: Was this common?

MB: Henry always had a steady sale.

RL: A steady sale.

MB: But ours was –

RL: It was actually –

MB: Yes, in that circumstance. She was something else.

[laughter]

I took her down. I had to take it down for a little. I was a little worried about how bad it was going to get.

RL: You had to wait for a little bit.

MB: I took her down because she slapped back and forth. We were running with it, but she hangs one way or the other.

RL: This is the next morning I'm sitting on Marty's boat, *Penobscot Gulf* down in the

[inaudible]. We're having a cup of coffee. We're going to continue the conversation. We're on frame 396, about. I have a feeling that we are recording, but I think I'll just check and play it back. Okay. Now, remember last night, you were going south with *Penobscot Gulf*. You've gotten in some terrific storm. You were talking about sales. You had to take us down and so forth. But I'm going to go to another subject totally. When you prepare to go on a sword fishing trip in your vessel, and you're tied up here in the dock, what takes place anyway? What goes on?

MB: Well, first that comes is the crew probably. You try to line up people. We can work the boat with four, three or two total number of people. It's a very adaptable rig. It depends on the quality of the people you can get. Up north, we can work about the hardest weather with three people. If you're catching a lot of fish, it's nice to have four. So, that's the variation. If you have a lot of fish, you want four. If you're fishing the maximum amount of gear, and not many fish, three is enough. If the weather is good and the fish are slim, two is plenty.

RL: Okay. Are these mostly people from Woods Hole that are fishing with you?

MB: When we're in Woods Hole, mostly it's Woods Hole crew.

RL: I remember [inaudible] was with you.

MB: Right. You usually pick up your crew from where you start. The good ones hang in and slowly but surely, either the fish eliminate some or the conditions or the amount of time away, and this sort of thing. So, basically, we start out with a family organization. Then slowly, it became people who were who were dedicated to the job and really like to do the job as well. Usually, it ended up being just about one steady person and myself and a pickup.

RL: Who was the guy that you had, the older man that I see down here all the time.

MB: I don't recall, really. (George Hilton?) was one of them.

RL: Did you fish with him for a while?

MB: Yes, for a while. That was quite a while ago.

RL: George Hilton. What was the name of this girl that was looking for –

MB: Let's see, right after (Beaver?). Beaver was our first righthand man that hung through while we were – I guess we have Tom. Tom was family. He was on for a year.

RL: Who's this Tom?

MB: Tom Richards.

RL: Tom Richards.

MB: Right. He and Beaver were together.

RL: I remember talking to him.

MB: The rest of the family sort of made summers out of it. Lucy and Paul and –

RL: Was it (Lucy Worthington?)?

MB: Yes. Lucy Worthington-Bartlett.

RL: I remember meeting her. She's great.

MB: Yes, she's great. I just sort of started a trend that we kind of liked. That was having girls aboard was always a pleasure. They contribute tremendously to the cleanliness of the place.

RL: Do they sort of balance things out? I mean, is it fun? I mean, when a guy's really got the seasick or whatever. Does it help having girls around?

MB: The girls get as rum sick as everybody else. It sort of eliminates that macho atmosphere.

RL: The macho atmosphere.

MB: Because the girls are obviously doing as good as any of the guys on the boat. I mean, they're like the other people.

RL: They could get in the [inaudible] –

MB: Yes. They do everything. They're as seaworthy as anybody can be.

RL: Which of course, [inaudible] girls going on the albatross.

MB: Right. They're very quick. They're very alert. I don't know, you get people who bounce from boat to boat, and they just sort of leave everything to the old saying, "It's his boat. Let him worry about it."

RL: Yes. Let him worry about it.

MB: That's something that girls appreciate the job a whole lot more when they get it. They don't like to live in squalor, and most guys just don't care how dirty things get. It's your boat and you have to live in it.

RL: So, in other words, they'll take a sponge and clean off the –

MB: Right. We've had guys on the boat that say, "Well, it's a fishing boat. It is supposed to be dirty." But the place begins to wreak and people just get worse and worse until it gets unbearable. I mean, you want to live in a place. You want to come down here and sit in a comfortable place while you're in port. It's one thing to go and walk off, I suppose. If he runs

over into the engine room and into the gear and everywhere else, you live in quarters that are dirty, that means the gear doesn't get together, right? The engine room gets filthy. Then you start to have breakdowns and accidents and stuff like that. You just got to start somewhere and your living habits are the natural. If a guy has poor living habits, he ends up having poor working habits too. It's very easy. You see it developed, but it's still sometimes you get people who can do part of the job very well, and sometimes you have to settle for that.

RL: Okay. Now, several days before you go out, you arrange for your bait. I mean, for the –

MB: Right. I guess our system is pretty much the same as it's been for everybody. Once we have the crew together, we make sure the boats are in operating order. Then we make sure the gears is provided for. Then crucial thing is when you pick up the ice because you want to move as fast as you can after you get through ice. Because every day, you sit around [inaudible] is one day less that you can survive on the other end of the trip.

RL: When you get gear ready, does this go by baskets or does it go by – not by baskets, like in (line drawing?). But, I mean –

MB: It used to be. In the [19]60s, the (draw line?) boats were all using baskets right up to the end. They didn't have reels. They used a [inaudible]. I don't believe that boat ever switched over. Until she went dragging, I think she always used the [inaudible] and the baskets and the gear were all made up stationary, and you couldn't change anything on the spur of the moment. You couldn't have two sets of branch line, two sets of float lines. You could vary.

RL: So, how long is one set of gear?

MB: It varies off from boat to boat.

RL: It varies?

MB: Yes. The little boats depend on how big you're in the harpooning too. The little boats will fish, I'd say, a minimal of five miles of gear. Most of them will always have five. The medium boats will have 15 to 18. The big ones will have 30 miles.

RL: 30 miles.

MB: That's the American – in other words, you could have a continuous line, say, from one buoy goes to there. It could be a distance. So, one degree of latitude.

RL: My god. How many hooks would that be?

MB: The hooks on the Jap and the American maximum hook number is about the same. It's around 22,000 to 2200 right in there. So, there's space, quite a distance apart. The American boats, the branch lines are shorter. So, they're closer together. The gaps are deeper and longer.

RL: Does the depth of the drop lines to depending on the –

MB: Yes. The further north, the colder the water, the shallower you can fish. Because then you got these deep thermic lines down south.

RL: Right.

MB: It's much that the warm water is shallower in the spring. So, you tend to use shorter gear at spring. Now, in fall, it cools from the top.

RL: You can do a scientific guessing about temperatures or BT or anything?

MB: You take your temperatures. Some people have a down temperature still. You take your temperatures, and then when you catch fish in certain place, you hope you have enough data to – in other words, [inaudible]. There is no magic number.

RL: There is no magic number. You just simply keep trying until you hit something. Then you try to have enough information left from that set so that you can follow the water and get back in the same spot anyway. So, the *Penobscot Gulf* fishes up to about, what, 20 miles.

MB: We fish about 14 miles.

RL: About 14 miles in here. Okay. Well, now let's leave the dock in Woods Hole. Now the next place is you head for the Bedford? Is that right?

MB: Right. We pick up our ice and fuel and water in the Bedford. Any stores and any supplies and stuff that we can pick up, the ship supplies.

RL: You get your fuel over there too?

MB: Yes.

RL: What do you figure you wouldn't have to invest in long line gear these days?

MB: We don't –

RL: Pick up our ice and fuel and water in the Bedford. Any stores and any supplies and stuff that we can pick up, the ship supplies.

RL: You get your fuel over there too?

MB: Yes.

RL: What do you figure you wouldn't have to invest in long line gear these days?

MB: We haven't lost any gear, to speak of. This last trip was the first trip we've lost any amount of gear at all. That was simply because it was the last day, so we didn't stick around for the

subsequent days.

RL: But gear loss for a pelagic long line is not a problem.

MB: Yes, it is. I was a definite problem. It's one of those things you learn not to do. You learn how not to do. I mean, it varies a whole lot with the number of fish that are around. Because you can sacrifice a lot of gear if you're catching a lot of fish. The way things are, getting the gear, it's almost as important to get the gear back these days as it is to get the fish. Because lots of times it's an equal distribution of wealth. So, you get more cautious the fewer fish there are. I mean, you're not going to stick your neck out for in hard weather. You're not going to put \$5,000 or \$6,000 with a gear in the water when the water when the chance of getting fish is getting slimmer and slimmer. So, we've streamlined the gear and lengthened everything out. We used to be happy when we were fishing a thousand hooks to get one fish per hundred hooks or so. Now, some days we don't put out with a 30,000 branch line and stuff like that. We're setting just about 100 hooks, and we're catching as many as four fish per hundred hooks. So, economically, it's working because the price of the fish is up, and the number of fish is down. So that if you have better gear, you're holding your own at least. If you can get your bait prices down to a hundred baits a day, that sort of thing. Then you're using lights that go for a dollar a piece. It's getting more expensive using those.

RL: So, you mean, this is for markers, you mean?

MB: No, they go above the hook, about 4,000 above.

RL: You're using those?

MB: Yes.

RL: I don't know anything about this. Actually, this is a chemical, but glows on the water.

MB: Right.

RL: Does it make a difference?

MB: Oh, definitely.

RL: So, you can try this on your new gear too.

MB: We could.

RL: Yes. That's interesting. That might be something to try.

MB: Sure. They have luminous bull worms. This is one of the things there is to. If that doubles the number of hours you can fish. If you fish at night, you can double the crew, and just cut the leg to a [inaudible] and half.

RL: Okay. So, you go right into Bedford, you take on your supplies, and then you're ready to go. You head to the bank, so the grounds.

MB: Right. You pick our food up back here, and food and bait come from back here.

RL: What kind of bait do you use?

MB: It's been all mackerel up until the last few years, and squid was working well down south. It's really good. It has a good holding quality because it's packed. It's packed and blocked instead of individually, so you have a lot less air so it lasts a lot longer.

RL: The squid?

MB: The squid, yes. It has been a quite course.

RL: Who supplies it up here?

MB: Logan Clarke.

RL: Oh, they do?

MB: A lot of this comes through Logan Clarke, most of stuff comes from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

RL: So, there's quite a big business still going on.

MB: A huge, big business. It's 37 cents a pound.

RL: Really for bait?

MB: The bait we use, yes.

RL: My god. What do lobster fishermen use?

MB: They use racks. They use waste, mostly.

RL: Mostly waste, so they can get it much more cheaper.

MB: They get a little cheap in a way, but it still does not –

RL; That's the deal.

MB: Right. Sometimes you get fined. That's the hard part of that.

RL: Okay. Then you head out for the banks.

MB: [affirmative]

RL: That's what you usually started fishing in terms of the continental shelf are usually beyond the shelf.

MB: We used to fish in 100 fathoms out and then they moved all lobster gear. So, you're more or less restricted outside two hundred now or the fixed gear. Now they're putting the red traps into 350 fathoms.

RL: So, it could be more fixed gear restrictions?

MB: Well, any fixed gear not only takes priority over your gear. It'll tear you up. You'll hang up on it. You won't catch any fish.

RL: Oh, wow. So, in other words, it's [inaudible] or deep sea red crab.

MB: Right. They're going deeper and deeper. There aren't too many of them yet.

RL: But is this something you think is coming?

MB: Oh. It's definitely there.

RL: Because they got a way of getting the meat out of them now over there. Was this in Westport, same operation?

MB: Yes. Westport and Fall River.

RL: (Pat Jerry?), the girl who worked for (Warren?), just went out on a deep sea red crayon boat. So, then you get out there. Do you go back to a similar spot based on your [inaudible] or whatever? Or do you just say this might be a good place to set? How do you do it?

MB: Usually, you're working edges. If you can find an edge, you can find a piece of water and edge that's similar from this stuff that's around that you usually try. We used to –

RL: So, the green in the bend of water.

MB: Blue is one way to do it. Then temperature is another way to do it. Weed edges, we find –

RL: Okay. Weed edges with the [inaudible] on one side and rock.

MB: Yes. It's usually a place to start looking anyway. You can go almost anywhere between here and Texas at any given time of year, and you have a good possibility of finding fish. But it's getting slimmer all the time. Back in [19]64, we'd have an edge running, and then we'd have four boats abreast back to back, to another four boats abreast. It'd be eight boats fishing. Nobody would really care whether they were the inside boat or the outside. They just go to where the boats were and put the gear in the water. Everyone was just happy as clams.

Everyone was fishing with more or less the same gear. There were no conflicts to speak of. Occasionally, that first summer, they were a couple of boats from Maine. Bruno & Stillman came out, and they were kind of panicky. They come out and couldn't get in the right spot. They spent a lot of money. They used to push the big boats around a little bit, getting the gear in the water early. Now that's become a thing of standard procedure. The whole thing has become dog eat dog. It's pretty ridiculous the way that things are carried on out there now.

RL: Do you ever have any watches looking for a swordfish on the surface?

MB: Yes, always coming and going.

RL: Okay. In other words, when you're going out, especially on calm, warm days out there.

MB: Right. We try to plan it that way.

RL: So, you do have scouts on in a sense.

MB: Yes.

RL: Okay. Then you get out there and you set your gear. You, first of all, toss over a flag buoy. You got radar reflectors on there?

MB: Right. Made our reflectors on everything.

RL: You use the old navy kind?

MB: No. We've gotten this new aluminum that are about 18 inches across.

RL: I know they're [inaudible].

MB: They do half of a job. They're designed for it. They're much better than the square ones.

R1: Give you a good blip. They're not like the old –

MB: Fairly good, yes. They aren't the ends.

RL: They offer up to an awful lot of resistance to the wind. I mean, in terms –

MB: Yes. They lie right down.

RL: They lie right down.

MB: We've had them picked up right out of the rack by gusts of wind. So, there's definitely a lot of surface there. But when the wind is blowing, you can't pick them up on radar anyway. So, usually, if the wind is blowing, you'll get a big enough swell on so that when they come up out of the trough, they aren't leaning over. So, you can get a good look

at them anyway. No, you don't get a blip, but you can see him. It's quite a long way.

RL: How far can you pick them up on your radar?

MB: Well, given the right atmospheric conditions, which is a little lens of dissimilar heat or something right over the water even. Hey, there's no limit to what you can get. But usually, it's less than four miles for us. Some of the gang can get 14 miles regularly with a super good machine like the (Atlas?) or something like that.

RL: Do you set out at any particular time of day?

MB: Well, the sharky, you're after dark. If it's not sharky, we try to put in the water by dusk.

RL: By dusk. Then what do you just – light to?

MB: Yes. We have a light buoy on the lured end, or wherever we end up anyway. We just drift to lure.

RL: How long does the gear soak?

MB: All night.

RL: All night?

MB: Yes.

RL: You pick it up at?

MB: We start back at dawn.

RL: At dawn. So, the action takes place from darkness until dawn.

MB: Hopefully.

RL: Is this the way you mostly fish swordfish?

MB: Yes. Well, except for the harpoon fish.

RL: Except for the harpoon fish,

MB: Exclusively, yes.

RL: So, siting them and then go after them.

MB: The Japanese have initiated the same fishery over in the Pacific. When they were fishing for big eye tuna, they did a lot of night fishing. We could have read that into our plans long time

ago, but nobody took the trouble.

RL: Now, when you haul up your gear, is it cleaning up the gear –

MB: Right. There are two systems, and the majority of the boats have long line reels that hold the entire main line. They are considered dangerous because you do have between 20 and 40 miles in line in motion to get back every 6 feet that you want.

RL: So, in other words, in terms of –

MB: When you're setting out, you can get backlashes that drag that hook back aboard and boats steaming full head. There are systems that work. I won't say there aren't systems that don't work very well, but there are an awful lot that don't. The people who are in charge of making word right aren't back there getting the hooks thrown at them.

RL: On the [inaudible] with (Don Powell and Albertson?), we had a stainless steel wire on a continuous drop with micro press sleeves. The drop lines [inaudible] on these. We set out miles of this stuff that we caught mostly sharks on that. We did get some tune and gill nets went up. But this is, in other words, it's all contained on rear.

MB: All your branch lines will snap on.

RL: So, how you retrieve yours?

MB: Well, we've got a pot hauler that drops the line into a hatch. The Japanese have both systems too. But they haul with a standard hauler all the time. They either take up with a big spool or take up by a take up winch that drops the line into one of four apartments. So, they obviously don't haul with a big winch at all. So, when they say the winch is dangerous, they must mean in terms of putting it over the side. They have two identical haulers, one that hauls a gear, and one that spits it out when they're setting a given speed.

RL: Is that so?

MB: Yes.

RL: When you set out, does it go over kind of a shoot?

MB: Yes. All goes to a PVC tube.

RL: Okay. Those were PVC tube.

MB: It's only 2 inches.

RL: It takes the hook and the bait?

MB: No. The bait goes on after the line goes over the sides. You just get to the station. You

get from the line pile to the station. The [inaudible] have a PVC tube from the hauling station to the line bin. They pull their line back to the PVC tube before they set out. Our line hatches forward, so we put it through the tube after.

RL: Are the swordfish mostly dead when they come back?

MB: Mostly are dead, yes.

RL: So, do you bring them up to the surface, or you pull them out of the surface before you gap in the board. How do you do this?

MB: Right. It's usually the guy on the winch can tell when a fish is coming. He doesn't know whether it's a shark or swordfish. Usually, the boat is slowed down so that you don't overrun the fish, get them on the wheel or something like that. Or you turn the boat in such a way that –

RL: So, you're on the wheel all the time?

MB: Right.

RL: Oh, I see.

MB: Right.

RL: You got to do this.

MB: Right. You have to run along the line. You're lifting the line. You're trying not to pull it to the boat or the boat to the gear.

RL: When you do have sharks, does this mean you're going to get a lot of sharks?

MB: Not necessarily, but they can come in tremendous numbers. You can lose everything.

RL: You can lose everything. What's the most common shark you can get out there? Blue sharks?

MB: Blue dogs are most common up here.

RL: Is this blue shark? *Prionace glauca*?

MB: Yes.

RL: Okay.

MB: The one down below is probably the dusky or silky.

RL: The general name on the Pacific too is blue shark, lots of them.

MB: Yes.

RL: So, you got a few hammerheads.

MB: The hammerheads are mostly in shore. If you get too close, you'll get hammerhead. Sometimes, there will be a few makos around. The makos and the swordfish run together more or less.

RL: What other fish that you can take commercially besides swordfish where you get occasionally?

MB: We'll bring the tunas and the makos, that's about it.

RL: Tunas and Makos. Will you bring a few, bluefin tuna?

MB: A few, yes. They seem to be coming back a little mid offshore. That's for sure. Gee, I think we went almost five years before we caught one.

RL: Is that so? They're supposed to be in shore, you were saying.

MB: Well, they're supposed to be in shore. That was one of the interesting things that we could never understand. We could see them coming off the bank in the fall, but we could never see them coming in in the spring through the gear. But this spring, they caught a bunch of giants coming through the [inaudible]. They never got any in the bay. So, it makes you wonder what the fish were –

RL: Really, in other words, this is totally a different migration there.

MB: Right.

RL: These were the big –

MB: Those are giants.

RL: Four hundred, five hundred. Is that so?

MB: Yes.

RL: All right. So, you've, you've hauled your first day. Then what do you do? You set out again that night?

MB: Right.

RL: Repeat the whole thing?

MB: Right.

RL: You put your fish down in the ice right. They're cleaned. This is a harpoon fish, you cut off the harpoon and the sword. Sword comes off. Fins come off. Everything comes off, so that you can put them in the ice and pack them right in.

MB: Yes.

RL: Then how many days will you be out fishing?

MB: We do two weeks up here.

RL: Okay. So, how many days are you out?

MB: We can do fourteen up here because the ice lasts longer.

RL: That's compared to how many –

MB: It's about ten down below.

RL: Cape Canaveral?

MB: With the exception, perhaps, of the Northern gulf in the middle of winter, when you go in there.

RL: Okay. You ready to come back. Did you come back full bar all the way, I mean, when you're coming back?

MB: Pretty much. Trying to –

RL: Do you radio Logan that you're ready to come in?

MB: Yes. We tell them we're coming usually.

RL: Then they meet you down here at the dock and unload.

MB: Right.

RL: Do you have to go out there to settle up? I mean, is this what you usually do?

MB: Yes. We go out there to get the check and all that. We have a fairly loose relationship. We send the fish up in containers from down south and send them up in the truck. We don't even watch the way out.

RL: In other words, you also fish for him when you're down south.

MB: We used to.

RL: Is that so?

MB: We have container loads of fish to send up. We used to send them up because the deal was real good. At first, the only people down there were some people out of Atlantic City who have their own company boats. We could never get the kind of deal that they got, and we had better fish than they did. So, we were wasting our time to deal with them.

RL: Now he just seems to have the ability to take over and manage this thing. I mean, is he a really decent person to deal with and so forth?

MB: He has the same problems everyone else does. I mean, [inaudible] from this day and age. He's doing very well.

RL: Is he your ex-high school teacher that you're telling –

MB: I believe so. I don't even know if it was high school.

RL: But he was a teacher.

MB: He was a teacher at one time.

RL: Interesting. Is he from this part of the country?

MB: I believe. So, he's got a very close family. He goes out to [inaudible]. Well, he lives in sandwich.

RL: His name is?

MB: Logan Clarke.

RL: Logan Clarke. It's whatever this one isn't. It's without the E or with the E. So, when you said Logan and Clarke, but it's Logan Clarke.

MB: Right. Let's see if I can find the card and get it right. I'd have to look at them again.

RL: Like everything else.

MB: You're better safer than I am.

RL: Okay. All right. Beautiful, Logan Clarke in 290 Shore Rd. Bourne, Massachusetts with a whole bunch of telephone numbers, 759-7600. That's pretty good. How many years has he have this now?

MB: His business?

RL: Yes.

MB: Just about as long as we've been in business. We had to talk him into taking the first load of swordfish.

RL: Is that so?

MB: We've worked with a guy that we used to send the fish to without weighing him or anything. (Bob Frazier?), but it was a typical deal. He had everything sewed up. Then after two years, for some reason, he started to cut corners. He used to weigh the fish right out of the dock, and things got dubious in that respect.

RL: Okay. So, Marty, let's go into a very important part of this interview. I feel you certainly have one of the better backgrounds and knowledges in this business than anybody I've talked to. You can kind of speak and understand the language. But in your opinion, what has happened in recent years? I mean, you started, was it [19]70, [19]73?

MB: Right. While we were doing the research starting in [19]60s. We did a lot of research beforehand. Some of this was done with (Keith Smith?), I mean, Pete Wilson, these guys and the old General Tire guy, Bob – what was the name Bob Wilson or no?

RL: Because you started way back with –

MB: The guy that's out in California now.

RL: (Squire?)

MB: With Jim.

RL: Jim Squire. I forget the question now. So, the research was done. But I mean, what has happened in recent years? What have been the big changes that have taken place in the swordfishing?

MB: Well, it's a typical sort of pattern. It's reaching a pattern stage anyway, where we're fishing. We've reached our maximum range. Then we had the restrictions of range put on, where we couldn't get to places we've been before.

RL: When you say the restriction range put on, you mean the 200 mile?

MB: Well, yes.

RL: So, that 200 mile limit affects you all the way from the Gulf of Mexico all the way up to the edge of the Grand Banks?

MB: Right. Well, you used to be able to follow the fish which you have to do with swordfish,

especially if you're going to start to overfish.

RL: A lot of fish, they're way on shore when you're down south. Is that what you're saying? I mean, in terms of 200 mile limit.

MB: Right.

RL: Because of simply the topography of the continental shelf around these areas.

MB: Right. They're inshore other people's water. The line goes straight across the Gulf. Conceivably we could fish Yucatan. We've been there a couple of trips. Had good signs there, off and on.

RL: I thought this was one of the big questions about the 200 mile limit that highly migratory species were sort of being a different –

MB: The tuna are, the billfish aren't.

RL: The swordfish are not, that's right?

MB: Right, not yet.

RL: Doesn't make sense at all.

MB: Well, swordfish are, but the tuna aren't.

RL: But the aren't.

MB: Right. The billfish and the sharks are just as migratory as the tuna. But the tuna thing was strictly for the for the West Coast lobby. That those are the only fish that they decide were migrators, because of the tuna lobby told them that. They had to buy off the tuna industry with that stipulation. It didn't even work for them, as it turns out, because it will still be illegal to go down in somebody else's 200 mile limit. Nobody was coming up to our 200 mile limit. So, they're in their bailiwick anyway.

RL: So, if you fish off Cape Canaveral and you're 90 miles of the beach, that's illegal.

MB: Illegal?

RL: Is it illegal?

MB: No. We can fish within, right? No problem. Our problem comes when we get in Mexican or Cuban waters, and if the Bahama people wanted to get on us right down the middle. That also screws up all the management plans too. Because the Bahamas haven't started to make any noise. They say, out of sight, out of mind. They don't care, as long as the tourists and the local fishermen are happy, we can fish any place we want to over there.

RL: Okay. But along the American coast, I mean, we have the 200 mile management zone. Now, any place within that 200 miles you're saying you can fish?

MB: Swordfish.

RL: You can fish swordfish. Now you come up the coast and come up [inaudible] and go up there in the canyons, sitting up towards the banks and you cross over into Nova Scotia. There still is 200 miles up right there. But does that put you outside of where the –

MB: Yes. It excludes swordfishing up there for sure.

RL: It excludes swordfish. Why does it exclude sword fishing up there?

MB: Well, because they don't want our boats in their 200 mile limit. Or in other words, each country has the same problem.

RL: This is one of the biggest changes in terms of the economics of the game.

MB: Not the biggest, I wouldn't say. Well, the biggest is that you have that effect the shortening of the grounds. Then you have the other effect that a bunch of other fisheries whose grounds were also shortened jumped into the swordfish business because it was obvious, easy way to go. But they've done the same thing to the sword fishery now. That they've already done to the shrimp and the scallops. They've over capitalized and shortened the range. So, the obvious result is a shortage of products.

RL: Then the other thing is the restriction of grounds by allowing more fixed gear fisheries take place.

MB: All that too, and you've got the survey boats now that are chopping up your gear. Plus, the Japanese who see the see the bill in Congress to include the tuna in the tuna monitor. They've just moved in. So, it's sort of a crushing combination at this point.

RL: All right. So, how much has the effort increased?

MB: Oh, incredible. Eight of us in the Gulf the first year. Well, the first year I was down there anyway.

RL: This is in [19]73.

MB: Back to the first year after the mercury thing in [19]70. There were eight of us, and about half of us made money.

RL: There were eight [inaudible] and four weren't.

MB: Right. Now we found putting more boats into it. You find more fish. There's no doubt

about that. But I wouldn't even venture to guess how many boats there are. But I know that there are at least a hundred boats rigged for in the Gulf.

RL: In the Gulf?

MB: The percentage of time they spent fishing is questionable right now. Because there were a lot of them right after a few northern boats showed them that there was a profit to be made, a huge profit for a few boats. Then they just blooded the whole place. This is true all the way along the coast. Everybody with long line is very easy to get into, \$5,000 does it more or less on a small boat. A big boat, of course, would be two or three times that. The return is there in a trip they can get pay for everything. So, they've just jammed it up. They fix it so that Southern boats can't make it in the Gulf in the wintertime, which they have to do. They have to be able to do that, or they they've got to do something else. Then there's a continuous bunch of boats ready to fish from Key West to Canaveral. It'll go out anytime that the weather is reasonable. They'll saturate that area with gear, which is also a prime spawning area used to be. Then up north, you've got mostly a seasonal fishery. You got to more or less of a seasonal fishery. But everybody who's big enough to get out of the Southern waters in the summer, when they've lost it down there, is saturating this area.

RL: Some are up here.

MB: They tribe all the way from Hatteras to there. But now the ones that are big enough all are going to Grand Banks because they aren't doing anything on George's.

RL: Now, what's happened to George's?

MB: This summer at the zoo with the Japs and the oil boats and lack of fish and a number of –

RL: Are you willing to [inaudible] out there?

MB: They'll run into us.

RL: But they're out there.

MB: Oh yes.

RL: The guys on the rigs you mean?

MB: No, the survey boats.

RL: Still more survey boats out there. [inaudible]

MB: Every company that's looking at a lease has a whole profile of the whole bank.

RL: Still going on?

MB: Oh sure.

RL: This is still going on.

MB: Two of three of them all in the same area that we're fishing in.

RL: Using explosives or [inaudible]. They're [inaudible] and computers.

MB: Yes. So, in other words, we have oil exploration still going on, or re-seismic in the areas by these companies that have leases. Then you have your fixed gear.

RL: What about the [inaudible]? What is this?

MB: This is this is something new. They didn't do this last year. They stay outside, except we used to tangle with them down off Hatteras, literally. That was in the fall, and things were really tough there,

RL: How big are these [inaudible]?

MB: The [inaudible] are 170 to 230 feet.

RL: It's a beautiful boat.

MB: Yes. They fish 60 miles a gear. I had six sets of gear within 4 miles, which we don't set closer than a 1.5 miles or a 1.25 miles. These guys set with inside of each other's gear. I had four of them run down one side, within 2 miles of the inside. They're setting close enough to the lobster gear so you can't get between them and the lobster gear. They're setting right out to the 500,000 [inaudible]. 90 percent of the places there's no fish outside 500 pounds.

RL: So, these guys do this fairly scientifically.

MB: There's much science to it. I mean, they do have the best available information. They're catching fish, and there's so many of them that they just saturate the area. I'm not sure.

RL: But speaking of, how many are there? I mean, say, between –

MB: I don't know what the total numbers are, and it's impossible to keep track of. They only have 10 percent. But they the companies apparently work together, because you'll see four boats go down together, just so they can keep track of where they are, where are their gears.

RL: So, that boat is [inaudible] 170 feet or so?

MB: Yes. They'll set end to end, of course, all the way up the bank, as long as there's warm enough water to catch the hundreds.

RL: I'll be damned. I wonder what they do with their gas.

MB: They're freezing it.

RL: Then pulling all the way back?

MB: I believe they haul at their shipping places like, I think there's one in St. Martin's, one in Las Palmas. They keep the catching boats here and ship the tuna and the crews back and forth.

RL: So, are they taking everything?

MB: No. They can't take the billfish and the sharks. They got to let those go. Dead or alive, they have to cut them off, as suppose, not take them out of the water.

RL: They're not taking swordfish.

MB: They're not taking swordfish.

RL: But they're killing swordfish.

MB: Well, obviously, even with a long branch lines, there's a high mortality rate. They don't slow down. So, if he's got hooked or the gill hooked, they rip them up pretty goodly. So, our boats chase them around and get the fish from them. But it's –

RL: No fooling. In other words, if you get up next to one, so, of course, you have to get to them and pick them up.

MB: Well, they float them. They put them on put them on a float line, and you just pick up the fish and –

RL: They put them on a float line?

MB: – run on ahead and put their gear back on their line, more or less, you know. I mean, that's the way it usually works.

RL: I'll be damned. You mean, in other words, they will let the fish go off on a float line for the Americans to pick up.

MB: Right.

RL: Is this part of an agreement?

MB: No, not really. This is informal.

RL: Oh, informal. Isn't that interesting? I think not everybody knows about this.

MB: Well, I hope not. It's one of those things.

RL: Why would it be illegal?

MB: It's not illegal. It's not illegal.

RL: But I don't think we have any idea of how much effort there's out there, though, on these big projects.

MB: Well, it wouldn't be hard to figure out, because they're setting 20 23 hooks a day in almost all weather. You know how many boats are there? I mean, the observers know what kind of sleep they've got. No. I don't think it's much of a secret.

RL: But it's really restricted the ability of you guys to find places to fish among everything else.

MB: Right.

RL: This has just happened this year, the Japanese –

MB: Just this year, when that bill got in Congress to include the tuna with a 200 mile limit. Then then they said, "Well, if you're going to chuck us out, we're going to move in and make any kind of killing we can."

RL: Are they catching a lot of tuna?

MB: They're holding their own and it will be there.

RL: What about in terms of the changes in the population? What are the things that you see here? I mean, are we getting to a serious point of the swordfish where overfishing is really a serious problem now?

MB: Yes. It's a serious problem in respect to making a living. It's not as serious as it is in the case of the bluefin tuna where it's apparently one population is being beaten on in the wrong sort of way.

RL: In all different age groups.

MB: At all times a year, that sort of thing, where the Japs are taking 7,000 or 8,000 giants. That's just absolute –

RL: Is this Northwest Atlantic –

MB: In the Gulf.

RL: Do these boats all move up on the Grand Banks?

MB: The Jap boats?

RL: Yes.

MB: They follow our fish. They had a winter fishery. Of course, they stick with something all winter but it used to be tropical, more or less tropical. It started out tropical fishery, and moving closer, closer to the temperate.

RL: So, the range of the swordfish fished commercially is what? From the Gulf to the Grand Banks?

MB: For our people. Then, of course, the concentrations are not where the Japs are usually, until they got into this. They're fishing deeper. So, they miss most of them. They miss a lot of them. But they still make it impossible to fish this, which may be good, in a way. I just don't know whether they're taking more than they're saving by being there. It's hard to tell what's happening in that respect.

RL: But with 60 miles a year, if they do catch a lot of big swordfish and have to release them, is there usually somebody following them around, trying to pick up their releases?

MB: No. [inaudible] It's all small boats that are doing that, because they have the speed and the versatility and the time to chase them.

RL: What about the size of the swordfish over the years? Are they getting smaller?

MB: Well, I don't think anyone has really good data on that. It's available and it should be available. They ought to have a bunch. Of course, if you can't bring the thing aboard, you can't measure it. They haven't been around long enough to really measure the trend over 10 years, or something like that. But there's an awful lot of small fish. That's what you hear more and more that the big ones are getting bigger and the small ones are getting smaller. So, it's pretty, pretty acceptable sign that overfishing is occurring.

RL: The hook and line gear is certainly not selective. Isn't it?

MB: No.

RL: What size hooks do you use?

MB: We use all sizes hooks. So, the longer the branch lines, the smaller hooks we use.

RL: The longer the branch line, the smaller the hook.

MB: Right.

RL: Why is that?

MB: Well, it's because you have more give on the longer branch, so you can use a weaker

hook. He doesn't even know he's hooked on a big one for quite a while. Like well on the long branch line, on the short ones, he gets the message right away. So, you need a heavier hook and a larger bait.

RL: This is the first year that you've that you stopped swordfishing. But you say this year was kind of a bust because of all the problems you just talked about.

MB: This year has been a bust because of the problems have gotten worse. Every year, there seems to be a new one or a couple of new ones. When the quantity of fish you're catching decreases, of course, things get harder. You can survive the increasing cost if the fish at least hold their own. When the fish drop down and you get a bunch of destructive elements included in the gamble, then it gets to be a very marginal proposition.

RL: This also has an effect on the people that you take out with.

MB: Yes.

RL: They're wondering if this is going to be a good boat to be on and so forth.

MB: Yes. More fly by night.

RL: More fly by night. That's a problem. So, you've now decided to switch to a new, experimental kind of vertical long line.

MB: Right. I believe. It's not really experimental. It's quite effective in other areas. So, I suspect, given a little time, we can –

RL: What's a proper name for this type of fishing?

MB: Automatic jigging.

RL: Automatic jigging.

MB: Right. It's being tolled as a fuel conserving device with a long lining, bottom long lining. Many of our swordfishing boats have already gone to bottom wall lining in the Gulf in the wintertime. When they can't find any swordfish, they just sink the gear with large snapper hooks on it. They're doing well in the Gulf. I would say they're doing quite well.

RL: The fish are on the bottom?

MB: Right. Well, the fish they're after are the grouper and snapper.

RL: Oh, I see, the red snapper. In place of the old snapper traps went down, they're getting [inaudible]. This is in the National Fisherman's yearbook you're telling about.

MB: Yes.

RL: Okay. I'm going to get this and take a look.

MB: Right.

RL: Do you have any thoughts about the future of fishing in this area? Somebody told me once that the guy that had the old wooden boat, and it was paid for, could make it. I mean, if he starts with ground fishing. But the guy that has a big mortgage on one of these new boats, costs a million or over a million dollars and get big interest rates, is really having problems and stays on an awful lot of around. This pretty much –

MB: Right. Well, of course, what happened was that all the bankers and every doctor who needed a top tax dodge and that sort of thing, tax shelter, they call them properly, I suppose. There are a lot of people that didn't have that kind of money and they're still coming out. You still see new long liners being put in business. It means that you're going to have to – you become a multi-purpose boat. I think it's a question of you have to be multi-purpose in order to make a living if you want to stay in one place. It used to be there were enough fish around the swordfish, particularly where you could follow fish with one setting gear, one boat, which was fairly economical. It's a little harder on the crew because you had to have a crew that didn't mind moving around. But now, the next step, of course is – well, the original step, I suppose, is switching gear. Switching gear, staying in the same place and switching gear. I've screwed it up. The first step would be fishing the same fish from one place with a single set of gear. That's the way it ought to be. That's the cheapest way. The next way to go is having a multiple bunch of gear staying in the same place. The next step is having one set of gear and traveling. So, you have to have six sets of gear and travel. It's really difficult to say that there's no way of knowing what the ratio is to fish in terms of economics. I mean, I think I heard [inaudible] once said, I figured that a pound of fuel to a pound of fish, or something like that.

RL: A pound of fuel to a pound of fish, I don't think you can make it on that.

MB: Well, this is what he –

RL: Yes. It's a different fishery, of course. It's his fishery. It's a high fuel consumption fishery, for sure. I think a pound of fuel would cost you close to 25 cents, wouldn't it?

MB: I think so. In terms of a gallon, let's say.

RL: Well, you pay for your fuel.

MB: \$500 I guess. I was just giving them.

RL: What do you figure a trip cost you in terms of expenses?

MB: It used to be under 1,000. Now, it's over 2000.

RL: That's not bad.

MB: Well, for us, it's fine. I was just talking to a boat that landed 34,000 of swordfish. The price was probably pretty damn good, but he did pay 17,000 to go fishing. Went to the Grand Banks.

RL: The fish were \$17,000.

MB: 12,000 was the highest I heard up to then.

RL: What is it about? A 58-hour run?

MB: At least. Well, for him, it's only three days. For us, it would be five.

RL: Three to five days based on your speed.

MB: Right.

RL: The draggers are probably about what \$6,000 a trip? So, unless you get paid properly for your fish. Plus, all these other problems you're talking about. The law of survival is holding forward here [inaudible]. Could I make a trip with you someday to go on and get some features of your gear and whatnot?

MB: Just this new stuff?

RL: Yes.

MB: I don't know how much help I'll be able to give you, but I mean, after you get going, just go out, right?

RL: Would it be four days or so?

MB: No. Well, it gets hard to tell. Later in the winter, I think we'll make shorter trips. We'll be fishing closer to land. We'll be able to take out for a day probably.

RL: I really like to do that. Also get a look at the [inaudible]. (Bailey?) would be with you then.

MB: Yes.

RL: Do you have any other thing you want to add to this tape in terms of what you feel some of the real problems? What do you feel about the relationship to the commercial fishermen industry to the National Marine Fisheries Service? Do you think the scientists are getting on the right track? Do you think that they're so wound up in computers and forgetting the whole organism that they're kind of letting computer do everything for them these days?

MB: Well, I think, I think there are some people that are utilizing the equipment and information

in a way to help the public. There are a bunch of people that are using it to help themselves. You can even slice that right down. It varies from place to place.

RL: You don't know that there are a bunch of people trying to help the industry too or the commercial fishery,

MB: That's what I mean. They're utilizing it in a way to help – that's the idea, after all, I believe.

RL: Manage the plans.

MB: Right. I mean, I think that a bunch of them they feel they have to be insulated. I guess, to get an unbiased, biological answer to a question, sometimes you can use that insulation. But I think it can be misused too. If you shroud your results so much that nobody can criticize them. Obviously, that's not the answer.

RL: Now, this laboratory here does not have much direct input into big pelagic fisheries or fisheries research.

MB: Not at this point but they –

RL: [inaudible] for years, but he wasn't really given the "Go ahead" signal and [inaudible].

MB: Right. This lab, well, it's all been relegated. The offshore stuff is all relegated to Miami. These guys are still doing ground fish, and they have a good skip jack. I guess, [inaudible] used to be (skip jack?).

RL: I don't know.

MB: But it seems to me that with the observer corps may be collecting more important data than some of the people realize around here. They really haven't gotten a chance to look at that or analyze it. The only one that done it was [inaudible] who's had them plot up squid catches, some of the Portuguese and some of the big trawlers out there.

RL: Well, I think they're doing what they always did and that sort of firefighting.

MB: It's just the squeaky wheel gets the green worn out formulas.

RL: Okay. The other thing is that it's difficult in terms where they're going to get refunded, I think. This is another problem that everybody is facing right with our new Reagan economic right now.

MB: Right. I just hated to see – I knew this when the first cuts came out, many, many years ago, the first thing that went was the exploratory fishing gear research which was the only link that they had with a commercial fisherman. The second thing that goes is the aquarium, it seems, which is the only link they have with the taxpayer. It seems to me just very, very poor grasp of who they're working for.

RL: That's right.

MB: I realize everyone's strapped and things like that.

RL: The other thing is that I've talked. To people who have come in the back to inquire this year. They never realized it could go up and look down on the fish, and also the kids could handle it and what not.

MB: Absolutely. This has been one of the only really one-to-one relationships that our guys have had with the taxpayers.

RL: Very valuable.

MB: When I worked up with the Boston Fish Bureau, I tell you, when I had fishermen come in who had caught the [inaudible] and yet didn't know what a male or a female was, you know. I dread the day they close the thing, because we're going to be inundated with IRA people. They're going to take as many people to handle, the people that don't get into that aquarium will be to run the damn thing. They will be shutting the door down.

RL: Yes, that's right.

MB: I hope somebody ought to hand out cards right at the door saying this is (Dr. Haneman's?) office. Every one of them should line up in the corridor and take him on. [laughter] I think I might print up the cards, right? What room number are you in today? Let them have it.

RL: I'd say our door is open anytime if you got problems. I think that's a big problem, probably the biggest one they've got. [laughter]

MB: I don't know. I think it's a shame. It's a shame.

RL: Listen, I think we've had enough, and you've been more than a person to sit down and take your time and talk with me. But I did want to sort of talk to one of the younger fishermen who had experience in swordfishing. There's an awful lot on the older guys that went out here and steal harpoon fish and going out in May and going out in the south of the vineyard and whatnot.

MB: We never did get into the bootleg and all that stuff.

RL: What?

MB: We ought to do that sometime.

RL: You mean the Canadian, the bootlegging.

MB: Yes. Terrible, that sort of thing. That's a thing of the past, but we've gotten rid of it locally anyway. (Lady Anne?), we got rid of her.

RL: Lady Anne was one of the ones – she hauled off the Canadian [inaudible]. She brought him into this guy over in the vineyard.

MB: Well, that was another boat, a different time. But that guy was unloading right here he was, he was running around with a pickup truck getting \$1.50 for rotten fish when we were trying to get \$1.60 for good fish. He lands right when you landed. Then the thing that really, really disgust it's bad enough to have rotten fish on the market at a lower price to promote relationships with the consumer. But the guy was claiming that he caught him, and would actually be out there saying, "I'm setting gear here and there in the other place," and he wouldn't have anything in the water.

RL: [inaudible]

MB: Yes. I don't mind an out smuggler if he just keeps out of mind or whatever. I guess you got to do. If you don't know how to fish, it's bad enough when you're running rotten fish, as long as you take it. But he wanted to take up sea room, and then he want to come in and tell me stories about where he caught the stuff. ,

RL: Oh, my god. That's terrible.

MB: He even wanted me to accept his stories about where he caught the fish and everything. He's on the radio, banging away, saying –

RL: What was the average price that you got for swordfish this summer?

MB: This summer, we had one trip where it was below \$3, I think.

RL: Below \$3? So, that's a fairly decent price.

MB: That's a fairly decent price. It's a fairly decent price for ground fish in terms of what they're sold for in the markets.

RL: Yes. I think you're right. [inaudible] Well, there's more loss too, a lot more loss in the ground fish,

MB: But, I mean, I just refuse to pay seven something. I suppose it's going to even get higher because of the supply –

RL: I went out and bought fish up at the Stop and Shop the other day, a good looking pollock. It was tasty. It was nice. It was good stuff. They had it on sale for \$1.50 a pound, which I don't think you can beat.

MB: We've eaten goose fish too.

RL: That's a luxury item.

MB: I talked to fishermen. They said, "I wish I had them now." All the times I threw away out on the northern Georgia. They used to [inaudible] along with it, try to make a living. Listen, I appreciate this very much. I really do.

RL: The pleasure is mine.

MB: You're doing a great job. If you do your cycle, what you hit count decrease, and the jig cycle and the number will decrease until you let up on the button. That's where the cycle will be. It will step jig, or it'll jig in the same spot. If you have a one there, it'll jig in the same spot. If it step jig, it'll jig for five or six steps into your fish and go down the bottom. The space is just the amount of pickup, the amount of jigs.

RL: This is actually [inaudible].

MB: Right. It's a little more manual than the other ones. The other ones have automatic – the things that ring and buzzers that buzz. This is an overload buzzer here in case something screws up.

RL: [inaudible] have to drag that.

MB: It's a new wonder, like a [inaudible] plastic. Look at this.

RL: This is a discussion of a new type of automatic jigging gear. The tape just seemed to break into it. So, this is a less important part of the conversation. We're sitting on Rocky's boat. I'm just adding this note on today because it just seemed to break into something that wasn't related to the rest of the tape. This is my note in brackets. This is on September 27th, 1984 as I'm trying to put this tape in order for you, copying it from the micro cassette to the standard cassette. So, we're going to continue with the discussion. But this is a less important part of the conversation. Taping again.

MB: It was rubber gaskets and rubber housing over some of the –

RL: [inaudible] that was level one piece. It tells you what the damn thing is made of someplace.

MB: I suppose with WD40 on it.

RL: No WD40.

MB: You wipe with fresh water, soap solution or methyl alcohol. Do not use the following chemicals: gasoline, thinner, kerosene, benzene, WD40 or motor oil.

RL: Oh, for heaven sakes.

MB: What does it say? It says [inaudible]. I don't know. This is a different brochure than the first one. Good thing I started reading it. It's almost time. See that had a picture, and this

doesn't have a picture on the bottom. Look at that. It tells you to look for the picture in this one here, but it doesn't tell you where the picture is.

RL: Picture up top.

MB: They're absolutely different. [inaudible]

RL: Does your counter read in meters?

MB: I'm not sure what the counter reads in.

RL: In other words, this can go down. It has how many digits and it has to go down to –

MB: It depends on how full. It really just counts number of turns.

RL: Number of turns, digital counter.

MB: It's just a recorder. I don't think there's anything literal about it. This is going to change with the amount of –

RL: That's pretty exciting, it really is. How heavy is the thing?

MB: It only weighs 10 pounds. The Scandinavian jobs have [inaudible] and they weigh up to 40 pounds.

RL: Is that real oil in that?

MB: Yes. It looks like real oil.

[end of transcript]