

Wayne Seaman

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Fairport, Michigan

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Start of Interview

(P) Wayne what are your first memories of your commercial fishing career?

(W) Well I was about 7 years old when I first started we were reeling nets with my dad. We used to...

(P) What do you mean reeling nets?

(W) Well sorry about that. For reeling nets we used to have a – a little side line they were cotton they were all cotton. We'd have to put them on the reel like... It's hard to explain once you see it, maybe about eight foot long and forty feet high and you keep pushing them up and up almost like a Ferris wheel they work on.

(P) Ok then the nets would wind up around it?

(W) Wind up around it and then we could put them on there to dry it in a day or so and then we can pull them back down and dry them out and work on them. But that was before about once a month then we had to treat them too, you had to put them in a boiling bath and boil them to get the bacteria get out of them. We did that up till about oh 57' I guess we used to do that, but we haven't have the amount of film on nylon twine but it used to, the side lines or the – we called it and we still had to boil them and treat them. Before that when we were young my twin brother would used to have a row boat about the same time, seven, eight years, my dad had a...

(P) You were about seven, eight years old and you had this rowboat?

(W) Yeah he had a guy by the name of Mike Andrew—we didn't let me...

(P) Your name of your boat was D.N.W

(W) --

(P) Why did you call it the D.N.W?

(W) This...

[Turns off tape]

(P) The boat D.N.W was named after Dwayne and Wayne Seaman. This is Wayne's twin brother. Did you and your brother actually do any fishing from this rowboat?

(W) We were just little kids who – Little Bay here, on the passage here were we call it yeah I'm pretty sure we were in the harbor – used to be a few perch and that and we'd play with them. Dad would give us some nets.

(P) The passage you mean between Fairport and Summer Island?

(W) Yeah we used to take that there, the sub for the boat used to be perch and that.

(P) And then Wayne who did you work for after you worked for your dad?

(W) Well I quit school when I was about 15 then, say I fish one year there and a couple years with dad and then grandpa would – fish one more then I would fish with him. Dad had good control of putting some nets for me and Dwayne made me fish part of the county ship with him and then granddad were had me similar so dad who were fishing I guess we bought an old model A-4 that fish --- and then maybe when I was 16, 17, worked pretty well with him for a long time then we well like anything else when you get about 17 nobody can tell you what to do so I worked on, when the fish went bad we went to Cheboygan, Michigan. When they couldn't make money there I got a chance I was 17 when I went down there and I got a job fishing on Lake Huron, on Huron Katherin.

(P) On the Katherin? Who owned that boat?

(W) Guy by the name of Vogelheim who really owned it out of Rodgers city.

(P) Vogelheim fisheries of Rodger City.

(W) I worked there one summer there. It was kind of bummed after that I was about 17 and where did I go from there... yeah I was 17, 18. Then I worked Flint, Lansing, Lansing at one time. Stayed with my sister that one I came back go to be fishing and that way I went to sail about night 17, 18 I went Rodger City and I fished on Lake Huron and I went up to, I worked for people, then I went to he was a pretty good fisherman and we went to Huron, Vogelheim and I went up to, next year I worked for a guy on Lake Superior moose hair ---. About 18, 19 then. Then a couple year I hardly do nothing. What we do then we then till well pretty well. Then I come back there --- then we, dad died about died in 57' I was about 23. Well then me and my brother took over the fishery.

(P) Ok who is your younger brother?

(W) Vernon Seaman.

(P) Vernon Seaman. Ok and what was the name of the boat that you had at this time?

(W) The name at that time was the P.P.

(P) The P. and P.

(W) Yeah we never did change it.

(P) And then you fished with your brother and then you went on your own when your brother split up fishing?

(W) Well yeah we kept going for about two years, three years together after that was about 57' 57' we took over when dad died. And then we went maybe till 57' for about three years because

in 60' we bought him a pick up. In 60' we had another chance to buy another boat then we split up. And then I went out on his own and he went on his own.

(P) Ok this was 1957, what kind of fish did you catch then?

(W) We were just fishing chubs.

(P) Just chubs how much were they a pound?

(W) I believe the reasonable price were around 20 cents.

(P) 20 cents a pound and what was an average catch?

(W) Well at that time 60' 61' I figured my boat and another guy worked for me after. Go and catch 100 bucks worth of fish, make money.

(P) Because gas and other expenses were not so much. Could you explain the fishing gear that you used at this time?

(W) Yeah that was another nylon type twine. We still using the pretty well cotton – we still have rope on up that we used to use line on the - give about six weeks to two months in the summer. We had trouble with black rocks at that time and the fish were breaking the net apart we didn't have the facilities to boil them to bring them in more so they wouldn't break apart. But the twine about the same if we would at all time.

(P) So you were fishing from Oscoda?

(W) Oscoda.

(P) Do you remember how much a license cost at this time?

(W) At that time for a commercial license I believe it was a dollar forty maybe a dollar ten at that time which I think the boat we had were 42 foot maybe 20, 20 and that would be about 60 some dollar we would pay for. They the only reason we got licenses the fog gear we never pick up the license.

(P) How much do you pay for a license now?

(W) I think the license right now I do fish a couple different, my license cost right now for a single boat back then maybe double 89 maybe a little bit more than that. But I could get a paper one, we got I got two different boats and pay about a thousand dollar a year but its kind a of fishing equipment though I got two different type boats that I can use.

(P) Ok can you tell me how your fishing career has progressed? You first of all had one boat when you are your brother split up this boat was about 40 feet long? What was the name of it?

(W) P.P, we called it the old man because we own it the old man. Well the P.P she out of gas --- I had the boat by the name of Janice I fish for about 20 years. -- Everything else can be more you work you get more money at it.

(P) So how many boats do you have now?

(W) Well I got three boats. But I really only got on license I got the one by the name of Mary Core year boat 42 huge she a trap.

(P) Ok that's a Mary Core.

(W) Named after my two daughters. And she's a 42 foot boat. She's only 40 foot boat but she she got a ten foot beam on it. And then I got one I bought on Huron on the other side of Detroit city serval years ago. And she's a 36 footer she had a Himmy in her.

(P) A what?

(W) A Himmy a Chrysler.

(P) Ok Chrysler that's the engine.

(W) The engine and she was a 36 foot and then we brought her up here, it wasn't big enough so we put a another a four foot make it a 42 footer. And then when I got a two verified V Cummings.

(P) And what's the name of this boat?

(W) Her name is The Fin.

(P) Oh The Fin why did you name it The Fin?

(W) Well I got put it my wife's sister used to call me Fin and his wife was from Finland and for some reason others used to call me Fin a lot of times so we just call it a Fin now more a less.

(P) So you got the Mary Core and The Fin and you have another boat?

(W) I got a – just built here. She about... well I run her about three years three summer two spring she about three years I figure she about three years old now.

(P) You had this boat build?

(W) I had it built in Escanaba.

(P) How big is it?

(W) She a 51 by 14.

(P) What's the name of this boat?

(W) This boat name after my wife The Sharon.

(P) The Sharon ok would you mind telling us how much you had to pay to have the boat built?

(W) Well...

(P) Its up to you you don't have to.

(W) Yeah ill tell you don't matter it don't hurt. I got over 90,00 dollars in her. For I should have a little left over that I didn't put it in but I got 90,00 I'm going to put more work into her yet but

about 90,00 dollars I got no lifter but I do have radion and a couple sonar off awful good engine so she a good boat but she could be a little bit better yet. More equipment in her.

(P) Ok you mentioned a few minutes ago a lifter what do you do with a lifter on a boat?

(W) That would be where you bring in your gill nets, the come in. They come in – mine are old can one at a time and mine got really old I got a new one. They aren't two spins so they cost you can get one for \$5000, \$6000 dollar. But time they just they make them down in New York some place I got the address I don't know where. But I could get more for about \$5000, \$6000 dollar.

(P) To lift the gill nets you just hook them in there and then it kind of reels them around?

(W) Bring them in then you gotta I think they got like jaws there-- they got a circle 36 inches across only half of that you got – 16 jaws spring ---. – Just like a fence in the water you can bring them in. ---

(P) And you just pick the fish out of the nets? Ok do you have any other, you must have other nets besides gill nets because you said you have a trap net boat. You have two trap net boats. Ok how are trap nets different than gill nets?

(W) Well gill nets actually just the same things as a fence you sent them underwater which is -- the gill net setting and the fish get caught in the gill net after you were supposed to be gilling and they both be dead. Well I disagree with that there but I do have a trap net rig. A trap net rig is the same thing it's a, it's a live trap, you trap minnow in a crick or a turtle trap everybody know what a turtle trap or trapping minnows or same thing as that there they worked on the same principle but they worked as they corral you got wild horses you got points out on them they bring them in there then you close the gate on them, they work on the same principle as that. Working on that corral that there you got to lead to bring them in. --- where the fish go into that there then they follow up into the part and into the part then into points. That the way a trap net work then we bring them up and I guess we reel about 90 feet of water, we bring them up that deep. And having a little trouble you can let them go back but...

(P) Do the fish usually live? When they come out of a trap net then? And are release?

(W) They must cause I have been fishing for seven years, I have been fishing for seven years and it seem more we fish them the more fish we got here, we fishing on the seven tape ground here we fishing off of good cropper fish and we ain't gotta more little one then we have big ones. It seems like I have been fishing seven years in the trap nets and in Big Bay here and it see more we fish the more fish we got. We do have a bunch of small fish right now. But we don't have no herrings today.

(P) No herring? You are fishing right now white fish?

(W) White fish that's all we fish.

(P) You said a minute ago that you didn't agree that the gill nets killed the fish?

(W) Well the gill nets I mean we do kill fish for the most respect there the net there you can set this kind of in the water and the fish is there. Well I wouldn't say more money off there but the

gill net a way better investment it cost you too much money to get a trap net where a gill net you can go into the fish stay out of the little fish is.

(P) I see if the fish are too small or if it's a fish you aren't supposed to be catching then you just don't set your nets?

(W) I like trap net, if I had my choice id go fishing...

(P) Are there any area of Lake Michigan that are closed to you as a commercial fishermen?

(W) Oh yeah.

(P) Where are you allowed to fish right now?

(W) I have just... what do I have... well with the trap net I do have a little more. But they just closed off the gill nets we have just, like we would have a fon on the gill nets if we would have had a fon fishing the Big Bay St. Martin area. If I would have a fon say a forty footer I would only have one quarter I would have less than – to fishing you would knock out that way maybe I maybe I could—in the gill nets. The trap nets you do have some more area on her. The traps nets only have can go only 90 feet.

(P) 90 feet deep the water can't be...

(W) Trap net more than 90 feet. And the bottom we can't fish on. They are no strict on us there are no restrictions for that but we have certain bottoms we can't fish on because we hold our net stony bottom or there ain't no fish there. And we use trap nets we may be stricter if maybe you got a 40 aches area then we only be fishing like maybe less than 20 that would give us more area then trap net, I mean gill nets. The trap nets would still can't fish any deep, there some flat area there they are fish there and the fish run into the same thing like banks up there or hills any place you go fishing you look at your land and that way you can see where your banks is. We do have sonar but any place you go fishing you can see the same area that your land hilly and you go up and see a bottomless --- gotta know the bank and that where they... good thing I do have a deal your fish do travel in temperatures of water.

(P) Temperature of water?

(W) They do have that there.

(P) Now to set the trap nets then you have to have equipment to go out there and drive stakes in so they will stay in the right spot?

(W) No no no that's pound nets we don't do that anymore. I never did fish nets. I worked the pound nets a couple different times but we don't do that no more.

(P) Oh you just anchor then. Just anchor but it's still too difficult to move them?

(W) Well no, the trap net no we have very little trouble with the trap net the trap net off of the rig we can move them. Cause I guess that we move then on seven years now. But I fish when -- dad fish them. I fished with him. But the biggest net he had was 15 footer I wanted a 16 footer that was a little bit difficult now we got, you can set a trap net and this spring here set here for about

50 minutes you find a spot where you want to set it and then when your already it be two days and then we would set our trap nets, ---- go back and keep looking then you set we do have better sonar and you know the depth of water but you want your trap net in a certain place. A trap net, you can set a trap net in four, ten minute if you have calm weather. With a gill net you can go any kind of weather.

(P) You have been fishing trap nets for seven years then why did you decided to start fishing trap nets when you were satisfied with fishing gill nets?

(W) Well they called...

(P) Who do you me they?

(W) Well the DNR at one time, once serval years ago they go put out the gill nets because it was a choice they could pay us off. Id get my pay out, ill take my pay out a \$40000 dollar quick fishing but I've been fishing now for seven years I don't like quick fishing I've been fishing too long and what 40000 dollars. I have, I do have good boats.

(P) I mean if you stopped fishing right now the DNR would pay you \$40000 dollars for your license?

(W) My gill nets I can still fish trap net though.

(P) But just for your gill net license then you could still fish trap net?

(W) When that gill net I don't do that at all I don't have no sons. The gill nets would just out and I can't see it. I do like trap net fishing I still like gill net. If I had to make a choice for either one well I am forty seven years old I only got to fish for another forty seven oh I am good for another twenty years yet.

(P) At least [laughs]. Ok are there any seasons that are closed to commercial fishing?

(W) Well we got a month in November get closed you have to remember I only can fish whitefish, yeah the month of November it's closed.

(P) The month of November you can't fish anything?

(W) Well we can't fish... well we only can fish whitefish right now.

(P) So then the first of December you can start fishing again?

(W) We used to we can could fish gill nets with the trap net go back.

(P) You can't fish trap nets when there is ice covering the lake?

(W) We pretty well. We went out there yesterday morning for instance first time I've been lifting trap nets for seven years my hands never been cold but my hand were cold they were down to about 22 somebody said. Took my first fish net out of my hands.

(P) Now you are fishing whitefish, what are whitefish a pound right now? What do you get for them?

(W) Well that really depends...

[Tape turns off]

(P) How much is fish right now a pound?

(W) Right now fish are way down, right now I have no idea what the price a bag would say about 70 cent or 80 cents.

(P) A pound?

(W) A pound but we got the volume right now they are going in. Right now the buyer I sell to Garden Garden Fish Company they go on the last one they were up to \$2.45 cents a pound. There were no fish going on, coming over catch a whitefish they maybe a hundred pounds for that right there the ice there, now you got the volume right now you got people in Chicago who don't even want white fish, they just they, right now they don't want do with them -- right now I think 70 cents would be a lot for them. By the time they get to Chicago see they gotta, let's see what it costs about 18 cents per frate and boxes and there buyer isn't making to much on that there.

(P) That's 18 cents a pound?

(W) He got we got 70 cents then you add another 20 cents on at least we save for the boxes, the packing, and the buyer gotta make well we call him a broker he is a broker more or less he got me some money, he running trucks, he got me some money too but they just don't want them! Something you go someplace else! You gotta steak you going into the fish market any market where you sell fish where you sell beef when you pay two dollar or four dollar for pound a steak whitefish up like there like last time there that many fishing going in you can sell that, right now whitefish are down well you push them you push them down you buy them and you got a price and you gotta have them when they only two dollar and that won't let it hurt us. When the whitefish are high just like when beef was high you can't sell fish when they are high but when they are high everybody gotta make a buck off of, money off of the fish. And just \$2.40 cents I don't like, I see whitefish at oh dollar if I get a dollar per pound I can go on more or less I got other investment by the time they get down to the public they ship they still got to pay \$2.00, \$2.25 a pound at least they are gonna eat them. That's what I like to see. The high fish price of fish now I don't like because the people can't eat them. Take them home and eat the fish.

(P) Do you eat fish yourself?

(W) Yeah we... I got a gill net boat with Sharron over by Stillwater when there is good weather we don't eat it with the wet weather because there is only two of us on it we don't take anybody on it.

(P) So then you have your noon lunch right out on the boat?

(W) Well...

(P) Cooked fish?

(W) Well we carry a lunch bail too. But a lot of time people go on the boat there we usually don't do a lot of cooking, a lot of the time we go around to a certain area around to another area maybe we got twenty minutes or on the way in. We boil fish a little bit. Fry in the frying pan pretty good we eat whitefish too but not too much on the boat yet. But you with a three guy crew there we got company on the boat and we got a pretty good cook there and then they usually do it. We get it at least three times a week probably.

(P) How many men do you have working for you at your peak?

(W) Last two years only two besides myself. But two years ago I had five guys work for me.

(P) And then the three of you run three boats?

(W) Uh no, well yes! We run a gill net boat and a trap net boat but then we got into a predicament where we, the two trap net boats only licenses for one license we could only fish ten trap nets so we, the two trap net boats actually just one for a spare or you can throw a trap net on boat, both trap net boats can't be on the lake at the same time unless you really want to break the rule but we only got one trap net boat but we have two. The gill net boat well we can have somebody else running that if we want.

(P) How many license fisherman are fishing from Fairport right now?

(W) Well say I was going to say maybe about here in Fairport, I would say... about I could name them off, about seven.

(P) About seven license fisherman? Ok are there any Indian fisherman?

(W) Yeah we got two here.

(P) Two Indian fisherman. Ok the DNR states that the lack of certain species of fish is because of over harvest by commercial fishermen. Do you agree with this?

(W) Really cause the commercial fishermen we have, only we trouble we have we have no DNR not there. What happened I think about ten years ago when they start biting trout the DNR got lots of money I don't know where they got it from, is they stop finding trout with from the federal government and they got a plant the trout well who was actually the gill net license the gill net is actually what started out the DNR wanted to get us out. Cause they wanted the lake trout for the sport. We catch a few lake trout they put them in same ground.

(P) The DNR plants the trout on the same ground as...?

(W) We will get any time you got a gill net in that there, there is an abundant of lake trout right now in the lake right now. You will get them on the whitefish ground with the gill nets.

(P) Do you get very many trout?

(W) At certain time of year I would say yeah. There about a week or ten days, two weeks when you fishing whitefish you would run up to in the bay which my dad, I call him dad he my father in-law, Remmie he fish with me for about twenty years. I never see anybody like that where they are now they plant trout and they, we do have them but only about two weeks during the

summer, I don't quite know why they were fishing gill nets good. Yeah we do have trouble with them, in that same area where we get them just lake trout and whitefish. And we could...

(P) Well then are the sports fishermen out there in the same grounds where you are fishing?

(W) Out there in the St. Martin area and in the Michigan area Big Bay any area here in Big Bay and Little Bay I've been fishing there now for oh pretty regular I fish my whole life up in this area but I'm just trying to figure out, I've been fishing up here for about 17, 15 years we will say about 15 years before they... but I've never seen a sport fisher around St. Martin.

(P) Never seen?

(W) Well no because they don't bite there. I tried it too I got a friend here that got a little 22 footer there and he got up rivers and down rivers and lots of baits on them we tried it there once and there were no hits there. Now go over by Boyers Bluff.

(P) Boyers Bluff?

(W) Yeah that little bit of area some reason they do pretty good there. But I would up in St. Martin area and that in Michigan water they won't...

(P) Over by Boyers Bluff then do they also fish commercially there?

(W) Very little there. And they got pretty well cut down there but that is good hook and line fishing there.

(P) So then actually the commercial fishermen and the sports fishermen don't fish the same areas?

(W) Mhm not while I've been there.

(P) Do you think the commercial fishermen have over fished? Is that why sometimes the walleyes have gone and the perch have gone?

(W) Um... the perch are going we got cycle fishing. Now I ain't no biologist I'm only a fisherman, it's hard to explain. I asked that a biologist I did ask him I have a good friend who's a biologist and I don't got on state biology but I worked at Stevens Point there with a guy by the name of Roy Robert but there was another one the head guy there... I can't think of the name what the biologist say about the whitefish there. But nobody seemed to agree with me too much. They won't only we got a lot of whitefish here. We used to have a lot of herring here in Lake Michigan here and Big Bay here especially but they don't want, we don't got no herring here in the past ten years probably a lot of whitefish how much we got a lot of whitefish? We have been fishing and they have been fished so hard. We got more trap nets and everything how much we got so much whitefish? We are fishing them hard there no doubt about it. But we got there Steven Point there work with us.

(P) You mean they are working with the college there at Stevens Point University Wisconsin?

(W) I was just trying to think of the head guy there I can't think of his name but one of the guys we got Michigan state too working, they working on Lake Huron Lake Michigan --- and they tag

fish. We got certain types of tags they tag them on. And the fisherman they got nothing to do with DNR.

(P) No. But you don't think the commercial fisherman have over fished? That isn't what brings about the lack of fish in at certain times? Or a fish disappearing a certain species of fish disappearing?

(W) Well...

(P) Why did the walleyes disappear and why did the perch coming back right now but they were gone for 15 years!

(W) How, walleyes we don't got no walleyes in Big Bay here.

(P) No but they used to be.

(W) Yeah but they used to be a bunch of them. I wonder if they ever figure out, walleye is a fat fish. They really tiny same thing about herring. We do get once in a while in November or December, December when we start big mashing in the bay here, Big Bay out by St. Martin we get big herring. No small ones. What happened? And something like that they be back take a while.

(P) The walleyes will be back you think?

(W) The walleye and the herring. Cause when you have that DBT remember when had they white fish got fat! Fat in the back and the could dissolved by the DBT where the herring that's a no fat fish or the walleye same thing they got no fat. I only a fishermen I ain't no biologist and what happened is the same thing with the eagle. The eggs got softshell and stuff and they wouldn't hatch and that what they won't come right down to about that. DDT was good for the farm fat one time, that's what could be what they we don't have no herring no walleye right now. We got no walleye, same thing with our lake trout, our lake trout ain't producing they plant them but they ain't producing.

(P) Not producing the ones that are being planted are not producing?

(W) No no I watch the—but we would have the whitefish and we have abundant of whitefish right now. Could eat the some they eat the same spawn the vice versa. Herring eat whitefish fawn that why you ain't got no herring in the bay right now. That why we got an abundant of whitefish right now. Cause the whitefish they overfished.

(P) The what?

(W) They a overfished right now

(P) The white fish are overfished right now?

(W) At the rate we got right now the equipment, yeah we been fishing a crop just like you go out into the field. You got cows, you harvest the best crop you got right now. We got biologist from Stevens Point we have two bad years, we can take two bad year yet spawning white fish up in Stevens Point. We got to watch out for the third one. And they cut us down, we got by them.

(P) Well then is this a bad year for spawning?

(W) No.

(P) This year is good?

(W) Wait uh well no. We this year is the best year I've seen according to the small fish we got right now.

(P) You mean you have been you've been catching a lot of small fish or you've seen...

(W) We been catching the best, trap nets I've seen in seven years since I have been fishing.

(P) Then if you catch small fish in the trap nets then you release them again?

(W) Yup.

(P) Ok if you catch small fish, do you catch the small fish in the gill nets?

(W) No. Very few very few.

(P) Why not?

(W) Well the size mash so the size mashers you just don't catch them.

(P) Oh by mash you mean the size of the squares in the...?

(W) That would be correct yeah.

(P) That you fish with. So if you got a large square then the small fish go right through?

(W) Fish nets type twine when they in the trap they can do the same thing they the same size mash. By the way too you go and take picture if you been... you have been on she my sister but she ain't been on the boat yet. But you can go out and see the trap net lifter the small fish can get out they can, we have four and half inch mash half our -- about thirty foot long and the last four footer two and half which won't matter it would have been better if we were only of course we don't want two -- two inch mash is better because we don't get no six inch whitefish going in it. But it don't matter anyhow, you don't see the fish the smaller six inch fish could get out dat net anytime they want. But we still get a percentage of six to eight inch fish they can get out of that four inch mash anytime you lift them up. Even when they have two inch mash they can get out and they still come. Well in 90 feet of water they could get out of the net anytime they want.

(P) But they just didn't?

(W) They just stay, well we do pull them up slow cause we...

(P) Because if you pulled them up fast then they would die?

(W) Well we are lucky. University of Lansing I think it is, they got a crab vessel and I just happened to get down there one time not too much on the whitefish I have only been down there once and I took another place. I only went there for ten days or a week or so.

(P) Is this a fisherman's meeting that you went to?

(W) No you supposed to go every week, every year to this but I just have, like say one people don't want couldn't go that I jumped second class I was third class I jumped last I went to last class when you went to this class then the next year you went to that there but only a week there one teacher at Steven Point there I think his name --- I got to go in the place of that guys spot I went on four week class and got down there and they tell you about the whitefish really you can bring them up and they got burp depending on the pressure they burp and then they can get that air out of the bag then they do go down. What most happens a lot of time they we handle them too much they do get fungus on them but small percentage for what we handle, very small but the whitefish will go down.

(P) What's the average size of the whitefish that you do catch? How many pounds or inches?

(W) Well we got to keep over a 17 inch whitefish. But in say a ton yesterday in the trap nets we keep yesterday when we fishing out in any place where we usually fish we have five different --

(P) You have what?

(W) Five -- class there. Maybe well we got all the way from six inches to twenty inches.

(P) Of a ton of fish?

(W) We got throw over a lot of fish.

(P) About how many did you keep out of this ton? Were you able to keep?

(W) We kept a ton.

(P) Oh you kept a ton I see.

(W) We sold twice in the amount of fish we sold in weight, it would be weight we five over we kept so five back.

(P) Five back for every one you kept! Mm and this is out of trap nets?

(W) But then still time of year then next time we throw out the trap net is could be the opposite way. They just the way the running.

(P) Are the fishermen, oh the last few years has been a lot of restrictions put on fisherman by the DNR, such as you can't you only got a certain area to fish in. For instance you moved to Oscoda and Cheboygan to fish could you do that now?

(W) No.

(P) No you can't your license is only good for certain areas?

(W) Just for certain areas.

(P) So if the fish leave here that's tough for you?

(W) Yup.

(P) What are some of the other restrictions that the DNR has put on you?

(W) Well once its spring we gotta have these stickers on it for some reason they all three boats gotta have a ton of them with stickers on it of course they document boat outta the Soo so nobody. Only one people can come on there the federal government or the Coast Guard if he is fully dressed. The boats we run they can't, the DNR actually on the lakes not that we have trouble with them but...

(P) They can't come on your boat the DNR?

(W) Not actually on these boats they give us the license but actually these are federal boats the MC boat they can document anytime. My rowboat I got a 22 foot motorboat but actually these boats when they document DNR have nothing, but that ain't what we are talking about. What did you want to know about?

(P) I wanted to know about more restrictions that the DNR has put on fishing other than the area that you can fish. Now they you have had to change to trap nets?

(W) Yeah but we just got that all of that there.

(P) But they wanted you to change to trap nets and yet they still let you fish with gill nets?

(W) Well yeah but we have been fighting them for the last ten years all they did for me got me a bigger. What happened before just fish gill nets -- but they actually they do a roundabout way the DNR really just putting you out of business. They are going about the roundabout way it's not right the people there I don't like that there.

(P) You are talking about what's been happening?

(W) I don't go for that there.

(P) But do you think that's license commercial fisherman?

(W) Oh no oh no oh no.

(P) All of these nets that have been pulled out of Garden Bay did any of those belong to a license fisherman?

(W) No I don't think, no I know no.

(P) Mm. That's what they are reading in the newspaper that commercial fisherman are setting nets where they don't belong and the DNR are coming in and pulling some...

(W) That might be the Indian DNR but then they got their own people I don't know what they do. If it wasn't for the Indian people ---

(P) But it's not actually the license fisherman that are disobeying the law?

(W) No no no! We gotta a license that we gotta hold on to. One guy can make almost as much money as I can, I got a lot of -- I gotta hold on to my license.

(P) What do you think of the idea of the DNR restricting the number of license that they give out now?

(W) That been going on now for a long time.

(P) For a long time?

(W) Yeah. That be going on for seven, eight years.

(P) Yes.

(W) The only bad thing about dat there is nobody else can get into it. And I ain't on no board I talk to different guys and that is something to get to get straighten out is actually you can be on who will give the new license to? – What kind of license you want, my license can be kind of a liquor license I ain't got no daughter. Shit I can sell my license for \$100,000 right now and sell my commercial fishing license. Just fish trap net. But I don't want that. Hell. I want, how everybody else going to get their license right now in the state of Michigan you can't get no new license.

(P) You can't get a new license you have to buy the license from a fisherman who has a license. Ok can you sell your fishing licenses and still fish trap nets?

(W) Not the gill nets. No no.

(P) You couldn't fish the gill nets but you can still fish trap nets then?

(W) I can sell my license and still fish trap. No when I bought my license yeah.

(P) They could fish gill nets?

(W) No no.

(P) They couldn't fish gill nets?

(W) No no we only the ones with gill nets right now. They wouldn't let me change my license right now.

(P) You couldn't sell it either?

(W) No.

(P) Oh I see.

(W) Maybe when I get done right now then but Tommy just sold his license.

(P) Who did?

(W) Bud Tommon

(P) Bud Tommon?

(W) Yeah but he didn't have no gill net license.

(P) He had a trap net license?

(W) Yeah.

(P) Do you have both a gill net and a trap net license then?

(W) Yeah. Well not really seven years ago they told me to go trap net all they did was make me a big fisherman add a gill net license.

(P) And then they give you two license?

(W) Now like I said they make me bigger.

(P) Well that's good. In some ways. Do you know how much Bud Tommon sold his license for?

(W) ...

(P) Unless he told you it wouldn't be of value.

(W) He had six nets...

[Tape cuts off]

(P) A lot of fisherman disagree with DNR regulations are the fisherman organized in any way?

(W) Yeah we got a pretty good organization. We got what you call a Michigan Fish...

(P) Fish producers?

(W) Yeah we got pretty good that there. We got little bit better right now should have been and but we got awful good with the amount of people we got here well when you eat fish god dammit you got to have some good friends there they gonna put us out but we got good friend down in Lansing. But our occasion is pretty good we got a reasonable occasion for the amount of people we got. Oh give or take maybe think about 500 in the state of Michigan. Maybe we got some buyers in that there I mean not just all fisherman.

(P) About ten years ago the DNR said they went going to be anymore gill net fishing. Not at all, they were going to buy out the gill net fisherman and then they were going to pay you so much for you license and if you wanted to you can change over to trap nets. So seven years ago that's what you did and that was at this time then gill nets were supposed to be outlawed and they keep letting you fish a little bit longer?

(W) What? About 33 or 28, 33 of us I guess were give out our gill nets which I still don't.

(P) Is this 33 on Lake Michigan?

(W) Yeah it would we would be in the state of Michigan I believe.

(P) Is that how many fisherman there are? In the state of Michigan?

(W) Well it be approximately more than that we got some trap netters we got some other fisherman and then you got some other guys part of the occasion. But I think 33 or so on fishing

gill nets right now. Hold out at court for the last seven years. We still fishing but now they backing right now that's been caught – but we still waiting on it. I do fish trap nets.

(P) So the DNR again just recently just within the last week that you can't fish gill nets again?

(W) Yeah the 27th what date is it today?

(P) So the 27th you got to quite fishing you got to pull out everything but then your lawyers are fighting against this now?

(W) Well we went to higher court there is in the state Michigan now we got to go to the supermen court the federal court we got to go to.

(P) But what has happened every time before when this has come up to a high court? Then have you had to pull out for a while and then you were allowed to set nets again?

(W) Usually even just a couple of weeks. But this year's we been fighting for seven years in the state of Michigan court now this could take us a little bit longer but they won't take it in. Little bit more now.

(P) But then you do agree that the DNR should have some regulations on fishing?

(W) Oh defiantly like closed season, bait and they stuff like that. We gotta have conservation now the DNR in Michigan we don't like. But we do have to have a common conservation.

(P) You don't like the DNR in Michigan but you do need oh I see conservation... to fish

(W) Yeah well anything with anything you got to have conservation!

(P) That's right.

(W) Not for what I do anything.

End of Interview