Interviewee Name: Tom Duym

Project/Collection Title: Voices of the Maine Fishermen's Forum 2019

Interviewer(s) Name(s) and affiliations: Galen Koch (The First Coast) and Giulia Cardoso (College of the Atlantic)

Interview Location: Rockland, Maine

Date of Interview: 02-28-2019

Interview Description
Tom Duym, from Lamoine, ME, shares his decade-long experience as an educator dedicated to supporting high school students from fishing backgrounds in developing skills and knowledge that are relevant to their career interests and will empower them as community members. After recounting some past experiences, he focuses on his current position at the Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries and how his work with students enrolled in the Eastern Maine Skippers Program is informing his hopes and concerns for the future of coastal Maine.

Collection Description:
Voices of the Maine Fishermen's Forum 2019 is a project of Maine Sea Grant, The First Coast, College of the Atlantic, and the Island Institute, with support from the Maine Fishermen's Forum Board of Directors.

Citation:
Duym, Tom, Voices of the Maine Fishermen's Forum 2019 Oral History Interview, February 28, 2019, by Galen Koch and Giulia Cardoso, 17 pages, NOAA Voices from the Fisheries. Online: Insert URL (Last Accessed: Insert Date).

Transcribed By: Giulia Cardoso

Start of TOM_DUYM_VMFF2019_AUDIO

[0:36:45.5]

GK: Galen Koch
GC: Giulia Cardoso
TD: Tom Duym

[0:00:00.0]

(Mumbling, can opening.)

GK: This is nice (laughs)!

(Noise in background.)

GK: Are you comfortable?

TD: We're not on camera, are we?

GK: No, no camera, just a microphone (laughs).

TD: Not that it matters, but.

GK: Yeah, just a microphone. Now, will you just say.

TD: Haaa.

GK: Your first and last name for me?

TD: Tom Duym.

GK: How do you spell Duym?

TD: D-U-Y-M.

GK: And Tom, where is your home?

TD: My home is in Lamoine, Maine.

GK: What's your occupation?

TD: I am working for Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries now as a Fisheries Education Specialist. Doesn't that sound fancy?

GK: That sounds really fancy.

TD: Ha, that’s what I thought.

GK: Can you tell me a little bit about your own personal history with the fisheries?

TD: Oh, jeez. You gotta a long, how much tape have you got (laughs)? Well, let's see. Uhm, I grew up in a, in a family boatyard. Didn't have much fishing experience, but, and somebody in town, I grew up in Blue Hill and, and somebody in town said there was a program at University of Rhode Island called Commercial Fisheries and Marine Technology.

[0:01:03.1]

So, uhm, my parents encouraged me to go to college, and I thought, "Well that sounds like something that would be useful for the family business." Marin—the Marine Technology piece. And I went down there (coughs), low and behold it was a, it was a vocational school basically, for two-year associate degree for commercial, to, going into the commercial fishing business. And is that proverbial kind of uh, you know, you, your future gets [inaudible] up the side of the head experience the—it just, I, I just really loved building gear and uh, you know, working, working boats from that angle, from the commercial fishing side. So came back, graduated from that, came back, uh, to Maine, worked in the family boatyard for a few years. Wasn't real happy at it, uhm, fished in the summer and part-time whi—while I was doing that. Uh, got married fairly young and so my wife convinced me to go back to school. And I went back to school thinking I was gonna get a Marine Resources degree at Orono.

[0:02:02.4]

And found out that I wasn't very good at Chemistry. Too bad. But uh, uh, ended up meeting a guy that, that was uh, really pushing marine education through the Sea Grant program in Orono. And he convinced me to go and, to transfer into Education, which I did. And uh, they, it was a big push to try to get people with marine backgrounds in Marine Education at that time and, uh, so from that I ended up doing my student teaching at Washington County, uh, Community College, down in Eastport in the boat school, which is dedicated campus to marine programs, down, and they had a fisheries program. So I went into that, uh, taught in that for ... Well, got a job at, after my student teaching. Graduate from Orono, uh, with a Bachelor's Degree and then, uh, started working for them. Basically taught the fisheries program for I don't know, fiv—five, six years? Five years, I guess. And then, uh.

[0:03:00.7]

Moved up into uhm, management job with them. Running, being the manager for the whole uh, Eastport Center. And so I was there 20 years. And then Ted Ames, from Stonington, came to me here at the Fishermen's Forum, 'cause this is, we used to always come here. And uh, said they, he would really, if there was any way he could convince me to come to Deer Isle and teach down there at the Marine Trades program. They wanted to rebuild it. And I said, "Well, you know (coughs), good timing." 'Cause my son was just going into high school, uhm, and I kinda wanted to be a little closer to home, 'cause I, we lived in Lamoine but I, I had, had a small house down in Eastport, so I was travelling back and forth. Uhm (coughs) so it came, I, applied for the job and got the job at Deer Isle Stonington high school for the Marine Trades job, we really, they, the school board there was great and, basically said, "Fix it back up, and set it up the way you want to." And so, so we did.

GK: What was it like when you got there? What was the . . .

[0:04:00.5]

TD: Well the program had, had, the program had been in place I think since, I wanna say '70, like the late 70s. Uhm, But unfortunately it did, it had gone through several different people who were not necessarily fa—uh, fishing background, but maybe either boat building or, or been mechanics or something like that. And it had just really fallen into disrepair. Uh, the facilities were pretty, pretty uh, run down, the uh, tools and stuff were all pretty much destroyed. Uhm, it was, there was literally, I scraped probably two 55-gallon drums of resin off the floor, juts from where they'd been building stuff with fiberglass and really s—not being to careful.

GK: Wow.

TD: Uhm, so we fixed it back up and uh, stated the program up. And uhm, and so I, I was there 17 years, doing.

GK: What—

TD: Doing it there.

GK: What year did you get there?

[0:04:59.5]

TD: I landed there the summer of uh, 2000. Something, yeah, 2000. 'Cause 2001 was the first class I went through, I think. Yeah. When did you graduate from . . . ?

GK: 2007

TD: Ok. Uh, so couple of things happened at Deer Isle that were uh, you know, uh, and I should say, one of the reasons I wanted to come back to Deer Isle was because, and I really jumped at that job, uhm, was the people I knew in Stonington who were fishermen. Because and uh, it goes back to my Rhode Island days. One of the first things I, I did, when I got down there, they asked me where I was from, and I said, "Blue Hill, Maine," they said, "Oh, Maine. Where, where is that near?" and I said, "Oh, well, maybe Stonington, you know Stonington?" And the guys went, "Oh, yeah, we know Stonington, Maine." You know there's, those are some of the toughest guys in, and best fishermen in the coa—on the whole coast, around here. And so I, I'd grown up knowing uh, Mike Grindell and John Williams and, and a few other people down the Isle.

[0:06:01.7]

And they had, you know, just, as I do today, still immense respect for them. Uhm, and, so I knew, I knew I knew some people down there, so it'd be, you know, an easy place to, hopefully to work in. Uhm, and that certainly was true. Uhm, so some of the highlights while we were there, we, you know, we got the program going again, we, we took a group of kids to Iceland to compare uhm, you know, living on, living in Stonington Deer Isle to a, to an island community both based in well, strong fisheries economies, so they could kinda see, see the comparison. Uhm, and that was in 2005, and I'd been to Iceland before, in tw—in 1998. Uhm, and it was amazing to see the change in that country, from '98 to 2005, just uh, in '98 it

was, it was literally, uh, their, their economy—70, how does that go . . . yeah, 70% of their economy was fisheries-based.

[0:07:01.0]

The national economy. And of that 70%, uhm, 60% of it was based on codfish alone. So, everything that they did in terms of management, research, everything, was based around what was good for the cod, uh, stock. So they managed all other species, including whales, around the c—around what was good or bad for the codfish. Anyway, it, the other thing that impressed me of that first trip was that they, they were really into expanding their reach in terms of marketing globally. Uh, so they were sending fisheries product to Asia, to South America, to United States, to, all over the globe, they were, they were sending stuff from put—you know, sending different products. We, we went out behind this one building and there was racks, they were probably 40 feet high, of nothing but codfish. Heads and racks, where they filleted them, hanging, drying. I said, "What are you doing with those?" They were sending them to Africa.

[0:08:00.1]

'Cause they make fish soup out of 'em. And so they were, they would send container-loads of that stuff over there. So, I mean they were selling everything. Uhm.

GK: They were using every single part of that fish.

TD: Yeah.

GK: Yeah. Yeah.

TD: And, and they were really into f—fisheries engineering, like any processing line, uh, like I was talking to 'em, some of the guys there about, about how we lobster over here, and they said, "Really? You're doing that much manual labor? You know, why wouldn't you automate this, and automate that . . ." And when you look at their small-boat fleet you can see that they've, you know, they've, they've certainly got systems engineered out even on the small boats that uh, would be, were quite ahead of the time as far what we would deal with here. Anyway, uh, so we went back in 2005. You could see that the, the economy had shifted from fisheries products to money. And so when the thing crashed in 2008, 9? 2008? and a lot of that, that crash that we, that we saw, started in Iceland, because Iceland's.

[0:09:00.7]

B—b—basically their banking system fell through the floor. And one of the reasons it did, at least for, for my opinion was that, what they discovered by globalizing their product lines is that they could make money just trading money. And so, banking became, and investing became their, their push nationally. And they got caught in a, in, when it collapsed, uh, they took a real hit. Uhm, so it was really interesting to see that whole transition through, through two visits there, but I would love, I mean, I'd go back in a heartbeat. It's a, it's a, one of the places you all should go if you (laughs) ever get a chance. That's.

GK: Yeah, I've, I've, I did go. I went there after, after college. With Zach and Grace, actually.

TD: Oh, really?

GK: Yeah.

TD: Oh! Grace! How's Grace? I haven't seen her in a long time (laughs).

GK: She's good, we'll talk about that (laughs).

TD: Yeah, yeah, ok. Uhm.

GK: But, no, I, but I've always heard stories about their, sort of uh, approach to, uhm, marketing every single part.

TD: Mmhm.

GK: Of . . . and how you would do that with lobster, I don't really even know.

[0:10:02.5]

TD: I, I don't really know.

GK: Did the students have, did you talk to the students about that, or had it changed so much by the time you went there that it wasn't really, uhm, at the forefront of their minds?

TD: The students, my students?

GK: Yeah, the high school students that you.

TD: It wasn't on the forefront of their minds. I m—I mean, it was, I mean for a lo—for some of them, I think, you know, maybe they'd been to Boston, or Florida or something. But, you know to go to a, uh, th—take a flight and cross half the Atlantic and end up there was, was quite an experience for some of them. Uh, it was really funny, 'cause we, on the flight over John Williamson, Judy, John and Judy went with us, and uh, Steve Robbins the III went all with us too. And, and Jenny Steele. And uh, we're going over and John's sitting there telling the students flying over, you know, flying over the Arctic Circle and stuff and he says, uh, Labrador, I'm sorry and he, he's telling 'em stuff about Iceland and, and uh, I remember uh, one of the guys just sit there, just looking bewildered, and he goes, "John! How do you know so much about Iceland?"

[0:11:04.6]

TD: He says, "Well I read, don't you?" (laughs). He says, "I read up on the place before we ca—," you know, and he was like "Oh" (laughs).

GK: That's great.

TD: Yeah, great, yes. Just what they need to hear. Uhm.

GK: That's great.

TD: So, it was uh, it was, it was, it was really, really pretty fascinating, but I think it was almost overwhelming. We were there four days so it was, it was a lot to take in in four days, but we did get to meet some, a small-boat fisherman in the harbor next to Reykjavik and uh, he was, you know, young guy, probably mid-30s and he was trying to build up his quota so he could move into a bigger boat, he was in a 38-foot boat and yeah. Pretty, pretty cool to, to, over there, there's, their boats, 38-foot, engine's in the stern, V-drive. Fish holes in the middle. This is all tub-trawler, or long-liner, and wheelhouse with a couple bunks down below and the whee—the wheelhouse there was two chairs, air ride chairs, like you'd see in a big truck?

[0:12:00.0]

With 5-point harness in 'em. And I looked at that and I said to the skipper, "Holy shit, what, what, it comes with seatbelt?" He says, "Oh, it gets a little rough out there sometimes," he says (laughs). I say, "I guess so, if you gotta strap yourself into the wheelhouse chair!"

GK: Wow.

TD: But, uhm, so they put in some pretty hard weather, those small boats, but, it, it does it, the weather, as you know. Comes up like that, and it goes from beautiful sunny day like this to horizontal snow and 50-mile hour winds in 30 minutes. But, uh, so that was a great experience, the second thing in, in high school I think that was really an unbelievable exp—and it's kinda shaped the Skippers Program, which I'm involved with now, was the CREST program, which was, which is now an Institute program that uh, dealt with a lot of the coastal and island schools, that stood for Community Rural Education Stewardship and Technology, I think it's what it stands for. It was basical—we took on a project at Deer Isle, around the Deer Isle Boys, which was the America's Cup crews of the 1895 and 1899, uh, Cup Series and did an extensive uh, research on that for the community side.

[0:13:05.3]

And it was just really, really cool to see students uhm, just tackle that program and learn, learn so much about their, their background and it was, it was literally, Kim Larson was, who was the English teacher there, and I were involved in it a—and we'd go to places and, honest to God, I felt like you were being guided, you know, by, 'cause things would, would, things would get discovered that nobody else know by these students. And these students knew things about the Deer Isle Boys and the boats that nobody else knew, including the [inaudible] themselves. And it was, it was just amazing, just—and we'd go to places and, and sudd—suddenly somebody would say, "Oh, you know? We've got this relic from one of the boats they produced, the ship wheel." And the students would go, "Oh, wow!" Like, "Our ancestors were holding onto this wheel," and they had pictures taken with it, you know. And they had it in some storage locker out in the back at Mystic Seaport, so you know, it just amazing connections that happened through that.

[0:14:01.8]

And, and I think that kids, kids, students, really got a lot out of it, you know? Did it change their SAT scores, did it change their MEA score? No. But did it give them a really meaningful uhm, experience in high school? I, I absolutely think so. And so that kinda led to the Skippers Program, which it, I've always thought, always struggled with one as a teacher,

that you had a lotta, a lotta young people, mostly males, but all coming up through who were used to making some serious money as a high school kid, uh, fishing. And, uh, the, especially the generation from 2000 on, had seen nothing but the lobster catch basically go up. Value staying relatively high and the catch rates go up. So, you know, it wasn't uncommon to have three or four guys in my, you know in junior, senior level, uh, or te—11th, 12th grade.

[0:15:01.2]

You know, b—having a net worth of something around $250, 300,000. You know, they had a, a relatively new boat, 30, 30 to 35 feet long. They had a gang of gear, they had their full licenses, uh, they were, they had a sternman that, that was working with 'em. You know, it's, and to talk to these students about, "Oh, you gotta, you know, raise your hand, get permission to go to the bathroom," it's like, you know, it's like two different worlds. And, so it really struck me that uhm, there needed to be something a little more directed at their futures in high school to, to at least allow them to get through high school and not just say, "Oh, the hell with it," you know, "I go, I can go make $5,000 a week fishing, why do I need to go to high school?" you know and it's pretty hard to look them in the eye and tell 'em, "Oh, you should do it because . . . ," you know, everybody always says, "Well you'll, something will happen to you and you'll need something to fall back on." But is that really, how often does that really happen? So, uhm.

[0:16:00.2]

The other thing that happened at that time, was that the school [inaudible] was going down. Uhm, and so we uh, we, we put together this idea that if we had a small group of students at all these little high schools that were gonna go into fishing, if we combined them into this, like a cohort, that we could have a fairly large number that would also have gotten to know each other a little bit through, through the interactions of a, of a program like this and uh, we, so we called a bunch of a schools together. The, the, both high schools on the Haven islands and Blue Hill and uh, ourselves. Uh, I think we invited Ellsworth and MDI, but they didn’t join up until the second year. Uh, so we didn't.

GK: You didn't invite anybody further Downeast yet?

TD: Not, uh, we, we did, we invi—we invited actually Sumner and Narraguagus and Jonesport. They didn’t come along until, in fact, Sumner just came along this past year. And Jonesport the year before. But, uh, it was a little s—it was a little slow starting there and so, but, everybody had the same concerns, you know?

[0:17:00.3]

We had the—these four or five kids that were like, really into fishing, they were successful at it, they were doing it and it was hard job to keep them engaged in school, because, you know, they just didn't see any reason for it (coughs). Uhm, on, on a lot of levels. And so, we pulled it together and it (coughs), it uh, it took off and we've got now nine schools. We got uh, through Jonesport and about, we, we go between 80 and 100 students a year. Depends on, on kinda what's going on, we got more interest from Downeast, 'cause it's obviously more investment going on Downeast and it's, catch rates have picked up down there and, uh, lob—well, younger guys getting into what, uhm, guys and girls, and so it's, it's picked up there and uh, so I saw, you know, I, originally I wrote up a, a white paper that kinda described this, uh,

program and started the conversations amongst the schools, and the principal at the time, Todd West, who was, who was a great organizational person, he kinda pulled the organizational piece of it together.

[0:18:01.5]

And, and we get the thing started, so, when this, when this job came up, I was, I was, my patience with working (laughs) with teenagers had, felt worn out after 17 years, so I, I uh, I said, "I'll give this one shot." And I, I'd like to see this program really solidify and, and, and hopefully grow uhm, and so started last summer working you know, with all, all nine schools through the, through Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries. So that's—

GK: So you're coordinating kinda, you're.

TD: Yeah.

GK: Helping to coordinate that.

TD: Yeah.

GK: Yeah.

TD: Yeah, I mean, I working with Christina Fifield, she's, she's technically the coordinator, which means she handles all the logistical stuff, which I'm not that good at, and she uh, and I, you know, I'm, I'm kind of the big thinker guy. You know, that, plus I've, I've got 45 years around the industry that I, you know, just gotten to know a lot of people, so. That's, I think, one of the reasons they hired me. Uhm.

GK: Can I ask you what your, just even personally, what your goals were and are for those students? Because I feel like they're, they're different than your average teacher, you know?

[0:19:04.9]

GK: You mentioned SATs.

TD: Yeah.

GK: And, you know.

TD: Right.

GK: It's not the same.

TD: My goal, my, well, my, my philosophy and goals for these students, and philosophy of the program is, is that these are, these are the, these are the future citizens of the town. Uhm, and take no offence to this, but a l—a lot of the kids that I saw in Deer Isle that went, went college-track and really, really worked hard to get into some good schools, went there and never came back. You know, they don't live there. All the kids who went fishing, buy homes, have kids that go onto the school, so, so in one sense if we, if we, if our goal is to get kids into the best schools we can, then we, then we're closing our schools down. Because they

aren't gonna come back and repopulate the island. And as you know, the islands, you know, people that come to the island have, are beyond child-bearing years, or they, or their kids were educated somewhere else and a—what they see is an expensive school for, for lowering numbers of kids 'cause the youth will leave them.

[0:20:02.1]

And leaving in, in droves. Uhm, and it's the same thing in the County, same thing in a lot of the other coastal towns. So the kids that stay, uhm, are the, are the fishermen. And they were making a pretty good living. So they were contributing fairly healthily to the tax rolls and, and, so the whole idea of the program was to support community. You know, that, that if we made the schools uhm, responsive to the needs of the people that were actually gonna come out of those schools and live in those communities and, and further the fisheries economy, then they would s—they would hopefully support those schools later on and they would have kids that would then go to those schools. And, and we're seeing some of that. Uhm, is it really making a change? Ehm, I don't know. But it's, but that idea certainly has caught on with a lot of other coastal communities, because it's, it is the one job that somebody can stay there with, uh, stay with and make a good living. I mean, uh, college degree or not.

[0:21:00.4]

You know? You don't have to have, I mean you don't have to have a high school diploma to do it. Uh, you don’t even have to be able to read and write and it's, you know, as long as you're putting in your time and you get the license, uhm, you're set on a path, you know? And that's, some people say, "Well that's not, that's not a very good way to advance the industry," but, I, I'm, I’m not convinced that, that's, that isn't true. Uh, that, that is not true, because uh, I see a lot of kids that yeah, struggle in high school for, either because of learning disabilities or family situations or whatever might be, but, but they wanna go fishing and they wanna be successful. And they are successful, and they make good money, and they pay good taxes, and they build homes, and they have kids and, so it's, you know, uh, I, I think it's a, I think it's a valuable thing to do and I, and I guess my philosophy is that I, I wanna, I don't wanna see and I, and I told Ted Ames this, I don't wanna see happen to Stonington what I saw happen to Rockland. When I was, when I was in college and Rockland.

[0:22:00.6]

This town had boats four or five deep that were 120 feet long. Fishing the Grand Banks and Georges Bank and there was, you know, this was a fishing town. This place reeked of fish when you came into town. You know, fish plants and stuff. Not like that now. You know. And so, you know, all these coastal towns, Boothbay Harbor was a big fishing town when I was younger, so, all these, all these places that, that's vanished. Uhm, and we’re hoping that Downeast, through a program like this, that we can, we can encourage and bu—and support those young people uh, to stay there and be successful and maybe, you know, adapt to whatever's coming down the road. Uh, we can preserve some of that rather than see it disappear. So that's really, that's what's driven me the whole time in this thing.

GK: Yeah, it's great, I mean I think of going to school there and, uhm, well kinda what you said.

TD: Mmm.

GK: I've been thinking about this recently a lot. How those, there were a lot of kids who were already making the money that I would, I will never see in my life.

[0:23:04.1]

TD: Yeah, yeah, true (laughs).

GK: There's no doubt in my mind.

TD: Yeah.

GK: That I'll never see that kind of money, and uhm, just that, e—I, I actually am wondering, this is like forward-thinking, but how you engage those kids that are like my, my peers, who were, parents were artists who moved to the island, we were being raised in a family that's go—that everyone's saying, "You go to Liberal Arts school."

TD: Mmhm.

GK: You have to, because you're not fishing.

TD: Mmhm.

GK: So my future was, in many ways, dependent on my education.

TD: Mmhm.

GK: In a way that maybe it's not for the students.

TD: Right.

GK: Who are in the Skippers Program.

TD: Absolutely.

GK: But I wonder if you're, if you ever think about ways to engage that population and, and give them the, and say like, "Hey, a—investment in your community is also for you," like.

TD: Right.

GK: "You're also invested in this."

TD: Well, and I think that’s, that’s happening.

[0:24:03.4]

TD: Excuse me, in some of the communities, like on MDI, for example. Where you do have a, the, the majority of the population has come from an education background, right? Uhm, because of Jackson Lad and other professional uh, level jobs that, that exist on the island. And so you have this overwhelming number of kids that, you know, they work really hard in

high school to go to good schools and, for their careers. Uhm, and MDI has enough of a turnover in, in population so that their school size really doesn't vary all that much. Uh, they tend to have a lot of kids who are interested in things like Marine Science, or, or uhm, uh, Environmental Science, that kind of a thing, that, that are never gonna go fishing. But they enjoy being involved with the kids who are fishing, who, who aren't gonna have the same levels of, of science and math ability, but have a real, that real common-sense kind of practical experience, that those other kids don't have, or have access to. Yeah, maybe they go out with their, with their parents and go sailing, or, or they might go on, you know, a Boston Whaler across to Islesford or something to have, have dinner.

[0:25:04.1]

But they're not out there, you know, in 10-foot seas, having to work to make a living, you know, based on what they can catch and their, their skills, you know. And I think that interaction, uh, what we try to promote is, is, is, is, for those kids that wanna, you know, go on and going to Marine Science or going to Engineering or, or uh, Law or whatever is, how could, how can too take those experiences and come back and establish a, a value-added seafood business or, or a fabrication uh, business, or a, uh, you know a, be a CPA and, and, and start a, a tax consulting or investment consulting business on the island. You know, 'cause it's, there's all kinds of things to do that way, uhm, we haven't been that successful in, in really bridging that gap. Uhm, and I think it, again, it's because som—somewhat cultural, you know, it's really hard to get those two groups to kinda, you know, really work together and, and respect each other's abilities.

[0:26:02.1]

Uhm, especially adolescent age, you know, it's kinda tough. But, it's working in some places. So, we're trying to do some of that, uhm. Uhm, we'll see how it goes, you know.

GK: Yeah, it's an interesting, uh, it's not even a dilemma, it's just a thing, it's just a.

TD: Yeah.

GK: It's just a little, I'm not, I, I see, actually, like on Deer Isle, a lot of success stories of people who did come back to start businesses, which is.

TD: Yeah.

GK: Actually been pretty surprising for me.

TD: Right.

GK: The gen—the four years older than me, who were a lot of friends of mine, came back.

TD: Yeah.

GK: To start businesses.

TD: Yeah.

GK: And.

TD: And it's, and I've se—and I've seen more, I guess more young people, come back. Whe—when I was seeing the big exodus was really from say, 2000 to . . . when did you say you graduated? 8?

GK: 2007.

TD: 7, yeah. So it was about up till then.

0:27:00.2

TD: That I saw a lot of.

GK: Yeah after financial crisis, we all came running back (laughs).

TD: Yeah, yeah that's true.

GK: [Inaudible.] (Laughs.)

TD: That's true. That really is it, uh, I hadn't thought of that, but that's right. They, a lot of people did come back and, and or, and I saw this with the male population, too, is that they, they say, "Oh I'm not, I'm gonna go get a trade, or . . . ," you know? And they go get a trade, but they still end up coming back, and they eventually most of 'em ended up going fishing, because the money was just too good, you know? And uh, and some of them were so, because they'd been exposed to maybe some, some vocational training, they also had a little bit of an entrepreneurial spirit, so they, you know they're working on the stern, going, "Mmm," you know, "I'm doing pretty good, but the captain's doing real well, because he's able to write off his truck and his shop and his this and his that," so, you know, they c—they made that next step and uh, and done pretty well and they, you know, for most of the, most of those guys too, they got family support, they get 'em, you know, make sure they've got some places to fish, they got some, you know, people to call on if they get in trouble and stuff like that, so. That, you know, that's a lot of it, too, but . . .

[0:28:02.4]

GK: We should wrap up.

TD: Yeah.

GK: Here in a second, it's also getting really cold in here (laughs).

GK: Da—once the sun goes down. Uhm, but I wanted to know for you, Tom, just what your kinda like, concerns for the future, hopes for the future, especially 'cause you're working so much with students.

TD: It's funny, 'cause we were asking the same questions when we do our interview in, in, on that, on that little map in the.

GK: Yeah.

TD: Uhm, uh, my concerns for the future (sighs)? My concerns for the future are that there, there is a uh, a, what seems like a pervasive attitude amongst fishery managers that they wanna consolidate uhm, access. Because it's easier to manage data from fewer people catching more of the product. And that the owner-operator is a kind of uh, al- almost doomed uhm, entity.

[0:29:04.0]

That, that, you know, NMFS and other pla—and, and State as well would like to see a, a small group of fishermen have exclusive rights to, or exclusive rights to harvest a public resource and, 'cause it's a lot easier to manage, a lot easier to control data inputs and outputs. Excuse me. And uh, I'm really worried that that's, that's gonna kill uhm, the legacy of fishing in all of the coast. I'm hopeful in that what I have seen happen, which is species like halibut, or scallops, you know, I mean when I was 18 years old, halibut was going for $3 a pound. Scallops were going for $3 to 3.50 a pound. Now scallops are $12 a pound, halibut's $12 or 13 a pound. So you catch a lot less of it, but you're getting a lot higher value, and so people started to really pay attention, especially in this day and age of the, kinda the foodie environment.

[0:30:02.4]

That, you know, fresher and sustainable and uh, uh, quality food is really become a priority. And so I think there's huge opportunity for people to catch a lot less fish, but, but keep its value up. Along with that, I also am concerned that then that creates an environment where the regular working family can't afford fish, and maybe that's the way it ends up, I don’t know. But, but I do see a lot of opportunity for kids, uh for young people in the fishery. I just think, you gotta stop thinking about, about, especially like, groundfish, for example. I mean, I was, I was raised, I came up through fishing as a dragger, you know, going out and towing the net, the bigger the net, the better and scoop 'em all up. But the problem is, as soon as you bring them on deck and you start gutting 'em, the price is going down, right? And so you gotta get in, you gotta get those fish sold for the best price you can, and if you don't get 'em sold, ever day that goes by the price goes down.

[0:31:05.7]

I mean, that' stupid, right? And so, if you look at the lobster industry, we sell lobsters alive. Why? It's a question for you. Why do you sell lobsters alive?

GK: Higher value? You have to (laughs)?

TD: Why do you have to?

GK: I don’t know, I've never even thought about it before. It's just what you do.

TD: Well, it's because, sh—uh, crustaceans basically, once they die, they get, they get pretty saturated, the m—the meat gets a taint to it because of the ammonia levels that build up in the, in the tissue. Crabs especially. Like, have you ever smelled crab's that's gone bad, right?

GK: Yeah.

TD: It’s like, woah! Doesn't take long. So.

GK: And clams will kill ya.

TD: You're right, and clams wi—well, if, clams can kill you when they're alive, but (laughs). Uhm, sometimes. But, so the, so the necessity out of the, out of the nature of the animal. Uhm, now fish, most people eat fish and if it, if it tastes really fresh, they think there's something wrong with it. 'Cause they're used to tasting fish that's half rotten, 'cause it’s been in the hold of a boat for five days, or it's been.

[0:32:02.0]

You know, sitting outside with maybe some ice on it, uh, I was, it was butchered and then rigor set in and then they straighten them out and pack them in the f—the fillets all come out, falling apart and, and so I think we could apply the same kind of rules to, to groundfish, except for lots smaller volumes. It's always been, you know, catch 100,000 pounds, that's the only way you'll make any money. Well, yeah, when it's 45 cents, 50 cents a pound, maybe even a dollar. But, you know, if you get fish up to 5 dollars a pound, 10 dollars for fillets, now you can take a lot better care of that fish and it'll, you know, it'll pay you a lot more money. And you don't have to catch as many. And you can even, you can size select 'em, you could have a slotted fishery, so you leave the little ones alone, leave the big ones alone. You know, same kind of conservation measures we've used in the lobster industry in, in Maine, for, for, you know, decades now. I think, that makes me hopeful. That, those kinds of things that people will capitalize on the, gradually get into it, see a couple of openings, make a little money, get the thing going.

[0:33:02.5]

So, I, I, I see a lot of opportunity, but I see a lot of potential for uh, state and federal governments to really try to squelch that, because it's really tough to get a whole bunch of small, you know, 500-pound landing operators, to manage that, it's really tough.

GK: Yea, and it's gonna take that forward-thinking about food culture.

TD: Mmhm.

GK: And food culture in Maine, in, it's already happening in Southern Maine.

TD: Yeah.

GK: That's a, I mean, it's happening all over the State, but down there, that economy is huge.

TD: Right, right.

GK: You could make so much money.

TD: I know, I know. And the same thing is really true, I mean, Bar Harbor, look at Bar Harbor in the summertime. Not just, not just the people coming through for the Park, which

would love to go down to the wharf and buy, you know, and have live fish swimming in the tank on a boat that just caught them. "Which one do you want?" you know?

GK: (Laughs.) "Fifty bucks."

TD: Al—al—yeah. Al—yeah! And they'd pay it! And, maybe not fifty bucks, but they'd, but if you got a six-pound fi—well maybe they might.

GK: They might (laughs).

[0:34:00.8]

TD: They pay fifty bucks, 'cause you, you know that fish is swimming and you're gonna cut it and it's gonna be on you, in your frying pan at your hotel or in your campsite, you know, in an hour. The people are gonna think there's something wrong with it, because it doesn't taste like fish. It's not gonna have much of a taste to it. You know, but, uh, but they will, but more's than that I see, you know, so people like Martha Stewart who got a, a hired chef, they're gonna, they're gonna buy those fish. They don't care what they cost. If it's the best they can get, they're gonna have it. And I think that market will exist, uh, so I think those markets exist, you know in different, it's gonna be small, niche, you know, online marketing. We got kids working, developing apps to how to, how to connect fishermen that catch small amounts of fish with individual customers and, you know, through an app, people buy fish based on what they know has come in, they, kids grab it and dr—drive it right to their house and deliver it just like uh, what's the, what's the service that delivers like pizzas and stuff to you, you know?

GK: Grubhub or something like that.

TD: Yeah, like that. Only, only you're getting fresh fish. I mean it's, the kids.

[0:35:00.6]

GK: You got Skippers kids thinking about that?

TD: Yeah, yeah.

GK: That's amazing.

GC: Wow.

TD: Yeah, you come to the thing tomorrow, you'll her some of that. You see some of.

GK: I will, I'm gonna come.

TD: Yeah, it's.

GK: I'm, I'm excited.

TD: The girls from Jonesport and the girls from Narraguagus both, they come up with that idea.

GK: Wow. That's why you gotta get girls.

TD: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely (laughs). And I, that was always my biggest uhm, I felt my biggest failure in Deer Isle, I never got enough females in the class. And it was mostly 'cause the guys just act like complete assholes, you know, and they, they didn't wanna put up with that crap. I don't blame 'em. But, some of the best students I mean, [inaudible] You know [inaudible], right? I mean, Jesus.

GK: Brilliant.

TD: Yeah, I mean, she's great on a boat. She'd work harder than any three guys put together, but she's also smart. You know? And, uhm.

GK: There's something to be said for a critical analysis piece that.

TD: Absolutely, yeah.

GK: Women's brains are.

TD: Abso—absolutely. Absolutely true. Absolutely true.

GK: Yeah.

TD: Yep. And you, and you look at the women that have gotten into lobstering, you know, a lot of them have been really successful.

[0:36:01.4]

Because they, they, they do the critical analysis, they don't just, you know, they don't just head down and "Oh, just gonna go out to haul and haul as many as I can," you know, they, they actually think it through and, you know, plan and you know, make wise choices with the money and all that, so, it's uh, I, I wish we could get more women into it. I mean, I wish it was more like the environment like Alaska, where you, you see a lot more women (coughs) both crewing and owning vessels. Uhm, but, you know, it, it may come through this niche kinda marketing, you know. Uhm, we'll see. Time will tell.

GK: Well, thanks Tom.

TD: No problem.

GK: Yeah.

TD: Sorry I talk so long, you know how I am, I can talk for ages.

GK: I know.

TD: Really.

GK: I'm sorry that it got really cold in here (laughs).

TD: Well, it's not bad.

GK: And while you were here.

[0:36:45.5]