

Narrator Name: Anonymous 1

Collection Title: Gendered Dimensions of Climate Change: Impacts, Adaptive Capacity, and Resilience in Maine's Fisheries

Interviewer Names and Affiliations: Jessica Bonilla–College of the Atlantic, Camden Hunt–Mapping Ocean Stories

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Interview Description: This interview provides insights into the interviewee's identity, upbringing, and family history, shedding light on their connection to the fishing community in Maine. Their father comes from a long line of fishermen and seafarers who have been in Maine for around 200 years. The interviewee discusses the significance of their last name within the fishing community and the challenges of expressing their queer identity in a community that may not be fully accepting, as well as other complicated interactions with other fishermen. The interview delves into the interviewee's childhood spent in the vicinity of their mother's seafood restaurant, highlighting the strong connection they feel to Maine, its geography, and its people. The interviewee's family history of seafaring and fishing is also explored, providing context for their deep-rooted ties to the fishing industry. The interview details their journey into fishing, from expressing an interest in learning more about the industry to eventually working on a lobster boat. Additionally, the interviewee shares their experiences and observations related to the fishing industry, including the challenges of environmental change and the need for greater understanding and respect for fishermen within the broader community.

Key Words: Maine, Fishing, Gender, Queerness, Acceptance, Fishing, Climate, Change, Environmental Change, Adaptation, Lobster, Ropeless Gear, Whales, Women

Collection Description: The project "Gendered dimensions of climate change impacts, adaptive capacity, and resilience in Maine's coastal fisheries" is led by Dr. Hillary Smith, an Assistant Research Faculty of Marine Policy at the University of Maine, with collaborators at the University of Maine, College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, and Maine Sea Grant. This project is funded by both NOAA and the Fund for Maine Islands. The project uses oral histories to document how women are being impacted by and responding to environmental changes in Maine's fisheries and aquaculture sectors to better understand their experiences of change, adaptation needs, and potential innovations. This research aims to inform theories of how coastal communities adapt to change and state-level policies to ensure investments in coastal adaptation enable resilient fisheries for all.

JB: Jessica Bonilla

ANON: Anonymous 1

Length of Interview: [1:01:26]

Jessica Bonilla: [0:00] All right. We are here it is February 23, 2024. And I'm going to start by asking what your name is.

ANON: [0:10] NAME

JB: [0:12] Can you spell that?

ANON: [0:14] [spells NAME]

JB: [0:17] All right. How do you like to introduce yourself?

ANON: [0:23] I think it depends on the people that I'm around. In the fishing community, I always use my last name, because it carries some significance in the fishing community, and it kind of maybe gives me this in that I wouldn't have otherwise and, you know, can start a conversation. Otherwise, it's just NAME.

JB: [0:51] And can tell you what pronouns you'd like to use?

ANON: [0:55] She and they, although, again, in the fishing community, like that part of my identity, I kind of keep to myself, but that feels okay, for the most part. It's mostly, you know, being recognized by my close friends that matters to me. And unfortunately, the fishing communities—You know, there, it depends, but you know, not that accepting of queer identities. So, you know, for me, I kind of have to put my success as a fisherman first. And that's unfortunate, but it's the way it is.

JB: [1:39] Can you tell me about where you grew up?

ANON: [1:41] I grew up in LOCATION 1, which is a small village south of LOCATION 2. And I grew up in the backyard of my mom's seafood restaurant. And that kind of was a huge part of my childhood. She has extensive gardens, and I would play outside a lot. There's a creek in the backyard. And I always had a very strong connection to the place and also, really, to LOCATION 3. It all kind of felt like, you know, it's the place that I grew up, and I feel a strong connection to the geography of it, and the people and yeah.

JB: [2:45] Can you tell me where your parents are from and what they do?

ANON: [2:50] My father grew up in LOCATION 4. And he comes from a long line of fishermen and seafarers who have been in Maine for around 200 years. And he did many things throughout his life. He had a woodlot and cut firewood in LOCATION 5 for quite a few years. And he briefly taught in a school in LOCATION 6, and he taught at SCHOOL 1 for 40 Some years, TOPIC. And he helped run the restaurant that my mom, that is my mom's with her as well. And my mom is from LOCATION 7. She came to Maine to go to SCHOOL 1, and she's been a chef for 36 years.

JB: [3:57] Did your mom grow up with a fishing background?

ANON: [4:00] No, no.

JB: [4:01] Is that something she came into when she moved here?

ANON: [4:05] Um, not so much. I mean, she never fished herself. But I mean, she's a recreational fishing person. And interestingly, even though my dad comes from the fishing side of the family, my mom was the one who taught me how to, you know, like, catch mackerel and go fly fishing.

JB: [4:29] That's awesome. Do you have any siblings?

ANON: [4:35] I have a half sister who's like 20 years older than me. From my dad's previous marriage, and I had a second half sister but she died of cancer. And I have two nieces.

JB: [4:54] Being an aunt is the best. Do you fish with your nieces?

ANON: [4:59] Um, I haven't, but I really want to take them both recreationally fishing, and I'd love to take them on the boat sometime, too.

JB: [5:08] Yeah, I love that part about getting to introduce fishing to other people. It's really exciting. In my life, I wish that I had been introduced so much earlier. That's nice to get to pass it on. We kind of already talked about this, but just in case there's something more—do you have any history of fishing in your family? Maybe beyond your parents?

ANON: [5:37] My grandfather, my dad's dad, was a lobsterman for many years, and also a herring fisherman. And he grew up, I think, seining for herring with his father. And then he took over the BUSINESS 1 from his dad. And he ran that for many years, too. And I believe it was his dad, my great grandfather, who started BUSINESS 1 in LOCATION 4. And then my—let's see, it would be my grandmother or my dad's mother's parents. So my great grandparents on my grandmother's side—he was a lobsterman as well out of LOCATION 8. And I believe his father was as well. And the few generations beyond that. I am not quite sure, but I know it's been in the family for a long time.

JB: [6:51] Do you feel like you resonate with if someone were to say it's in your blood? Do you feel that?

ANON: [6:56] Absolutely. Yeah, it's this kind of, like, when I first started doing it, it felt like, like it was what I was meant to do sort of, like, I feel so drawn to the ocean, it's really powerful.

JB: [7:18] Are you married?

ANON: [7:19] I'm not.

JB: [7:22] Do you have any children?

ANON: [7:25] No.

JB: [7:26] How would you describe your role in the fishing or aquaculture industry in Maine?

ANON: [7:33] So I work as a sternman in a lobster boat. And I intend to get my own license and be the captain of a lobster boat in the future.

JB: [7:49] Are you enrolled in any programs that are helping you get to that?

ANON: [7:53] No.

JB: [7:57] How did you get into that work?

ANON: [8:02] So fishing kind of skipped my dad's generation. So I didn't grow up, you know, in the lobstering community, but it always kind of fascinated me that that was part of my family history. And I'd always been drawn to the ocean. And I worked on tour boats for three years, and I was just getting really tired of having to interface with the public and, you know, deal with tourists and deal with men who disrespected me because they didn't think that, you know, it was my place to have authority and knowledge on a boat. So I started asking around, seeing what fishing jobs were available. And I was just randomly talking to a friend about wanting to do it. And he said that he knew someone who worked on a boat the prior summer, but she wasn't going back. And she was, you know, talking to anyone who was interested in taking the spot. So I met with her and she explained what the job was like. And she gave me the number of the sternman, or the first man, the other crew on this boat. And then I talked to him and he told me to come down to the dock and go with him for a day, see if I liked it. And when I got down to the dock and met the captain, he'd heard my name and he was like, you know, I think we're related. And it turns out that his grandmother and my great grandfather were brother and sister and both of our grandfathers seined for herring together a long time ago. And it was just kind of like my first pick because it was the first opportunity that came to me and I've been on that boat for three years since I started.

JB: [10:04] Wow, that's a really special story. Can you tell me what it felt like, initially, as you started? Do you feel like you had to learn a lot or it clicked for you?

ANON: [10:19] In some ways it felt natural because I'd been on boats a lot and that part of it, there was no kind of newness in terms of being working on a boat. But I started at the end of May, I believe, so that it was kind of slow then and there was time to, to kind of learn slowly. But it was I felt like I was having these amazing new experiences every day, it was really exciting like seeing really interesting things that would come up in the trap or hauling near other boats and learning the names of those fishermen are seeing there's this huge patch of moon jellies, I remember like we took the boat through and it was probably like a couple acres big and just everything felt really exciting right at the beginning and then the season picked up and I had to learn to work really quick and there was definitely intense moments and I felt like I was really pushing myself to the edge of my capabilities but that was something that I felt like I'd always wanted and I didn't know like how I could get this really intense physical experience.

JB: [11:58] How did it compare to doing tours?

ANON: [12:03] It was very different, you know there's definitely some skills that I learned on the tour boats that were able to carry over at least information about like boats and navigation and the equipment on boats but the tours were—My Job felt kind of slow paced. And you know, there were things that required skill and precision but it was kind of slow and you know, the fishing was totally different. It's a high adrenaline job and it requires really good organization and strategy to know how to—at least on my boat to kind of keep up with the pace and yeah, very different from tourism in that sense.

JB: [13:05] Do you feel like doing the tours and being used to looking for different species kind of laid down a foundation for how you work on the lobster boat?

ANON: [13:15] I think so. Yeah. I feel like sometimes I don't have time to lift my head up and look around but I always try to keep my eye out for interesting things and I feel kind of aware of my surroundings.

JB: [13:41] Do you have experience in bookkeeping, bait or gear preparation?

ANON: [13:48] Mostly in gear. The first year I arrived after all the gear work was done. The second year, the first man on my boat or at the end of the first year, he injured himself and was out for six months. And so I started the gear work, just me and the captain. And I really learned a lot during that period of time. About mostly rigging traps and painting buoys at that point. And then my third year I was also pretty involved in the gear work and got to learn a few new skills like building buoys and building warps. So I feel like I have a good understanding of how to put together and maintain lobster gear. And the bait is provided to us at the dock that we work at so we don't have to actually like go and acquire it from anywhere, but I was in charge of, you know, captain would give us the amounts that we would take but we had to keep track of what we ended the day with and how much we had left in the bait shed and and we would prepare it for each day. And then yeah, not, not so much in the bookkeeping aspect.

JB: [15:29] Do you guys always use the same kind of bait or change?

ANON: [15:34] It changes a little bit. I have also fished on a couple other boats where the bait is different. And I'm going on a new boat this year, but the one I was on for three years, we mostly used herring, pig hide. And then usually pogies, when we could get them fresh, and most often red fish heads or small, whole red fish. But the herring in the pig hide, were always a constant.

JB: [16:11] Is that more to do with availability or preference?

ANON: [16:14] Preference.

JB: [16:16] And are you guys part of a co-op? Or?

ANON: [16:20] It's not a co-op. But it's kind of like a unique spot, I think because it's a really old wharf that buys from a group of fishermen. And you know, there's newcomers occasionally, but there's kind of this core group of fishermen who get space on the docks down there to store their

traps. The ones who have been there the longest get gear shops in the wharf buildings, and all the bait is right there for us.

JB: [16:58] What's the name of the wharf?

ANON: [17:00] WHARF NAME

JB: [17:02] And how many people fish out of it?

ANON: [17:03] Let's see. I'd have to count them up. I'm so bad at estimating, I'll just do a quick count. Let's say 10 to 15.

JB: [17:28] And is it pretty exclusive? Hard to get, not many new people coming in?

ANON: [17:34] Somewhat, but I think it's probably just kind of based on lack of moorings and limited space, like for bait and other things at the dock. Yeah. But there've been maybe three or four newcomers in my time there.

JB: [17:58] How many of those captains are women?

ANON: [18:03] None actually out of this dock. But there's at least one in the harbor. Because there's a couple other places that buy lobsters in the harbor.

JB: [18:16] Do you have experience in post harvest processing, marketing or trade?

ANON: [18:21] No.

JB: [18:23] Do you have any experience in advocacy or community based organizations related to fisheries?

ANON: [18:30] Not really.

JB: [18:36] What does an average day of work look like for you?

ANON: [18:41] So the day would start—it depended a little bit, but often I'd be waking up at four or 4:30, sometimes earlier. I'd arrive at the dock usually around the same time as the other sternman, and we'd grab our gear and go down to the bait shed and the bait comes mostly in the really big totes. They must be like 50 gallon barrels or something like that. So we'd be bailing all of the fish out of these big totes and it was a physically strenuous job, but I liked it because it would build your muscles quick and we'd stack the trays up on bait carts and roll them out of the bait shed onto the wharf where there's a hoist that the boat would come into and we'd lower all the bait down. I would be on the deck arranging the trays and the other sternman would be running the hoist and during the busiest season, we'd get there early enough so that we would have time to prebait a lot of bags on the dock because our captain liked to fish really fast and all of his gear is really close together. So you really had to kind of be prepared. And then we leave the harbor kind of continuing to make bait bags and setting up the boat. And it was usually like

10 to 30 minutes steam, usually on the shorter end, though, to our gear, which is all in a pretty close vicinity of each other, and then we'd start hauling and we don't really take many breaks throughout the day. So it was only if we happened to have a longer steam between strings, we would really get a break. And so my job was bait, and picking traps and banding. At least in the beginning, I got to do some other tasks later on. But the first trap would come up and the sternman would open it and slide it down and he would do the bait bag and I'd pick all the lobsters out and we would just fish triples, and some pairs. And then I would get the bait bag ready while he checked the lobsters and then we'd band them together and then it does that over and over again. Unless something unusual came up.

JB: [21:28] Is it three people on your boat?

ANON: [21:30] Mmmhmm.

JB: [21:35] Do you guys stay inshore or go offshore?

ANON: [21:39] We're all inshore. My captain has a permit, but I think he's very smart about his business. I think he's figured out how to kind of maximize profits. And I think by burning less fuel and fishing the deep water inside he does really well.

JB: [21:56] That's great. Do you hold any commercial fishing licenses?

ANON: [22:04] I have my shellfish license, although I wouldn't really call myself a clammer. It's just more of something to have that if I really needed to make money, I could do it.

JB: [22:18] Do you enjoy it?

ANON: [22:20] I do, I love it.

JB: [22:29] How do you feel your background or identity shapes your work in the fishing sector, including how others perceive or treat you?

ANON: [22:37] I think my background coming from a fishing family kind of gives me an in and it doesn't automatically guarantee that it will be easy for you. But when people know that you have that history, I think sometimes you gain respect more quickly. And I think fortunately, I ended up on a boat where my gender had no impact on how I was treated, or the opportunities I was given. But I think that it can be a struggle. And I think that honestly, more so my perception of not being the dominant gender in the industry had more of like a psychological impact than any actions that other people took towards me. So I think that was the biggest challenge of overcoming my own—I think I was holding myself back more than anything else. Although I, you know, probably received some what would be considered sexual harassment by older men, but I don't know, it was nothing like that, really. I felt I never felt unsafe, it was more just like annoying comments. And it really was like the older men that were the biggest problem for me. But again, I never felt unsafe or like I couldn't get myself out of a situation.

[24:32]

I felt that I had to work harder to prove myself because there's now nothing on the boat that I can't do, but I feel like I've had to work really hard to get there. Especially, you know, not being particularly tall or large, that you want to figure out how to compensate for—really the lack of height is my biggest struggle, but I mean for the most part I feel like I've like been treated well by the people around me and maybe just had to work a little extra hard to prove it to some people. Because ultimately, the people that I've been around, if you're a hard worker that's kind of all that matters, and if you have a good attitude and you know show up on time, and are nice to other people, and

JB: [25:45] I feel like I think for me was once I could show people how many lobster traps I could stack. So part of me is like so how many traps can you stack? Because the height thing, it's about how you get it.

ANON: [25:56] Totally yeah, yeah. I've definitely had experiences going on other boats where captains assumed that I couldn't stack traps and you know, I had to fight to show them that I could, I was like, just let me do it.

JB: [26:15]

How does your role in the fishing sector work with your family or caregiving responsibilities?

ANON: [26:27] I think my family situation is a little complicated because my sibling isn't really—like she has her own family and doesn't live nearby and I do have a couple of family members that are involved but my dad's health is not great and so my mom is a primary caregiver for him and I moved back next door to my parents this past year to help take the burden off of her a bit, and so in some ways fishing is good because I feel like I can completely provide for myself and not have to financially burden anyone else, but the time part of it can be hard when I have to choose between work and helping family, but for the most part it works well and my parents are proud that it's what I'm doing. So it's a good thing but it can be a challenge too.

JB: [27:45] I'm sorry about your dad. I'm gonna switch to talking a little bit more about the environment. Can you describe any changes in the marine environment that you've noticed?

ANON: [28:13] Some of the things are things that I've noticed not necessarily just during my fishing career, but from when I was a kid too. Just thinking about the amount of sea ice, there was definitely more. I remember there being more as a kid and again, I think you know, this is a little bit location-specific, but seeing how scallop dragging and other dragging has impacted the seafloor and the marine life in places that are open to dragging. Just changes in species too. I don't know if this can be related to anything because it's over such a short timeframe, but my first year fishing there was a diversity in species other than lobsters that came up in our traps. And that seems like it's changed but you know, it could be a smaller trend or something else going on. I don't know if I could really relate it to greater trends, but it just something that I noticed.

[29:51]

I was young, but I kind of experienced the collapse of the ground fish industry. And there used to be three ground fish boats that came into **LOCATION 2** and my parents bought fish right off of them for my mom's restaurant. And I remember that big change. I feel like we have noticed a rebound in catching cod and hake and other other fish in our traps, and seeing that population actually start to increase. I don't know what it was like after shrimping was shut down because I wasn't fishing then. But now we are actually seeing a lot of shrimp, we catch a lot of shrimp in our traps that just come up on the ropes and in the seaweed in the traps. So, you know, I guess I feel like I noticed some positive changes too, which is nice to see. I sure there's something else but I can't think of it right now.

JB: [31:08] That's really good. Can you tell me more about—you mentioned you've noticed different species that come up in the trap?

ANON: [31:18] My first year we saw some black sea bass which was a more unusual find. There were tons of jellyfish that year. We also caught a lot of lump fish that year, 2021. Cod. Others. I wish I could remember the name of it. It's an eel-like fish. Something else that was really interesting that we caught one time. Sea bass, redfish, caught a flounder once. Scallops, hermit crabs, whelks. And then I've seen other things on offshore boats too, that you don't get inside.

JB: [32:27] Cool. I feel like every trap is always a surprise. It's like a gift. It's like you're unwrapping it and pulling seaweed. It's so fun. Do any of the changes that you talked about impact your work in the fishing sector?

ANON: [32:43] Not presently I guess. Although, there are changes maybe that I haven't observed, but I'm aware that could have an impact in the future. The change in water temperature in relation to lobster populations and not knowing how that's going to impact them or where they'll go. And also perhaps the rebound of some groundfish species could mean opportunities in the future. And same with the shrimp, but it's unclear.

JB: [33:31] Pulling up the cod was exciting, especially since they look so different. Is there anything you've tried in response to cope with or adapt to these changes? This could be how you make changes, how you process, where you source, the equipment you use, or pursuing other livelihood opportunities.

ANON: [33:57] It hasn't really applied to me presently, but it is something I think about again for the future, because I want to be some sort of fisherman. I would love it if it could be lobster, but I'm always thinking about what else I could do, or what opportunities, what fisheries could come about in the future. And also have thought about the idea of how to process and sell our own lobster for greater profits.

JB: [34:34] Is that something that's hard to get into?

ANON: [34:36] Yeah, somewhat because you need a kitchen essentially, that's up to code for processing shellfish. I forget for what type of sales, but sometimes you need refrigerated trucks. So it's a difficult and expensive process. Which is too bad, because I think a lot of fishermen would like to cook and sell their picked lobster meat because that's where the money is.

JB: [35:30] What is your biggest concern about the marine environment for the future of Maine's coastal fisheries and aquaculture industries? As a sub to that, if this is easier to answer; If you could tell policy makers in Maine what the biggest priority should be to help people adapt, what would you tell them?

ANON: [35:58] Definitely thinking about diversifying the fisheries and managing them well so there can be groundfishing again, because other places in the world, they don't have just one fishery like lobstering that everyone relies on. And I definitely am concerned about, you know, changing water temperatures and how that will impact the lobsters and what we'll have if we don't have that, so I would really want policy to be focused on figuring out how to have and manage other fisheries, and also how to provide funding, especially for lobstermen if changes lead to people having to buy different boats or different equipment.

JB: [37:10] You mentioned that you wanted to potentially go into other fisheries. Which ones are exciting you?

ANON: [37:16] I am somewhat interested in groundfishing, although I'm not sure if the way it's done, I don't know if I would like that necessarily just based on experiences I've heard of from people who have been on groundfish boats in the Northeast. But it's an experience I would like to have just because I know my ancestors did it too. I hope that maybe someday shrimp trapping will be allowed in Maine, even if it was recreational, or seeing that it seems like the shrimp populations are starting to rebound, the idea of anyone who holds a commercial license could have a couple of recreational shrimp traps to feed their families. And I'm somewhat interested in clam digging. But I also do love being on a boat, and I hope that crabbing will become more financially viable because compared to other species of crab, or other parts of the country, ours is just really not financially worth it to go crabbing for the most part. I'm sort of interested in seaweed aquaculture and rockweed harvesting. But again, I know some people do well rockweed harvesting. Not so sure about kelp aquaculture, but maybe as the fisheries change, it will become more financially viable.

JB: [39:10] Do you feel supported or like there's pathways for you to explore the things you want to do?

ANON: [39:17] I don't know. I think a lot of it's kind of a challenge. I think that there's certain things I can do now. I could do rockweed harvesting now, I could do seaweed aquaculture now if I jumped through all the hoops. I think that there are some resources out there but there's a lot that you have to learn about prior to doing those things. I think that once I get my commercial lobster license, then I'll have some more opportunities. And when I have my own boat that I can try different things off of. But I do wish that information seemed more readily available about some of the other opportunities.

JB: [40:20] Have you participated in any climate resilience or adaptation training? Or programs for the fishing industry

ANON: [40:27] I have not.

JB: [40:29] What strategies do you think would be effective in building resilience against climate related impacts for fisheries?

ANON: [40:40] Again, I think diversifying fisheries is a really important thing. Because there's more resilience in having more options and I think relying solely on lobsters is not what we should be doing. I also think having funding available to help people get into viable fisheries or aquaculture opportunities, because I think that's the biggest hurdle for them, or for people wanting to try a new venture. Also working to maintain access to working waterfront for fishermen and funding to maintain working waterfront places and to deal with storm damage like we had in January.

JB: [42:04] Was the wharf you work out affected by the storm?

ANON: [42:10] Yeah. And also, my great grandfather's wharf, which was next door, the, or the wharf remains, but the building, which was his buoy shop got washed into the ocean. And that was really sad. I never even got to see inside it because it's now run by my uncle. And he lives out of state. And they only come for the summer and I somehow never got to see inside it. It used to be that my dad co-owned it with him, but he sold his half to his brother. And it's kind of sad to me, because I wish that you know, it was something that maybe I could use in the future that could continue being part of the working waterfront. But my uncle does rent his workspace to a couple of fishermen in the harbor to keep their traps, and so I hope maybe in the future, I can keep my traps there. But yeah, the wharf that I fished out of was also affected, a lot of pilings were shifted and planks on the dock were just blown off by the water and there was some water damage in the lowest building, the water came up into it and the bait shed had almost a foot of water in it, and it washed stuff all around. I've actually been working for the dock for on and off for the past month helping with repairs.

JB: [43:58] I'm sorry to hear about your great grandfather's wharf. I'm sure it's a lot of work cleaning up. What was the general response after the storm?

ANON: [44:11] A bunch of my family pitched in to help clean up what we could recover from my great grandfather's worth. And it felt really good to have everyone come together and help out with that. And then at the wharf, I almost hopes that more people would have come and help out but I really like the crew who works at the dock and the guy who runs it so it felt kind of fun working together to fix things.

JB: [44:54] Was there any talk of “this is an odd weather pattern,” or climate change, anything like that?

ANON: [45:05] Amongst some people, there's definitely a lot of people who deny climate change in the fishing industry or they believe in it, but they're not sure that humans cause it. Or they might believe it if different words were used, that's a really big thing, actually, that I see. If you use words other than climate change, or global warming, or whatever, you can get people to agree that things are different than they were before. It's pretty funny.

JB: [45:30] Like what words?

ANON: [45:33] I can't think specifically, but I feel like I've heard people who talk about things not being like they were before, like, this is the highest water they've ever seen, or just acknowledging that the buildings have been there for over 100 years. And that this was kind of unprecedented. And again, I think that, it's sort of an aside, but I feel like I just wanted to say that a lot of fishermen acknowledge that there's a kind of change in the environment. And I feel like it's really important to talk about it in a certain way if you want the fishing industry to come together to be resilient for the future, because people acknowledge that there's change, but they don't always, like, want to attribute it to climate change or anything. And I feel like that's one of the biggest things I've learned coming into the fishing community is how to find common ground with people, that's really the only way, is to figure out the things that you can agree on to make change for the future.

JB: [47:14] That's a great point, thanks for bringing that up. It's almost like you need to have that bridge. Are there other types of changes, not only environmental, that are impacting your work that you want to tell us about?

ANON: [47:45] It's a huge can of worms, but I guess I have to bring up all the right whale stuff. It feels like the biggest threat to the lobster industry at the moment. And it is complicated and I feel like I have a more nuanced view of it than some fishermen. But I think there are a lot of people who are more in the middle on the issue or who are willing to make some changes, but not give up everything. And I guess what happens comes down to like, how in courts they decide whether or not we're violating the Endangered Species Act and to some degree there's less that can be done there. But going forward I know that there are gonna have to be changes that the industry makes and I feel like it's really important that fishermen are a part of that and I think it's hard to get people involved because they feel like—I think a lot of fishermen feel like no one will listen to them and kind of disillusioned by feeling that these are just things happening to them and they can't do anything about it. Kind of like with the collapse of ground fishing. But I really hope that there can be more avenues for fishermen to have a say in how we will go about any gear reductions that we have to take. Because I think there are a lot of people who, the younger generation especially, we love fishing so much, and we're willing to make some concessions as long as we can still do it. I feel bad for the older generation, though, because it's—I think a lot of it is change that they won't be able to adapt to, perhaps. But I just hope that there's more opportunities for fishermen to voice their opinions. Because I feel like a lot, especially with ropeless gear, a lot of it is being designed by people who know nothing about the industry and how we work.

[51:04]

I'm definitely not sold on ropeless. But I think that it could be not a blanket solution, but maybe a solution for if they're able to start actually tracking the whales or having a better sense on predicting where they're gonna be. Like having ropeless in certain areas, but I really just don't think it's the solution. And I think in general that needs to be the approach, that it shouldn't be just one set of changes applied across the entire Maine coast, because people who are fishing,

kids who are fishing in 10 feet of water, they shouldn't be having to conform to the same changes that someone fishing way offshore is.

JB: [52:18] Can you tell me about any opportunities or positive changes you've experienced in the industry during your time?

ANON: [52:38] Do you mind elaborating a little bit?

JB: [52:49] As you've come into your own in your fishing career, have you noticed that things come easier for you, or you can navigate things in a different way?

ANON: [53:07]

I feel like as I've established myself around the dock that I fished out of, I've gotten more opportunities to go on other boats, and I have opportunities to learn new things when I do that. I think probably the biggest opportunity will be fishing with my partner this coming year, and it'll just be a different experience, because he actually wants to take the time to teach me everything to be able to be a captain myself. I feel like it's an opportunity that not a lot of people get, even people sometimes who are born into the fishing industry. If you get your license when you're young enough, then that makes things a lot easier. But if you have to do the apprenticeship and get on the waiting list and wait for, who knows, ten years to get your license, then you're gonna get it and you might not have any experience actually going through the motions as a captain yourself. So I feel really lucky to have that opportunity to actually build gear and learn how to strategize where to set the gear and I feel like I'll be kind of more involved in the whole process and getting more opportunities to run the boat and things like that.

JB: [54:58] That's awesome. It's like a mind blowing moment when you realize like, wait, I can do all these things. It's not that hard. I know what you're talking about. I'm excited for you. That sounds great. What is your hopeful vision for the future of Maine coastal fisheries? And a side note to that is have you noticed changes in women's presence, participation, or status in the fishery over time?

ANON: [55:31] I'll answer that part first. I think that there's definitely more women in fishing now. I think it's only increasing over time and I still think women captains are a small percentage but I think women crew, or that is a larger percentage of crew. That ratio is better than it is for captains, but I love encouraging women to get into fishing. And I have a number of women friends who are also sternmen. I think that there should be more, and it would make the fishery better. Sorry, do you mind repeating the first part of the question again?

JB: [56:24] What is your hopeful vision for the future of Maine's coastal fisheries?

ANON: [56:31] Again, greater diversity of fisheries and also more education, information about how to get into those fisheries and more education in schools about it. I think that sometimes if you don't come from a fishing family, there's just an inaccurate and judgmental view of what the fishing community is. I want it to be seen as a good opportunity for anyone who wants to be in it. Also, greater access to property on the waterfront for fishermen. I don't know if there's anything

going on right now, any organization to buy properties that become available, but that's something I've thought about, how to increase access for people who are in a fishery. What else I guess that mostly sums it up.

JB: [58:10] That's great. Thank you. Is there anything else you wanted to share with us?

ANON: [58:33] In relation to the way that you say things when talking to certain fishermen, that kind of concept—I feel like it's something that I want more people to understand in terms of the interface between people in the sciences or in policy. In talking to fishermen, I feel like there still is really a gap in understanding, or being on the same level and I'm kind of struggling figuring out how to say it exactly, but I feel like, and I'm sure there's other people like me who feel like they understand a little bit of both sides and who can be go betweens, or mediators. How things are talked about is so important. And because fishermen, a lot of them are very stubborn, and they've lived and just know fishing. I think there's a lot of value in fishing as a profession and I hope for it to be respected more, and for fishermen to be better understood, and I'm not sure how to create better opportunities for more understanding between different stakeholders doing fisheries and everything else. But to be a part of that, I guess. I'm still kind of struggling to sum up this idea.

JB: [1:01:09] Well, thank you so much. With what you're saying, being here and sharing your perspective is really helpful and very interesting. Thank you.

ANON: [1:01:19]
Yeah, absolutely.

JB: [1:01:20] Camden, do you have any questions?