Interview 5

Theme 1. Learning young

* Set nets for chum, coho, and pinks
  + Fishes in Unalakleet because it’s home base
  + 26’ Yukon with 175 motor
* Learned to fish at age 7 with an elderly man
  + Remembers smelly fish and getting seasick
  + Mentored him. He helped with commercial, then they would go up river for subsistence
  + Fished all summer long
  + Elder taught him how to work together, and be cautious. Taught his sons these lessons too.
* Bought a permit from a local fisherman
* Started around 45 years old and fished alone
* Three out of four sons helped him
  + Teaches sons not to go out if it’s too rough.
  + If weather is bad, would leave sons at home

Theme 2. Out on your own

* Life jackets next to him, but does not wear when checking nets—entanglement
  + 11:34 “I don’t want to get tangled in the net. You don’t wear PFDs when you’re checking net.”
* Can get safety equipment at the cannery
* No safety training offered in Unalakleet
* 23:09 “No, pretty much all on your own out here. Yeah, and all those years never had any safety training. All the training we learned ourselves.”
* 30:38 “Fishermen pretty much know everything [laughs]. Everybody try to be safe as they can out there.” (can’t share lessons)

Theme 3. The ocean’s the boss

* Unalakleet—the weather can get really bad and everybody is fishing on a skiff
* Dangers—make sure the motor is running right
* Dangers—rough weather
* Day that felt dangerous
  + Getting thrown around boat, called it quits and pulled net early 14:54 “The ocean’s the boss, it’s the boss.”
  + Physically and mentally difficult trying to not let waves swamp boat
* Teaching sons when it’s too rough to go out (4’ waves and wind blowing)
* Always come back same day
* Keep an eye on the ocean, keep senses up
* Don’t ever panic
* Ask others about weather conditions in areas might fish
* If need help, call a family member who would find someone who can go now—locate by place names
* 28:07 “I just try to be really thankful. It keeps me safe out there. Don’t try to override nature.”

Theme 4. Physical challenges and strategies

* Fishing puts pressure on a past back injury
  + 26:23 “Long term, it’s getting tougher and tougher as you get older.”
* Hasn’t gotten any injuries while fishing—careful
* When it’s slow and the ocean is calm, can take a nap on the beach, snack and relax
* When it’s rough and need a break, stop and tie up to net to take a break, catch breath
* Has helper which makes it a lot easier than alone
* Rests and snacks when get home to reenergize
* Relief returning after rough weather
* Gets 8 hours of sleep
* Stay with the net if fish are hitting, go home a few hours if slow
* Family/friends help get net in and out of boat

Other:

* Same amount of fish as past, but more permits
* 27:51 “It’s sad when you’re not catching any fish and making any money. That’s the bad part of it.”
* Boat life: sound and feel of waves, rough water, calm water