

Interviewee: Chris Pringle
Interviewer: Tina Bucuvalas
Consultant: Kristin Sweeting
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Transcriber: Kristin Sweeting

Abstract: Chris Pringle is the fourth generation in a family of Cortez fishermen. His great-grandparents, Nash and Leona Pringle, came to Cortez from the Carolinas in 1918. In the 1980s he first got into fishing with his grandfather, Raymond Pringle, who worked on a gill net boat. Today Pringle fishes with his son for the AP Bell Fish Co. His motivation is a deep attachment to water and to fishing.

When he was 7 or 8 years old, Pringle first went mullet fishing with his father. Before the 1995 net ban, he used gillnets inshore. Today he uses mostly cast nets inshore to catch a variety of fish, depending on the season. Among the fish he catches are mullet, ladyfish, sheepshead, and some bait fish. But his personal preference is to catch mullet. Pringle sells his catch primarily to AP Bell, with whom he has a strong relationship. Occasionally he will sell to other dealers when he is outside the Cortez area.

Pringle lives part-time in Jacksonville, where his father is the pastor of a church. He is still fond of life in Cortez, but believes that tourism has changed it. He would like the public to realize that commercial fishermen are necessary as food source providers.

Over the years, Pringle has seen changes in the fish stocks. The increasing outbreaks of red tide have caused large fish kills. He also believes that population increase, habitat destruction, and pollution have had a negative effect, and that infrastructure changes are needed to prevent future spills. The fishing industry has also changed, and young people are less likely to enter due to increased regulations, expensive equipment, and the effects of frequent spills. In the past, Pringle was involved with the Organized Fishermen of Florida, who worked successfully to clean up Florida waterways.

[00:00:00] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Okay. So could you start by saying your name and where you are, and then talking about your family background. I take it your family's from here.

[00:00:16] **Chris Pringle:** Yeah.

[00:00:16] **Tina Bucuvalas:** If people in your family were in the fishing business, if so, what were their names? Like the name of your grandfather and things like that, and what did they do. Then how did you learn? And so on and so forth.

[00:00:28] **Chris Pringle:** My name is Chris Pringle. I'm a fourth generation commercial fisherman, family, all from Cortez, Florida, which is where we're at now. And my, I've got into the fishing industry with my grandfather, fishing with my grandfather back in the 1980s. And his name was Ray, Raymond Stargel Pringle, and that's where I first started fishing at, with, with him on his commercial gill, gill net boat back in the, in the early eighties.

[00:00:59] And that's where I learned the trade. And I still fish now and my son fishes with me, so he is a fourth, a fifth generation commercial fisherman. So my great grandparents, Nash and Leona Pringle moved here from North Carolina, the coast of North Carolina, where they were fishermen. And they moved here in 1918, if I'm not mistaken.

[00:01:27] So we have a long history in, in Cortez and I, I still fish now full-time with my son for AP Bell Fish Company. And that's, so is that..

[00:01:42] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Have you always done the same kind of fishing or have you done a variety of different kinds of fishing?

[00:01:46] **Chris Pringle:** I've done several different kinds of fishing. In the early days before 1995, we gill net fished, it was a certain type of net that we used in those days.

[00:01:57] But in 1995, State [00:02:00] banned gill net fishing, which is, and it's been shrunk down to a, a smaller, smaller nets and a different type of net, which are seine nets and cast nets. And that's what we do now and we use 'em to catch mullet, inshore fish. All the fishing I do is mainly in shore, in the bay and close to shorelines, like on the beach and stuff.

[00:02:23] But we catch mullet, primarily that's, they, they used to call Cortez the mullet capital of the world. So that's kind of what built Cortez was the

mullet fishing industry. But I still do other fishing too. Lady fish, sheep head, some bait fishing also. We catch glass minnows which are used for chum.

[00:02:49] They use 'em to chum other fish like snapper and things like that. And some other bait fish too, the menhaden. We catch some of those they use for crab bait and thread herring they use for crab bait. So those are the main types of fish we catch and Jack crevel. That's another variety that we catch too.

[00:03:09] So we, we catch a lot of different varieties. You have, you kind of have to go with a lot of different varieties because catching one species year round is not always feasible to, you know, for business. So different seasons you catch different fish that are, that are more abundant at that time of the year.

[00:03:27] **Tina Bucuvalas:** So why is that? Do fish migrate to different places or, or what?

[00:03:31] **Chris Pringle:** Definitely in the winter there's different fish in the area than there is in the summer. Like the lady fish are almost primarily a fall and winter species. When they, when it starts warming up in the spring, they, they go back up, up the coast north and end up in Texas, Louisiana, and other states.

[00:03:52] And in the fall they migrate back south, and then we catch them during the wintertime, winter months. And Jack [00:04:00] crevel, they're a migratory species. Just about all the fish we catch migrate to some extent. Some are more migratory than others, they travel a lot further distances. But like the Jack crevel in the spring, they have a migration north and we catch them during certain months.

[00:04:16] Usually February and March. We catch them when they're migrating. The mullet are probably pretty much here year round. We catch those pretty much year round. At some point you can catch mullet, but that's one of the, that's the main fish we can, can really depend on year round.

[00:04:36] **Tina Bucuvalas:** I, I've got a, I've got a couple questions about mullet. When I first came to Florida, the first place I lived was Miami. Then I moved up to Tallahassee. There's an entirely different attitude about mullet in Miami to Tallahassee. In Miami, they're considered just trash fish or bait fish or something like that. Of course, up in Tallahassee, you know, it, it, it's quite different and people love them, you know, so it's down here, it's different.

[00:05:05] So has there over time or been a change or is this a regional taste for certain kinds of fish or what?

[00:05:15] **Chris Pringle:** I think the mullet have a different reputation in different areas of the state because it could be the culture where they're, where they're caught. The different, different people in the area.

[00:05:27] Some people prefer the mullet flavor than some people don't. On the East Coast where I have lived part of my life in Jacksonville, they're not near as popular as they are on the Gulf Coast. Everybody says a Gulf Coast mullet is a better tasting fish. Well, I can't say everybody, but the Gulf Coast people say that at least.

[00:05:50] So it's, it's kind of a, it's just personal preference, but there is, there are places where they're used primarily for bait, and a [00:06:00] lot of it's because of the size of the fish. In some areas, the mullet don't get as big as they do in others. Like on the, the fish in the North Florida, the panhandle region aren't near as big as the fish from this area in Cortez, the mullet just don't get as big, and that may be why they're used for a, as a bait fish, more or less, just because they're not as big and you don't get as much meat off of smaller fish.

[00:06:24] But just it's preference, personal preference mostly. Some people love 'em, some people don't, but they've been really popular here in, in this area of the state for all of my, you know, as long as I can remember and my family can remember. We've always ate good fried mullet, it's hard to beat. So..

[00:06:46] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yeah, I think you may be right about the different , you know, cuz now that I'm thinking about, it's been a while and since I've lived in South Florida, but it seems like the people farther down in the keys, for instance

[00:06:56] **Chris Pringle:** Mm-hmm.

[00:06:56] **Tina Bucuvalas:** They liked mullet more or you know

[00:06:59] **Chris Pringle:** Mm-hmm.

[00:07:00] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Than the people a little farther up the coast.

[00:07:02] **Chris Pringle:** Yeah.

[00:07:03] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Anyway. So could, could we also go back, you mentioned three different kinds of nets before, and I'm wondering if you might talk a little bit about the differences between these nets. You talked about gill nets, seine nets, and cast nets.

[00:07:23] **Chris Pringle:** Yes. Well, when I first started fishing when I was 14 with my older brother and with my grandfather, we used gill nets back in those days. It's a monofilament net and it's the, the mesh size is, is to target a certain size of the species. For that size fish fits that net. And it's a very, it's the most selective type of net there is cuz it selects just the size that it's built for.

[00:07:55] And that's what we used for just about all the fishing we did as far as food fish. [00:08:00] We, we almost, we caught most of 'em with gill nets. Some, there was some seine netting that happened also with the smaller meshes. But the, the majority of our mullet fishing was done with gill nets. And but that's, that was, those nets were, we were allowed 600 yards of net and there was no depth limitation on it.

[00:08:20] But then in 1995 with the Gill net Ban amendment that was passed in the state, they outlawed the larger mesh sizes and then eventually outlawed the monofilament net in seines. So they made us use a two inch mesh, stretch mesh or smaller in our seine nets. And they made the seines only allowed 500 square foot or less.

[00:08:45] And that's a rectangular net that's used similar to the gill net, except you don't tangle the fish in it. You pull 'em down and they, they go into a pocket, you scoop 'em up into a pocket that, that's built into the net with a, and it's a smaller mesh size is the main, you know, a lot of the difference in it.

[00:09:01] And it doesn't tangle fish like the gill net did. And then the cast net, of course, is a hand thrown circular net that you throw, and it's tucked from the lead line by a hand line that you retrieve it with, and it tucks it shut at the bottom, and then you pull it in and dump the fish out of it. But it's a hand thrown net and it's, so, it's circular.

[00:09:24] Those are the main differences in the three different nets that I mentioned.

[00:09:29] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Right. What, what kind of fishing do you prefer? Is it, is it what you're doing now or since you've.

[00:09:37] **Production Crew:** Cut. Yeah.

[00:09:40] **Tina Bucuvalas:** So out of all the kinds of fishing you've done, what is, what do you prefer yourself personally?

[00:09:46] **Chris Pringle:** I've always been, I, I grew up catching mullet, so it's still one of my favorite things to do.

[00:09:52] It's it's not always the most lucrative price-wise, but it's something, like I said before, that it's pretty much a year round [00:10:00] thing. You can almost always go out and catch some mullet most times of the year. So the consistency of it makes me kind of stay with that. I've always been known, my reputation's always been i'll, I'll go catch mullet over just about anything most of the time.

[00:10:15] But sometime the money is there in a, in a different species and I'll, I'll go after the thing that's in season, but I always go back to mullet fishing. It's always been my favorite. It's just what I grew up doing and I still love to, I love to catch mullet. And I love to eat mullet too. They're, they're, they're pretty good. So, Yes.

[00:10:35] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Well, along those lines, what is it that drew you to fishing as an occupation and has kept you in it? What is your personal, real attachment to it?

[00:10:49] **Chris Pringle:** Well, I grew up fishing and it's always been part of my life and my family life. It's kind of a heritage situation with me, but I, when I grew up doing it with my dad, I just fell in love with it as a kid, a teenager.

[00:11:04] And then I fished with my older brother some in the summertime when I was outta school. And it, I guess it's just in my blood. I just, I just, the freedom of it. Working for yourself. I'm 52 years old and I've never punched a clock. The freedom of it is, is and I make a good living. I've raised two kids doing it, so it's, the money's been adequate to keep me doing it.

[00:11:28] But just, just the love of being on the water and, and doing what my family has done for five, four and five generations. It's, it's it's kept me doing it, you know, for almost 40 years now. So just, just the love of being on the water and just it, once it's in your system, it kind of, it's, I've tried to get away from it a couple times in my life, just for different personal reasons and just never have been able to do it.

[00:11:55] It's, it's just, it's still to this day for almost 40 years [00:12:00] later, it's still really fun most of the time. So , it's still a job, so it's nothing's fun all the

time, but I have a lot of fun doing it still. And my son and I are, are doing it together now, and he's 24 years old and we're, we're, he's been doing it with me since he was about 18, 17, 18.

[00:12:18] And I've taken them on the water with me since they were kids, both of my kids, so, you know, and he's, he's still doing it with me, which is a, a nice thing to do with your son to grow up working together and. . It's, it's just family time and just what I've always done and loved.

[00:12:36] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Do you think your son has the same kind of attachment to it that you do?

[00:12:41] **Chris Pringle:** My son he likes to fish. I don't think he's got it as bad as I got it when I was his age, but he he loves, he, he still loves to fish and it's still the freedom of it. Even though he's working with me, it's still, we have, he has a lot of free time in between cuz weather causes you to stay in. Certain seasons, certain times it's, it, he, he puts in a lot of hours and then sometime he can have several days where he is not busy and young people like that, that free time. But as far as him doing it for a living, I don't think, I'm not sure that he's got that in him, that desire. But he does love the fish and he, he, I've heard him tell other people, he might not tell me all the time cuz I'm his boss and his dad, but, I've heard him tell other people, mention he likes it, which makes me pretty happy that he at least has that level of enjoyment with it.

[00:13:38] And he is the best help I've ever had on a boat. So I really hope he, hope he'll stick with it at least as long as I want to, cuz he's really good help. So, good father and son time too.

[00:13:49] **Tina Bucuvalas:** That's great.

[00:13:50] **Chris Pringle:** Yeah, that's great.

[00:13:51] **Kristin Sweeting:** Can I interject real quick?

[00:13:52] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yes.

[00:13:54] **Kristin Sweeting:** So kinda playing off your, your [00:14:00] desire and you talking about you learning with your, your family. Do you remember the first time you went mullet fishing? And can you tell us about that or your first memory mullet fishing.

[00:14:14] **Chris Pringle:** My first memory, mullet fishing, I can't remember how old I was, but the boat that we were in, my, my grandfather that I started fishing with had a little inboard boat, it was very small. A little four cylinder inboard engine with an engine box on it. I remember laying up on the box, he took me out there at night and I was, I can't remember, I think I was probably about seven or eight years old and he took me out there at night and I laid up on the engine box cuz it was warm.

[00:14:47] And he actually tied his boat where we're sitting at this dock at the time. There was another small dock here and he actually, this is where he tied his boat up, right? Pretty much where I'm sitting, which is pretty cool. I didn't even think about that till right now. But that was my first memory of going mullet fishing.

[00:15:06] And back then they used to tow a smaller boat around with no motor on it, with their net on it. And they had oars that they would paddle or push around in the shallow water with. And I remember him getting in that little skiff and paddling away from me on that, sitting on that, laying on that engine box.

[00:15:24] And I haven't thought of that memory in years. I'm glad you asked that because that's that's pretty cool to remember that. But yeah, I remember laying up on top of that box and wondering when he was gonna be back and he came back with fish all in the boat that he had caught. It was it was a pretty cool time.

[00:15:41] Yeah, I, I think I was probably seven or eight years old, if I'm not mistaken. So that was my first memory of mullet fishing. So maybe that's why I still love it. I can't remember when I didn't, so, yeah.

[00:15:55] **Tina Bucuvalas:** I, do you have any memory, I mean, I think I asked you this [00:16:00] before, you know of one of the absolute best times you've ever had out on the water.

[00:16:06] **Chris Pringle:** Best times. There's so many of them. If you did this for 40 years, you would know what I'm talking about. There's so many best times that we've had on this water. But I think one morning with my son, I, a friend of mine called me from Venice and told me that those mullet were coming past the Venice inlet, going north on the beach and all day long that day he told me this late in the evening and I went and told my son, I said, get in bed and get some rest we're getting up early. Cuz just the experience of being on the water these years, I knew pretty much had a good idea where those fish would be the next morning. And the guy that called me didn't know that, he's a little

younger. He hadn't had the experience of seeing what those fish do at that time of the year.

[00:16:55] It was in the fall when they have their eggs, the roe mullet that probably people have heard of. But they were traveling north from down south and they were, they were going by that inlet. So we went to the Sarasota, big Sarasota Pass. I told my son, get in bed, get some rest. We jumped up at about 3:30 in the morning, went down there on the trailer and put the boat in the water and we went right out Big Sarasota Pass and went, came around the corner on the beach.

[00:17:20] And this giant bunch of fish was laying right there on the beach and it was my son's first real experience with a really big strike of, you know, set of fish like that to catch that many. And we caught 14,000 pounds of roe mullet right at daylight on a I think it was a Friday morning, if I'm not mistaken.

[00:17:45] But I, we've got pictures of it. I wish I had the pictures to show you and maybe I'll get 'em later. But that was one of the most exciting times cuz he, he had never experienced it. I think it was 2018, January of 2018. We had [00:18:00] 14,000 pounds of mullet that morning. And we actually couldn't get 'em all in the net.

[00:18:05] We had to scoop 'em out with a small, with a dip net because they wouldn't all fit in the pocket that was in the seine. And he was so excited, to see him that excited about a catch of fish was, that's, so recently, that's one of the most exciting times we've had. I could go back to some other nights and days that I spent with my grandfather, who has passed now, but some days with him, you know, can't hardly go, you can't hardly talk about how exciting and how memorable those things are and how meaningful they are in my life. But there's, there's many, but with my son, that's, that was pretty cool with my teenage boy to go out there and do that and see his excitement with it. It was very meaningful and memorable.

[00:18:55] **Tina Bucuvalas:** So you work, you sort of work like a, as a contractor for the fish house or how does, how does that work exactly?

[00:19:06] **Chris Pringle:** Well the commercial fishermen that fish for AP Bell, most of us own our own equipment. Some, some run the boats that are owned by the Fish House. I own my own two boats and I just fish independently and sell them the fish.

[00:19:24] They just buy my product. That's how that works. The business end of it is just, I just sell my product to AP Bell Fish Company as a, they're a wholesale dealer and I have a license to sell to a wholesale dealer. And that's, so that's, that keeps it independent and keeps us, that's kind of part of the freedom thing that I talked about.

[00:19:44] I can sell to them, or if I'm out of outta town, I can find another wholesale dealer. There's one in, there's one in Pine Island, a good friend of mine that I sell to when I'm, if I'm down that way around the Fort Myers area, but we travel some, but most of our fishings done here. But when [00:20:00] we do travel, we have the freedom of selling to whoever is the wholesale dealer in the area.

[00:20:06] **Tina Bucuvalas:** So, so do you have to sort of choreograph in some way, like with, with, let them know when you're going out or you know, or what you might bring, be bringing in, or do they suggest to you or.

[00:20:18] **Chris Pringle:** Well, there's sometimes when I, when I start to go fishing certain times of the year, I'll go ask the owner what she needs the most.

[00:20:27] You know, what can, what do you need me to catch the most? If I'm not sure which direction I'm going and what I'm gonna fish for, I'll just ask her, do you need this? Do you need that? And then certain species, like some, some of the baits that we catch, there's a limited market, so we get a certain time of the year and a certain amount of time to catch a certain quantity that they freeze and have on hand for their, for the market that's available.

[00:20:52] So the, like the glass minnows, it's like a, usually in the spring and summer is when we catch most of them. And sometimes she, she tells us how many she needs and we go and try to find 'em and catch the amount that she needs to put in the freezer for an order. So sometimes she's just got orders for a certain amount of fish.

[00:21:11] So the, that's one thing about the mullet, like I go back to the mullet, is just about always an open market for mullet. Certain other fish we do have to check with her before we go, but, but the certain things she'll take about any time the, the, the mullet she'll take about any time, lady fish is something that's pretty much wide open.

[00:21:32] The jacks we can usually catch about any time, but like the bait fish is usually something we have to check with her on.

[00:21:39] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Have you seen any change over time, over the last few decades in the stocks of fish in the Gulf? I mean, in the quantity or the quality, you know, of different kinds of, of fish?

[00:21:51] **Chris Pringle:** Well, over, over 40 years of fishing, there's many changes that has been observed in [00:22:00] many different ways and for many different reasons. A lot of times weather is, plays so much of a role. We've had, we had a freeze in 2010 that killed fish all the way down to the keys. So there's, there are, there are years when the fish are more abundant and a lot easier to catch just because of the weather. When mean, like right now, it's been blowing, seems like for six weeks we, we can't hardly get a day to go fishing. So that has a lot to do with how many we see and catch. But overall after the Gill net ban in 95, there was a lot less pressure on the fish.

[00:22:39] So there was a lot less fishermen. A lot of the fishermen quit because that's all they knew was the gill nets. And when they minimize the, you know, made the nets so much smaller that we were allowed to catch. Especially some of the older guys, they didn't feel like trying to learn how to use these nets and figure out what was gonna be legal and what wasn't.

[00:22:59] So that, that made a big difference in the stocks of fish. When you don't have as much pressure on 'em, of course it, it looks like a lot more fish because you know, you're not, the pressure's not on the fish. But the red tide recently, in recent years has been so prevalent it seems like almost every year that the Red Tide has, is, shows up somewhere on the Gulf Coast of Florida.

[00:23:24] And like 2018, that that red tide we had in 2018 was, it took us almost two solid years to get even close to back to a normal stocks of fish that we're seeing out there every day. So it, red tide's been our biggest enemy as far as stocks of fish and the amount of fish we're seeing most days. We can go out there and find what, like I said, if the weather's good, we can usually go find something to catch.

[00:23:52] It's not, it's, they're not, it's not like fish are real scarce, but on those years where we have the red tide, it, it does take a big [00:24:00] toll on 'em, and it usually takes at least a year, year and a half to even start looking back normal again.

[00:24:06] **Tina Bucuvalas:** So so have, have, has it been your observation that Red Tide has become more frequent or gotten worse over, over your lifetime?

[00:24:19] **Chris Pringle:** Well, when I first started fishing, it was probably 10 years of my fishing before I even saw, saw red tide. So the last three or four years we've had red tide every year. So it seems that whatever's contributing to it is a lot more abundant. In the last five to 10 years, there's been some really bad red tides and it's, it's took a big toll on the fishing, the fish stocks.

[00:24:47] It, it does recover. It always does. If it, if we, if the water will stay clean long enough, it will, you'll start seeing the recovery being out there every day, you know, four or five days a week, you, you do start seeing the recovery. But the red tide is definitely, has been a lot more prevalent and more, more often.

[00:25:07] We're seeing it almost, like I said, every year you see it somewhere on this, on this coast, so I don't, I'm not sure of, I'm not a biologist, so I don't know what all the causes of it are, but we can, we do, we do put two and two together sometime, and usually every summer when we have the real rainy season, there's always a, a spill of some sort, some sort of wastewater spill.

[00:25:33] There's sewer pipe breaks. Or last year we had the Piney point incident and it's always right there in the rainy season where all of it washes straight into our bays, and usually within two weeks of one of those spills, we have kept up with it and kept track of it almost every single time without fail, within two weeks there's red tide somewhere in that area.

[00:25:57] So we really, it [00:26:00] would, I think that would be the biggest thing is we can keep some of these spills from the water waterways. It would, it just seems to me that that was a common sense thing to keep our waters a lot cleaner is, is keeping those spills under control somehow. I'm not sure how they're gonna do it, but that has been the biggest issue I've seen with water quality is, is just, you see water, you see spills every year, and then within two weeks you see red tide.

[00:26:26] It's, kind of self-explanatory to me. So that's my observation in it anyway.

[00:26:33] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yeah, so essentially pollution is one of the biggest factor.

[00:26:36] **Chris Pringle:** Pollution seems to be the biggest factor in fish stocks diminishing. It's not overfishing for sure. They've got us limited to such small nets. They, you know, it, it's definitely not overfishing, so it has to be something

if they're, you know, if the stocks are fish dwindled, it's usually right after a red tide.

[00:26:57] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yeah. Do, do you think, do you think maybe climate change or, and maybe the, do you think the temperature has changed in the water at all due to climate change or anything? Would that be a contributing factor?

[00:27:15] **Chris Pringle:** I'm not sure what all the contributing factors are as far as the climate and the I'm not a, I'm definitely not a professional on climate change and those issues, but definitely the pollution factor is, and the, and the increase, the such huge increase in population has a lot to do with the infrastructure, can't handle the building.

[00:27:41] And the, I mean, with, with, with buildings, you have to have infrastructure and if your sewer treatment plants can't keep up with the, with the number of people, then something needs to be done with the infrastructure to keep up with the growing populations in the coastal areas especially. And the coastal [00:28:00] areas seem to be what's building the most.

[00:28:02] I mean, they just keep putting more houses and roads and these things in without proper infrastructure to handle it. And I, I think that's what contributes a lot to the the spills and the releasing of these toxic waters into our waterways. I, I just, I can't believe they, with where are all the environmentalists when you need 'em?

[00:28:26] Nobody's stopping them. I mean that, that, that Piney point spill last year was near catastrophic. It with, with just a little bit more, something bad to have happened. It could have been, it could have wiped out this whole area for years. And the fact that that place is even on that close to the water just blows my mind.

[00:28:46] I can't believe they would, they even keep something that close to the water with that type of toxic waste. But that's for someone else to handle. I don't know how to handle that problem, but that's definitely a problem in our waters. Toxic waters spilling into our waterways is without a doubt, a major problem in our waterways.

[00:29:07] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yeah, that sounds pretty serious.

[00:29:09] **Chris Pringle:** Yes, it is.

[00:29:11] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Have you been involved with any of the fisherman's organizations that are trying to, I don't know, prevent things like that or work with biologists who are you know, trying to document that kind of thing?

[00:29:30] **Chris Pringle:** I've been a, I was a O.F.F., Organized Fisherman of Florida member. I have been off and on for, since I was 18 years old, you know, for quite a few years. And I was, I'm trying to say, I lost the train of thought. Gimme a second. I'm glad you're editing. But yeah, I've been a O.F.F. Member, Organized Fisherman of Florida member off and on for most of my [00:30:00] life, most of my adult life.

[00:30:01] And I know they, they do a coastal cleanup every year. I did a, I participated in that with them last year, and we go around and clean waterways as shorelines of debris and things like that, which is a good thing to do. But I would like to see them more involved in stopping these spills. This, this, it's good to clean the shorelines, I got nothing against that. I'll probably participate again and do it again, but until we can stop this wastewater from running into our bays, I'm not sure where where else we can turn to clean our water waterways up. I mean, debris is bad, but it's not near as toxic as high nitrogen wastewater pouring into our waterways.

[00:30:49] So, Yeah, I have been a, I have definitely been a member of the O.F.F. Off and on for most of my adult life.

[00:30:59] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Slightly different turn, but you know, your family's lived in Cortez for a long time, and it seems like a, seems like a really nice little town, you know you've lived there, but you say you've, you've also lived in Jacksonville and other places.

[00:31:21] What's it like to live in Cortez and does this really have the kind of old fishing town flavor, you know, that it looks like it does. I mean, is it a great place to live or what, what's life like there?

[00:31:36] **Chris Pringle:** Well, I live part the time in Jacksonville because my dad was a minister and he started a church in Jacksonville, and that's where it ended up being the headquarters.

[00:31:47] So I've lived there, my family's lived there for quite a few years, but we still own a place here in Cortez that I stay when I fish. So living in Cortez, it's, it's a very [00:32:00] quaint neighborhood that's, it's always been a fishing village since my grandfather and his parents moved here in the early 1900s.

[00:32:08] It's, it was built to be a, a fishing village. That's what it has always been. Living here now is not like it used to be. It's, there's a lot more of a tourist feel to it, but it's still it's still holding on dearly to the, to the fishing village vibe. And it's got enough of it to still be Cortez to me.

[00:32:33] And that's, that's good that we still have the, the fish houses and the commercial fishing boats and the docks and stuff that we've always seen here. All the, some of the same docks are right here that were here when I was a kid growing up. So the, the restaurant here next, next to us, ap or Starfish Company, was actually a fish company and we unloaded fish there.

[00:32:57] It was not a restaurant, it was actually a fish company. So it's the people that, or have been a part of the community have preserved a lot of that feel in the shorelines around here in Cortez. And I'm, I hope they continue to, cuz it's a, it's a really unique place in Florida. There's very, I don't know if there's another place like it.

[00:33:20] I've been to other so-called fishing villages and I've, it's just not like Cortez. So yeah, it's, it's a really cool place to live.

[00:33:29] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Do you think there's a problem these days getting young people involved in fishing? Has it changed since you were a kid? I mean, people wanting to become fishermen.

[00:33:42] **Chris Pringle:** Young people in the, in the fishing industry is something that I've always tried to encourage.

[00:33:47] We need young fishermen. We're not always, we're not all going to stay young, so we, we do need new, and I have tried to even help some of the younger fishermen [00:34:00] get involved and get and get more knowledgeable in their, in their fishing. I've tried my best to help as much as I could with that, cuz of 40 years experience.

[00:34:10] I need to pass it on to someone. But it's, it's really hard to get some, some of the young guys involved because they when I was growing up, the young people were on the back of the boat doing all the hard work and learning how to fish. Nowadays, as soon as they get old enough to get behind a wheel, they grab the steering wheel.

[00:34:33] They haven't even been taught what fishing is about. And they learn, I mean, young people learn pretty quick anyway but if, I think that's what's missing is learning the industry and the fishery before you get behind the

steering wheel, and we don't have a lot of that, which contributes, I think, to guys going out there without a lot of knowledge and, and experience and realizing I, I can't catch fish like somebody else did, and they quit. They just don't stay with it. I've seen some that stuck with it and they've, they've done good for themselves, but the ones, some of 'em get discouraged and quit. I'm not sure what all the reasons for it is, but the laws that we have about our nets and stuff are a discouragement too for a lot of people.

[00:35:22] You've got these little, these very small, difficult nets to make work. I mean, you've got to really do things a certain way to, to be able to catch fish with 'em, and a lot of people don't want to do all of what it takes, and then, and then with one little infraction, they can send you a \$2,500 fine and take your license from you for three months. For, there's not a whole lot of in, you know, encouragement by the law enforcement either in the way the laws are written. So they've, I think there's just not a lot of [00:36:00] inspiration for people to get into something that's, that regulated. Regulation is a big reason why some of the young guys have said, I don't want to, you know, how am I gonna catch fish with that little, those little nets?

[00:36:12] So that's a lot of, I, I see that as a lot of the reason the regulation is, is pretty stiff, pretty tight. And every year it seems like they wanna regulate something some more instead of tackling the problem. The problem is not overfishing. The problem is pollution. We can't kill in our lifetime what that red tide can kill in a few weeks and it kills millions and millions of fish, and us guys don't kill millions of fish.

[00:36:40] So I wish they would, I think if they would attack the problem, you would give these young guys more inspiration to get into, into the business and, and keep it going. Cause we're gonna have to have another young generation to continue it, you know? So I, I like to try to help 'em and encourage 'em all I can, but I can see the reasons why they don't want to, because the, the laws are so tight and the penalties are so severe.

[00:37:10] It's really, it's really difficult to get into.

[00:37:12] **Tina Bucuvalas:** It's really expensive these days too.

[00:37:14] **Chris Pringle:** Yes.

[00:37:14] **Tina Bucuvalas:** To get some of the permits, isn't it?

[00:37:17] **Chris Pringle:** Yeah. Plus, yeah. The expense of getting into the, the fishing industry, you've got to get a boat and a motor that are, you know, \$15,000 motors and nets are more expensive than ever.

[00:37:29] Trailer, boats, trailers, trucks, you've gotta have all this stuff to, to stay in it. And and it seems like the gas prices go up and the fuel and the fish prices don't. So it's yeah, it's, there's a lot to it to get into it and then to stay in it year round to learning. Cuz if you stay in it year round, you've got to have some, you can't just catch one species year round.

[00:37:54] If ,you're not, if you're not able to catch more than, learn how to catch [00:38:00] more than one kind of fish, it's gonna be hard to stay in it as a year round business. So that's a reason, that's the reason we have a lot of part-time fishermen that show up when the lady fish are thick or they show up when the roe mullet are thick in the fall and they fish for a few weeks and they go back to their job wherever they have a full-time job.

[00:38:19] So we have a lot of part-time fishermen in the industry now because of that. They know how to catch one thing, so they show up when that one thing is thick and they catch 'em and then when they thin out they go back to their job. So yeah, there's a lot of, lot, lot of expense to it and a lot of demand to know, you know, have the knowledge of how to, how to stay in business on a year round basis.

[00:38:41] It's, it's tough to be a full-time fisherman.

[00:38:45] **Tina Bucuvalas:** And, and, and besides the local fishermen, do you also have people coming from other parts of the country down here to fish when there are certain and during certain seasons?

[00:38:54] **Chris Pringle:** Yeah. Certain times of the year, there are like in the roe mullet season, in the fall, November, December, January, we have people coming.

[00:39:03] We used to have a lot of people that even came from North Carolina, Louisiana, different states. It's not so much anymore, but they still come from all over the state to certain areas. Wherever the, wherever the fish are, the thickest, everybody will travel to that area. So then that puts the pressure on one area for a short time.

[00:39:23] But yeah, there's a lot of travel involved and there's a lot of, like I said, part-time fishermen that do a lot of traveling and they show up when

everything, when there's plenty of fish, and then disappear when the fish, you know, are not as prevalent for that area.

[00:39:37] **Tina Bucuvalas:** So does that, does that impact your harvest also?

[00:39:42] **Chris Pringle:** The part-time fisherman showing up in, by the dozens, if not hundreds sometime, definitely impacts the full-time fisherman that's in one place year, pretty much year round. And when you put 10 times as many [00:40:00] boats in the same size school of fish it, it kind of yeah, makes it more difficult to catch the fish, for one thing.

[00:40:07] The fish start running and hiding and getting in areas where you can't catch 'em. They'll go to closed waters. These mullet are not dumb. They will go find closed waters. That Manatee River, you're not allowed to fish mullet inside Manatee River to a certain point. They will go there and hide.

[00:40:23] They'll go in certain closed waters. We're not, we're not even able to fish. So there's a lot, there's a lot more to it than people realize. But yeah, it definitely impacts the local fishermen when the traveling fishermen show up. And most of the guys that travel are part-time fishermen. Not all, but the big majority of them show up in the fall when the fish are thick.

[00:40:47] And yeah, that it can definitely impact our, our catch.

[00:40:57] **Tina Bucuvalas:** What do you see as the future of the fishing industry? Do you think it's a, it's, do you think the future looks good? Do you think there are really major problems that might contribute to its decline? I mean, you've mentioned like the red tide or, but how do you see the, the, the large picture for the future?

[00:41:22] **Chris Pringle:** The future of the commercial fishing industry, especially the small inshore fishery seems to me that we really, we really need some changes in certain areas, in my opinion. Well, I think we need changes in some of the laws that they've got written. They wrote these laws in 1995 and some of the things that they were trying to stop with the gill nets has been stopped.

[00:41:55] So to carry on some of those fines and some of [00:42:00] those penalties for certain infractions, I think we've showed now that even through all the red tide, the fishery is not gone. We're still here, you know, 27 years later after this Gill net ban, they said they had to do it, or the fisheries would be, you know, extinct.

[00:42:20] The fish would be extinct. We were gonna kill 'em all. Well, 27 years later, we're still here. We're still make, you know, making a living. We're still, there's still stocks of fish that are abundant and even with all the regulation, theres still plenty of fish to be, to be caught. If it wasn't, we wouldn't be able to stay in business this long.

[00:42:42] And then the red tides on top of that show even more so that we can't hurt the stocks of fish with the nets they've given us. I, I would love to see them go back and revisit some of these regulations that they've put on us 27 years ago. It would be great to see them revisit 'em and see if there's somewhere they could relax some of those things to make it more commercially viable without so much, just the effort level we have to put into it now is, is ridiculous.

[00:43:17] And, and then for one small infraction, they want to take your license for three months and give you \$2,500 fines. And it's just, they call 'em major violations and what they're calling major is really not that major, some of them. And I would just like for the law enforcement and the lawmakers, to revisit some of the, some of those enforcement tactics and some of the, I mean, they've got drones that follow us around.

[00:43:45] Now I've been followed by drones for four hours straight at night. Why? I mean, I've been doing this for almost 40 years. I haven't ,you, there's still, there's fish out there. They're, they're, they're there. And the [00:44:00] worst problem is the red tide, not the commercial fishermen. That's my, that's the biggest story I can tell in this is that the commercial fishermen are not the problem.

[00:44:11] The red tide and pollution can kill more fish, like I said, in a few weeks that I will ever I could ever kill in my lifetime. It's amazing how many fish you can see floating out there by the in for miles, and they're still enforcing laws that were made 27 years ago for a, for a specific purpose. I would really love to see 'em revisit some of the enforcement tactics and some of the actual stringent laws that could be, I think they could be relaxed and the fish stocks would still be safe. And that would be my best foot, you know, path forward and vision forward for the commercial fishing industry. We, we do need some changes for the future to be as bright as it should be. The commercial fishing industry deserves a bright future.

[00:45:05] We've worked hard. We've been here as long as this country's been here. There's, we've been catching fish and we've been feeding people. Good help, you know, it's a healthy diet. It's, it's things that's needed in the, in the economy. And why not revisit these laws? I, I hope, I hope someone sees this

and, and thinks that it's a good idea to revisit some of the some of the laws that they've put in place, cuz I think they're a bit much. And for a, for a future that's bright, like I said, that we deserve, I think that needs to be done.

[00:45:44] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Is that boat bothering us?

[00:45:45] **Production Crew:** No, that boat's cool.

[00:45:46] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Okay. All right. Just because I can hear it.

[00:45:50] **Kristin Sweeting:** Can I interject?

[00:45:51] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yeah.

[00:45:52] **Kristin Sweeting:** Can you give some examples of some of the infractions that you think are way overboard [00:46:00] and what the penalty is??

[00:46:19] [Edited - Production conversation, boat interruption]

[00:46:21] So the question is can you elaborate with more detail about the infractions that you would like somebody to revisit if you think they're, they're too much?

[00:46:34] **Chris Pringle:** Well, that some of the some of the laws that we've been that we would like to see relaxed and revisited and, and updated is some of the net sizes that they, they make us use.

[00:46:48] The seine nets are only allowed to be 500 square feet each. We're allowed two per boat and they cannot be connected. And that amount of net is, that's where I talk about the, the, there's, it's so labor intensive to catch fish with these nets because there's so many things you have to do to not have those nets connected. In shallow water of course, we're in the water, so we can walk around to our nets, move them individually, but it just takes so much longer to do some of the things we do to catch the fish and the 500 square foot net. You think about how big that is, that's not a very, that's not a very big net. When we used to use six to 800 yards of net with no depth limit, it's like one per, less than 1% of what we used before, 1995.

[00:47:37] So, and they used those nets before 95 for a hundred years. And so to, to see them give us a little more net would be I think common sense thing to do for the industry. But we, but at the same time would not hurt the stocks of

fish because if, if the stocks of fish would [00:48:00] hold up to six and 800 yards of unlimited depth net, why wouldn't it hold up to a little bit more than 500 square foot something, something a little more commercially feasible.

[00:48:11] And that's, that's one of the things that I would like to see done, is to revisit the size of the nets they allow us to use. Cuz I, I think the fishery would easily support a little better gear for the fishermen and the fishing industry would, would greatly benefit from, you know, a little, a little relaxing of the, the laws.

[00:48:35] So it's something that can work both ways with conservation. It's still gonna be a conservation tool, but it's also gonna allow the fishing industry to thrive. So we're not asking for six and 800 yard nets back, we're actually asking for something that's just a little more commercially feasible.

[00:48:57] **Kristin Sweeting:** Another question related to that. So what, I'm sure there's a better word than silly, but what's like the silliest thing you would be fined for out there?

[00:49:12] **Chris Pringle:** Silly. What would be the, what would be the worst thing I've been fined for or what I could be fined for? I've, I've actually heard of this happening to a fisherman down south that the nets are not allowed to be connected.

[00:49:28] A fish got caught in one net and actually got tangled in the other net, and they considered it connected. That is a major violation that can cost you \$2,500. It can cost you \$2,500 and three month suspension of your license for something you didn't even do. So that's how silly some of the enforcement can be at times in the, in our, with our laws, the way they're written. I just, I would really like to see 'em rewrite [00:50:00] some of the stuff that's been done.

[00:50:03] **Tina Bucuvalas:** It's a \$2,500 fish .

[00:50:05] **Chris Pringle:** A \$2,500 mullet is kind of ridiculous to think about because you got nothing to do with it. The fish just happened to tangle two nets together.

[00:50:14] But you get, they said he was, they accused the fishermen of doing that on purpose. To hold the nets together. So that's how ridiculous it can get at times. So hopefully we can, hopefully at some point we can get together with our law enforcement and lawmakers and work something out to fix some of these things that are, where our system is broke.

[00:50:37] It could be, it could definitely be fixed in a way that, that is good for all involved.

[00:50:45] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Kristin, anything else? Or?

[00:50:50] **Kristin Sweeting:** Are you, do you have more?

[00:50:52] **Tina Bucuvalas:** I was just gonna ask the question about anything else you want to, people to know about?

[00:50:59] **Kristin Sweeting:** Maybe I'll ask the few I have first then.

[00:51:04] Edited - production conversation, boat interruption]

[00:51:06] **Chris Pringle:** Okay. So going back to Red Tide for a second. We talked to some of the other guys and curious to see what in your history was the year that had the worst red tide. And even in mind too if you know the difference between like the red tide and like the green tide, the other, and, and talking to that specific experience of what you saw.

[00:51:43] **Tina Bucuvalas:** You, you did mention the, you know, seeing a mile of dead fish, I mean you could, but, but yeah, you could be more specific

[00:51:52] **Kristin Sweeting:** That first year or there's another

[00:51:53] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yeah. If there are other things.

[00:51:55] **Chris Pringle:** Well, talking about the red tide issues that we have in the, on the Gulf [00:52:00] coast mainly of the state is we've had in 2018, I think was the worst red tide that I've seen.

[00:52:07] It was at one time, it was from south of Naples to north of Clearwater and it was throughout the bay systems, the inshore systems, all the way out. Some places 40 and 50 miles offshore. So it, that was the worst red tie that I have seen. There was one in 2001 that was really bad too. And even the one we had in Tampa Bay last year in 2021 it was, it was, that was bad.

[00:52:41] The Tampa Bay one from last year, from the Piney point spill was really bad in Tampa Bay. It's, I mean, a lot of people up there said it was the worst they've ever seen. I didn't see that one because I saw some in Sarasota Bay, but that came, that came this way from it, you know, it kind of worked to

the south from Tampa Bay, but they said that Tampa Bay was really, really bad last year.

[00:53:06] So in 2001 though, I, there was, Sarasota Bay was fish dead from one side of it to the other for miles. I mean, I didn't see all of it, but I saw miles of it, like the Sarasota Bay from Cortez down to Sarasota, downtown Sarasota's, I think it's outta 10 or 11 miles, and it was, there was fish from one shoreline, to east shore to the west shore for 10 or 11 miles.

[00:53:38] It's, it's certain places you're pushing on the side with your boat when you're running. They were just the whole top of the water for 10 or 12 miles by five miles wide. That's how bad a red tide can be. And how long, I don't know how long it takes to recover from something like that because there's no way to even estimate how [00:54:00] many millions and millions of fish that is.

[00:54:02] Be it's, you can sit in one place and and count hundreds of fish just floating around your boat. So you think of how many that could be over that many miles. And then it was 140 miles long. From north, south of Naples to north of Clearwaters' a long way. So that's the worst one that I've witnessed and had to try to live through.

[00:54:27] I actually started blue crabbing the next year because there was no fish to catch for most of a year. So, but the blue crabs always thrive right behind a red tide because there's something that's got to come eat all of what has been left behind. So, I I blue crab for about eight months with a friend of mine.

[00:54:45] So, I did that just to stay in, stay on the water for that amount of time until the fish started making a little bit of a recovery, which, which took a while. And like I said, 2001 was pretty bad, but it was, it was not the whole shoreline like that, it was just spots. Sarasota Bay was pretty bad, but then around Pine Island, that year wasn't so, it wasn't the whole coast, it was just here it was bad in Cortez, but we still had a good season that year cuz, cuz it wasn't everywhere. But when you go down a whole coast and kill fish for a hundred and something miles, it, it just takes so long for 'em to migrate into that area. It takes all the four seasons of, of fish moving to even start seeing fish again.

[00:55:33] And it, it was pretty depressing to watch. It was, it was one of the hardest times in my fishing career is to get through that just about a year before I could actually start catching fish again. So that was, that's the, that's the things that I'm passionate about, trying to figure out how to get somebody to do something about, I, I can only do so much and that's word of mouth and talk [00:56:00] about it and try to tell people what I've seen.

[00:56:02] But that's, that's our biggest problem by far, by far.

[00:56:13] **Kristin Sweeting:** So we've heard some stories where people have memories from childhood or growing up where they remember the water level on the seawall being one place and now they're higher, or something that used to stick out of the water, now completely submerged. Do you have any, have you witnessed anything like that?

[00:56:41] **Chris Pringle:** I, I think there's changes happen from natural phenomenon in the, in the, in the waterways all the time. There are, there are sand lumps and stuff out there that move all the time from tides, from storms, from different things. Water levels, I haven't really, in my own experience witnessed a change, cuz I remember it, I remember tides being high when, you know, in the wood way up in the woods, you could hear fish jump in the middle of an island because he was up that far up into the woods, the mangrove roots.

[00:57:21] So now that I, I have seen some small islands disappear and they're just a sand lump now. But I've also seen other islands grow that didn't have used to have any mangroves growing on 'em whatsoever. And now they're a big mangrove island. So the, there's natural things that happen in our, in environment all the time with regards to just habitat changes.

[00:57:49] The biggest habitat changes I've seen is dredging canals and building sea walls in places that used to be mangroves. That's our biggest habitat

[00:58:00] Changes has been done by man, not by, not by nature. We've, we've done more, I think, harm in destroying natural habitat for small fish. They have to grow up somewhere, and it's in the estuary systems.

[00:58:16] It's in the , it's in the mangroves and the, the creeks and canals that people dredge out and put boats and docks in. That's where the small fish used to grow up. But now they're, now there's boats tied up there. So I think that's been a, that's a, that's a concern too, that at some point has to be addressed.

[00:58:39] We keep destroying habitat and it's always habitat for the small juvenile fish. The, the bigger fish kind of can handle a lot more, but those juvenile fish have to grow up somewhere and they have to have somewhere to be hid and not eaten or something else, whatever. So that's, that's, we've destroyed a lot of habitat and I would like, I would like to see a moratorium on any building or dredging in this, in this, on this west coast because they've built and dredged and dug out and built canals and sea walls where mangroves should be so much that there's very little natural shoreline left

[00:59:18] Where I fish now used to be you couldn't see a house for miles some places. And now there's houses overlooking the mangroves. They cut the mangroves down and there's everywhere you go, there's not a natural shoreline anymore hardly. It's a sea wall or a canal or, or something like that, drainage ditch. So I would like to see that put under some type of control.

[00:59:42] At some point they're gonna have to slow down and, and build inshore, or build inland some a little further and leave some of our shorelines natural cause that's, that's where our fish come from. All of our sea, all of our sea life, not just fish, but crustacean. The crabs, blue crabs, stone crab, [01:00:00] all that grows up in that estuary system, that's, that's where they survive until they're, you know grown. So yeah, there's a lot of changes happen every day in us all the time. Our shorelines change continuously in some places. They're tides, like I said, wind, waves. Our beaches change every, every time I go out there, there's something on that beach that's changed.

[01:00:25] So unless you're out there every day to see it, it's, you know, some of it's never noticed by some people, but we notice it a lot cuz we're out there every day.

[01:00:37] **Kristin Sweeting:** Last like environmental thing, have you noticed any changes in flooding?

[01:00:50] **Chris Pringle:** The flooding is I think it still just goes back to nature.

[01:00:54] You, you, when you get a full moon, And a west wind on the west coast of Florida, something's gonna flood. If it's, if the wind is strong enough and there's a, like a low pressure system brings water with it. When that low pressure system comes ashore, it brings a, a wave of water with it, and that's where you're gonna get your, your flooding happens.

[01:01:15] A lot of it is just happens to be coincidence of the full moon, new moon. You always get bigger tides on, like right now the tide was really high today, well, last night was New Moon, and we've got a Southwest wind. That's a normal situation where our tides are higher on this, on this west coast of Florida.

[01:01:37] So a lot of it just happens with two things or three things coinciding at the same time. And I think that's, I haven't seen an increase other than just in the natural things that happen. It's to, to me, it seems like it's always happened. We've, I remember just a full moon tide being in the streets in Cortez because we had a west wind, you know, a hard [01:02:00] west wind.

[01:02:00] It pushes the water into our coast. So yeah, that's, I think that's a natural phenomenon that happens and when two or three things line up, it causes it to, to look worse than it might have been last, last year. You might not have seen it, but those things might not align it up last year. So I think it's, there's just a lot of natural things that happen and those are always gonna happen , in my estimation, in my opinion.

[01:02:28] That's what I see.

[01:02:30] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Is, is there, is there anything else you might want people to know about Cortez or fishing or anything?

[01:02:41] **Chris Pringle:** I think the biggest thing you need to realize and remember with the commercial fishing industry is we are necessary to a lot of people. We, we produce food, a very healthy food source.

[01:02:57] We're not all, we're not always received well along the shorelines when we're catching this food source, but when everybody lines up to go over here and eat it, they really are glad we were there. So I think I would like for people to realize that when they see us out there, yeah, we might be behind your house, but you built your house where we have fished way before that house was there.

[01:03:19] So you're welcome to build your house there, but I should be welcome to catch the fish that I have always caught there too. Just because somebody builds a house in a location that's in the view of what we do should not make them have the right to come harass us doing what we do. And we have that a lot.

[01:03:37] I would like for people to just understand we're just, we're working honest, living, making a living, putting food on people's plates and that's, I think that's an important thing that needs to be in this state. We have more water on the state than any other state I think in the United States. I think we have more shoreline than any other state, if I'm not mistaken in Florida. So [01:04:00] we should be producing seafood. We've got plenty of it. There's, and it's a, it's a great food source that a lot of people really enjoy. So just realize that we're working to make, to make a difference in people's lives. We do, people eat good food because we're out there producing it and it's an honest living.

[01:04:20] And we would like for people just to understand that when they see us just, we're just, we're just doing what they did and what everybody else does. We're making a living to feed our family and put food on people's tables. So

that's, that's a, that's an important thing to me is I would like to be received better at times.

[01:04:37] There's a lot of people that do, they love to see us. They all, but there's some that just for some reason don't like to see us out there, and I don't get it. I don't understand why it has to be that way. We're, we're Americans, we're Floridians and we've been doing this for a long time, and it's just, it would be nice to be received better at times.

[01:04:55] So that's, that's one thing I would like to make that statement, because all of us have to work together and live together in this state, and I think we should be able to do that. Commercial fishermen, the sports fishing industry, we, we catch bait for the sports industry, so the sport fishing industry, we would like for them to like look us at us in a little better light too.

[01:05:21] I don't have any problem with anybody doing what kind of fishing they want to do is, you know, but look at me that way too. That's what I would like to see. Me and my son too. That's for my son too, so, yeah.

[01:05:37] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Makes sense to me.

[01:05:39] **Kristin Sweeting:** That was a beautiful ending.

[01:05:40] **Chris Pringle:** Thank you.

[01:05:40] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yes.

[01:05:41] **Chris Pringle:** Cool.