Interview 8 Data Analysis

Theme 1. Family and fishing lifestyle

* Used to fish herring, currently commercial crabs, and salmon set gillnet
* 22’ flat bottom skiff for set net
* V-shaped breaks waves better, but he learned on a flat bottom boat
  + By 4th grade, dad let him take boat out by himself
  + By 6th grade could go wherever he wanted
* Fished salmon gillnet set fishing in Norton Sound for over 35 years—since kid with dad
* Bought own permit in 2017
* Growing up fishing 3:41 “I never saw it as work. It was just something to go out and do.”
* Fished subsistence locally and on Yukon—different fisheries experiences entire life
* Started helping at 5—persistent to help
* Now youngest son is like he was. At three, helped pull net, moved fish, lead line
  + Son helped him subsistence crab 6:19 “He was like, I want to help, and so I told him that he can.”
  + Now he’s 7. Other sons not as adamant about fishing 7:20 “He was always the one that was like me, wanting to keep going and going through the entire process.”
* Taught sons like his father taught him, but doesn’t want to yell
  + Older sons helped in past years, but more in the way than helping
  + Didn’t want to get mad at them, so just sent them home
  + More trust in youngest son with boat
* Nephew helped, not cousin helping. 10:14 “So I kind of like to keep it kind of family oriented.”
* Mentors and teaches younger relatives
  + Equipment, Maydays, emergency procedures

Theme 2. Pay attention

* Dad taught him 11:22 “Just to pay attention to the weather is the biggest thing. It’s paying attention to the weather and knowing what you can handle and what your boat can handle.”
* Grandpa taught him pay attention so you don’t get lost
  + GPS in head
  + Pay attention to local features, surroundings, current, boat, waves
* Tells story when he gets into fog with father and knows exactly where the boat will be when out of fog
  + 14:38 “And that goes back from like training of being out in the waters and out in the country my whole life. And just taking that one small advice from my grandpa to just pay attention to everywhere you go.”
* Look at surroundings for weather
  + 16:04 “Things in the land that you can sit there and look, out at Besboro [island] and use that as a weather indicator. Like, if you look at it the night before and you see that it has this mirage and it looks like it’s floating, you don’t want to go out in the ocean. It’s going to be a north wind, and the waves are going to be too big.”
* Traditional ways he was taught—looking at the clouds, sun (i.e., a cloud hovering over Besboro island indicates east wind coming)

Theme 3. Risky situations

* Scary opener—4,000 pinks in his 22’ skiff
  + Nephew sitting on wrong side of boat and waves are coming in
  + Too many fish and only 6” freeboard
  + Had to tell nephew to move or boat might have capsized
* Risky situation because they wanted to get done earlier
* Waited til returned to shore before telling nephew his actions were dangerous—being unobservant of situation
* Wishes he would have listened to his own instincts and concerns
  + Should have pushed boat off sandbar, but consulted his nephew who wanted to get the job done and said it should be fine
  + Boat could have sunk
* Dangers—waves
* Dangers—determination to make money when prices get higher
* 28:59 “I know that fishermen are more to put themselves at risk in going out. And then in the past, when I first started, if it was rough out, people wouldn’t go out. That’s the biggest danger that we have here for the fishermen is the determination to make money over safety.”
* Bad experience helping cousin crab.
  + Told cousin it was too rough, but he was headstrong. At least 12’ swells in 30’ boat
  + Males cousin turn around and go back

Theme 4. Safety equipment

* Does Unalakleet have enough safety resources?
  + Lacking in training and knowing importance of using a PFD
* Wears PFD when it’s really rough out—not when calm (too hot)
  + 25-40% fishermen wear consistently
  + 50-55% when rough
  + They don’t wear because they feel comfortable with their skills and boat in the ocean
* People rely on boating strategies to increase safety, not PFDs (i.e., navigating boat, closer to shore, etc)
* Tries to wear PFDs when with sons—they ridicule him when he doesn’t put on
  + 48:18 “It’s just like it’s just second nature for them to put their PFD on.”
* Type III vest is too hot and bulky
* People may be more likely to wear and keep on inflatables
* Safety equipment onboard—PFDs, bilge pump, flares, signal mirror
* Never had to ask for help—but if he did, he would use cell phone
  + Service is 15 miles south and 4 miles out, 10-20 miles north, and 10 miles straight out
* People can get safety equipment from the plant easily
* Teaching sons how to read the waves, have all the things they could need for situations,
  + Sons wear PFDs all the time
* Instead of yelling, likes to discuss safety
  + 54:28 “I’ll sit there and I’ll talk to them about safety issues and even with my nephew, I would sit there and I’d show him what to look for.”

Theme 5. Changes

* Changes in populations and species—pinks have increased, kings decreased, Coho fluctuates
* Fish crashed after 2019 because of high temps, lack of rain, and too many pinks in river depleting oxygen
  + High mortality of salmon in river past few years
* 2017-2018 record numbers of Coho, then 4 years ago, price went up
* Kings and Coho are spending only a few months out in the ocean instead of a few years and are getting smaller
* Weather is changing greatly from what grandpa, father, and uncles tell him
  + Storms frequent in fall
  + Inconsistent, long stretches of rain or sun for a month at a time
* Wind directions changing
* Used to be east winds dominate in summer (not dangerous)
* Now west winds (bigger waves)
* The earth axis changing is changing observation strategies
  + Sundog when sun is closer to east in sky means stronger east wind
  + Sundog at sunset indicates north wind 3-4 days.

Theme 6. Wellness

* Keeps him in shape
* Need to stretch
* 51:54 “I do make sure I stretch…I can see my dad and how he has, he calls it a back issue, back problem, but I know for a fact that it’s him not stretching.”
* Enjoys fishing—meditative and relaxing by himself or with good crew
  + But stressful if deckhand is not consistent
  + Doesn’t like yelling, so he just doesn’t take them back out if he feels like he wants to yell

Other: (on shore survival)

* Up river he was stuck because of the tide and 50’s and raining
* Elders taught him as a kid to stay dry by using an alder canopy to build a bed under, using branches and leaves
* This kept him dry (clothing kept him warm) and he survived to wait for tide