Interview 2

Theme 1. Fishing as lifestyle

* Learned from grandparents who salmon fished
  + 2:12 “They’d take me everywhere they went. [laughs]
* 18’ Lund skiff with 50 horse mercury outboard growing up
* Grandpa and uncle taught him to drive a motor and to watch for weather
* Family fun to fish with because you can pick berries and walk beach
* Crew easier to fish with than family
* Fishes with a deckhand—generally they have a good time
* Taught girlfriend how to maneuver boat and speed in different waves
* Shorter fishing trips now compared to past. Can get back to town now in same day with better equipment.
* Boat life
  + 6:19 “Oh it’s great. [laughs] It’s a lot of fun setting the net.”
* 20 years ago had a lot of King salmon. Now less
  + 45:13 “Now we don’t have very many and they’re a lot smaller.”

Theme 2. Equipment and preparation

* Preparation: not going out if it’s rough
* Constantly watching the weather—be aware and observant
  + 4:34 “It switches really fast sometimes.”
* Watching for Besboro island to change shape
* Ask friends and other fishermen about wind direction and speed
* Prep: Cleaning, straightening net, anchor lines, gas, groceries
* Safety equipment from fish plant (takes it off fish ticket)
  + Required: flares/signals and PFDs
* Safety classes not needed for set netting, but took it for crewing on tender. Included CPR
* Mom used to like helping with food
* Better equipment and boats bigger and faster, less stuff to get caught on
* Can use cell phone for help: tender or nearby fishing boat most likely to help you.
* Could get help in 1 ½ hours or more if 20-30 miles away
* People bring PFDs, but get too hot and take them off
* Wear PFDs when conditions are rough and underway
  + 32:06 “I’m pretty sure a lot of them don’t use them when they’re fishing by their nets, but I’m pretty sure there’s quite a bit of them that do when they’re actually driving their boats.”

Theme 3. Small boats, big weather

* End of August tells scary event—big weather that time of season
* Unique challenges in Norton Sound—lots of wind builds from open land
* Crabbing boat is bigger than set netting boat, so less danger of big waves
* Lessons—don’t think that just because other boats are fishing, that you should too
* Watch other boats around you—if they start to leave, you probably should too
* Set net boat scary when filled with fish and bad weather
* Watching weather and driving a [small] boat in big waves was the main safety lesson taught by grandpa and uncle.
* Near miss—trip when boat full of fish, then weather turned fast, big waves broad side, water coming into boat (able to drain)
* Would have cancelled before wind and current got to strong
* Can let Fish and Game know you can’t get net before closure and they are understanding.

Theme 4. Avoiding dangers

* Pay attention and don’t push limits
  + 51:13 “Just keep your eyes open and listen to whoever’s your captain and don’t push yourself to the limits where it gets too dangerous to be out there.”
* Stability—placing people to balance weight
* Stability—don’t put both lead lines on same side of boat unless can balance the weight
* Don’t want to get lines tangled in placement on deck
  + Need quick access to anchor in case motor stops
* Stability—keeping water out of boat so fish won’t move
* Danger to set netting—entanglement in net or anchor line going out of boat
* Danger—anchor dragging and getting dragged into other nearby nets
* Keep an eye on buoy, anchor, or boat rope
  + 49:20 “Watch where you place all your gear or equipment and that’s mostly the danger with those is entanglement.”

Theme 5. Physical health

* Last year deckhand had medical issues and couldn’t fish. Hard to find a new deckhand
* Long term physical effects:
  + 42:20 “Physically, it’s kind of exhausting because of all the wave action, waves, muscles get sore, body starts aching”
* Only injury was from climbing a hill to look for fish for herring
* 6 hours is least amount of sleep
* To stay awake: drink coffee and soda
* Strategies to relax:
  + Music
  + Sit down and take a break
  + Tie up to a buoy
  + Talk/tell stories