

Interviewee: Paul Moore
Interviewer: Tina Bucuvalas
Consultant: Kristin Sweeting
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Transcriber: Kristin Sweeting

Abstract: A native of Bradenton, Paul Moore's paternal grandmother was a Fulford—one of the founding families of Cortez. She lived here from the 1950s to 1980s. His maternal grandfather was one of the first commercial stone crabbers on the Gulf Coast. He and his father started stone crabbing and fishing in 1950s. At that time, they only pulled 30 or 40 traps per day. His paternal grandfather was a builder, one of first to start building houses on Anna Maria island.

Moore's father owned a retail seafood supermarket in Cortez. When Moore was 5, the family opened Moore's Stone Crab Restaurant, an old Florida-style restaurant that became a Longboat Key landmark for 48 years. They also purchased a fish house in Everglades City.

Moore learned how stone crabbing from his family. After graduating from high school in 1980, he started stone crabbing and lobstering on father's boat. They built all the wooden traps by hand—a constant process since wooden traps only lasted 2 or 3 seasons. Eventually, Moore moved to Everglades City and managed the family fish house for 6 years. He learned a lot since the business processed about 5000 pounds of crab per day, which were wholesaled or used by the restaurant.

After his family sold the restaurant in 2015, John Banyas invited Moore to work at Cortez Bait & Seafood. He now runs dock—and enjoys being in the seafood business. Stone crabbing on Florida's central west coast has remained very good. Cortez Bait & Seafood runs about 3000 stone crab traps (state tag limit) per year, which they pull every 5-7 days or so. Moore believes that the future of the fishing industry should be fine if the fishermen make sure that their voices and knowledge are heard by those making the rules and regulations.

[00:00:00] **Tina Bucuvalas:** So Paul, well, okay. Could you repeat your name and then I'm wondering, how your family got to Cortez, where they were from originally, what they did when they got here, whether it's grandparents', parents, down to you, so on.

[00:00:21] **Paul Moore:** Sure. Yeah. My name is Paul Moore. I'm a native of Bradenton, born and raised here.

My family on my father's side, my grandmother on my father's side was a Fulford, who's a founding member of Cortez. They lived here in the fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties, and my grandfather was one of the first commercial stone grabbers on this coast. And my mother, her family her father was builder and he was one of the first to start building houses out on Anna maria Island.

Then when I was five years old my family opened Moore's Stonecrab Restaurant on Long Boat Key. We were there for 47 years, and uh, when I graduated high school in 1980, I went on, started working on the crab boat with my dad, and that's what I did. I didn't work in the restaurant, I just worked on the crab boat, and I learned stone crabbing and lobstering from my father.

And after we sold the restaurant I took about a year off and then John called me here at Cortez Bait and Seafood and asked me to come over and start working on his stone crab operation, which, you know, I didn't have to learn anything new. So I'm like, sure, I'll come over. And I did, and well, now I'm running the whole darn dock.

So I didn't really have to learn anything new, but I, I enjoyed being in the seafood business.

[00:01:50] **Tina Bucuvalas:** And could you go back a little bit in time and tell us more about the stone crab business in Florida? Like I didn't know that they did stone crabs this far north, you know, because I've always thought of Everglade city and, and, and south as the stone crab home or, or whatever, or the primary area of.

Although I should know, because I know someone who got some farther up north. But if you could talk a little bit about the history of it and and then also you mentioned before that you were in Everglade City. I'm sorry about my hand.

[00:02:27] **Production Crew:** If you could, if you could, on the paper in your left hand

[00:02:29] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yeah, you're right. If you could talk about that a little that, that would be great too.

[00:02:34] **Paul Moore:** Well, sure. Stone crabbing here in the west coast, here in the central Gulf is actually really pretty good. I mean, I know that everybody thinks Everglade City in Florida Bay is the capital of stone crab, and it probably is because there's so many fish houses and boats that work that area.

But we get our fair share here and as far north as Cedar Key, as a matter of fact. And my family actually, while we had the restaurant, we had an opportunity to purchase a fish house in Everglade City. And we thought it was a good idea because we had a, you know, a good source of stone crabs. You know, we're Moore Stone Crab restaurant, we gotta have stone crabs.

So when the family that we were buying from for several years decided to sell, we jumped in and I moved down there and I ran the place for six years. And it was a good learning experience, we probably processed close to 5,000 pounds of crab a day. Of course, we didn't use that many at the restaurant, but you know, we would wholesale the rest out and that's, you know, that's, that's the stone crab business.

It's, it's, you know, it's, it's driven by, you know, supply and demand. You know, if the demand is up and the supply is low, then the price is high like it was this year. And if, if the supply is overwhelming, of course, then obviously the price drops. So it's a, it's an interesting business, especially dealing with all the fishermen and all the different egos and, and back channels.

And it can be kind of interesting.

[00:04:10] **Tina Bucuvalas:** And although I kind of doubt the, there may be some viewers that that don't know what the difference is between a stone crab and other kinds of crabs. Could you talk about that a little bit?

[00:04:24] **Paul Moore:** Well, I think the biggest difference between stone crab and any other crab is the texture of the meat, in my opinion.

It's firm and sweet and it's a lot easier to eat than say like a blue crab if you boil a blue crab, I'm sure you're familiar with this. Anybody that's ever eaten blue crabs, it's a darn mess. You know? And crab claws, they, we, you know, when we served them at the restaurant, we would precrack them, serve 'em to the table, easy to eat, sweet, you know, you could put, you know, butter on 'em or, or your mustard sauce is a good way to go.

And it's just, it's just, it's just a thing of its own.

[00:05:09] **Tina Bucuvalas:** So, and, and stone crabs are in the US are really a Florida thing, aren't they? Because as you said, they don't go much farther north than Cedar key, for instance. Do you know when they started fishing stone crabs? How long ago?

[00:05:30] **Paul Moore:** Well, My grandfather and my father started stone crabbing in the fifties and they were one of the first. He had, when they started giving out stone crab permits, my grandfather's number was number nine.

So, that was pretty high on the list. And my dad told me stories of the, where they would sleep on the beach and they rode their boat out and you know, and there wasn't the boats like we have today, which you know, they have two pullers on 'em. They're pulling 600 to a thousand traps a day. They'd pull 30 or 40 a day if they were lucky, rowing them.

And I can remember when I was a kid before my folks opened the restaurant, we had a seafood retail market here in Cortez. And my dad and my uncle came in with a boat just loaded to the, loaded all the way to the rails with live stone crabs and they couldn't crack 'em all that night and they left them overnight and the next morning they came in and the boat was on the bottom.

One of the stone crabs had pulled the plug out of the, sunk it so all stone crabs crawled out. So that was pretty interesting.

[00:06:36] **Tina Bucuvalas:** They're not stupid .

[00:06:37] **Paul Moore:** No .They're not forgiving either.

[00:06:41] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Did you make the traps also and has anything changed in that respect in term, in terms of the techniques used to fish crabs now from, is it different from the past?

[00:06:54] **Paul Moore:** Well, when I started crabbing with my father in 1980, we built all our traps by hand out of wood. We spent all summer long building crab traps and lobster traps. You have to, you know, build a jig, build the trap , pour concrete in the bottom, tie a rope on it, tie a buoy on it, put your number on the buoy, and it's quite a process.

Nowadays most of the traps are plastic. They, there's several companies that, that produce them and they have to have a biodegradable section in 'em. So

there's a space where you have to put a wood slat in. So if the trap is lost, the wood will eventually rot out and the crabs won't just keep going in there and dying.

It'll be able to crawl out. And next year they're going to require a three inch. It's gonna be a round circle to release the small crabs in 'em. So that's gonna be a new requirement as of law as of next year. So that'll be incorporated in the new design I'm sure the trap makers will probably put that in. But yeah, we used to build them all by wood, and I, I actually prefer a wood trap.

I think it catches a little better than a plastic trap, but they only have a short lifetime. You get maybe two, three seasons out of them, and then, you know, they, they're, they're rotten. .

[00:08:17] **Tina Bucuvalas:** So how many traps might you put out or, well, you're not still doing it though, or is your family doing it? Anyone in your family still doing it?

[00:08:25] **Paul Moore:** My family's not currently stone crabbing. When I came to work for John, I ran his boat for a couple of years, but now they have me running the dock and they won't let me go. So, unfortunately, I don't get to crab anymore. Occasionally I go once or twice, but I help 'em with the gear, putting the gear together, we're building traps and whatnot.

[00:08:42] **Tina Bucuvalas:** How many traps do you guys put.

[00:08:44] **Paul Moore:** We run 3000 a year, a year. You know, we have a permit for 3000. So..

[00:08:50] **Tina Bucuvalas:** And how many crabs does that bring in a year?

[00:08:52] **Paul Moore:** Well, my my thing is if you can average a half a pound of trap each day, then you're doing all right. So, you know, if you pull 500 traps a day and you come home with 250 pounds, you're, you're paying the bills.

[Edited - production comment]

[00:09:17] Well, we run 3000 traps. That's our tag limit. We have you have to have now, now you have to have a trap tag, which is issued by the state, so you're allowed, depending, when that program first came into existence, you had to show your last five years worth of catches, and there was a formula to figure out how many tags you would get.

So you can only run X amount of number of traps per year. We qualified for 3000, and back in the day, you could run as many as you wanted, and nobody, nobody said anything. But now it's a, it's basically a, in my opinion, a tax because you have to pay each year 50 cents a tag to get the new tag. And each trap has to have the tag on it, which has your information or your number.

You get, you know, a number on there. And so we have 3000 tags and we'll run, five to 600 traps a day and pull them every five to seven days depending on, you know, how it's going. If it, if there's a lot of crab around, you can go three days. If it's not, you'll stretch it to five and depending on weather and everything else.

[00:10:30] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Now I believe you take off the, the claw. Do you throw the crab back? Or, or, I, I thought that's what they did, but it sounds like maybe it isn't.

[00:10:41] **Paul Moore:** Well stone crabbing is a, actually a pretty sustainable industry because yes, you remove the claw from the crab and return the crab to the water, and they will regenerate their claw.

So if everything goes right, you know, I'm sure there's a, you know, there's a percentage of them that don't survive. And if the crab and the claw is cracked incorrectly and you've ripped the joint out, obviously it's gonna die. It's, it's more, it's more regenerative than anything else I can think of cuz you can't cut a fillet off a fish and throw it back over and it grows a new side,

[00:11:16] **Tina Bucuvalas:** That's true. Well, sponges grow back. So so and, and just to finish up talking about your family, has the rest of your family sort of stayed in the fishing industry? Do you have brothers or, or children and you know, that are also somehow in the fishing industry or the crabbing industry?

[00:11:43] **Paul Moore:** Well, as far as my family goes, I'm the last of the Mohicans in the fishing industry.

My kids are not in the fishing industry, thankfully. And no one else is. I'm, I'm the last one.

[00:11:56] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Okay.

[00:11:58] **Kristin Sweeting:** Can I,

[00:11:59] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yes.

[00:12:02] **Kristin Sweeting:** Why do you say, thankfully for your kids not being in the industry? And if you'll answer to Tina.

[00:12:10] **Paul Moore:** Well, the reason I say thankfully my kids aren't in the fishing industry is cuz I'm not sure what the future holds for the fishing industry.

I'm not a doom and gloomer, but it's not like it used to be. There's a lot of regulation, a lot of restriction, there's a lot of competition and I'm glad they got regular good paying jobs.

[00:12:41] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Do they have the same kind of attachment? I've noticed that a lot of people in the fishing industry and other kinds of maritime industries have more than a professional attachment to the water.

They have a personal attachment to the water. Is that true of you? And do your children share that though?

[00:13:06] **Paul Moore:** Well, I would say that if you're in the fishing industry, you have to have a connection to the water. And I certainly do, and I think my kids do to a point. You know, I mean, I take them out on the water quite often and they understand.

They worked in the restaurant so they understand how, how it works and but I'm not sure that they have the same connection that I do. This is my phone ringing.

[Edited - phone call and production conversation]

[00:14:07] Sorry about that.

[00:14:08] **Tina Bucuvalas:** That's okay. Yeah. So could we return to that question while we're thinking of it again, because, because of the sound of the phone.

[Edited - production comment]

[00:14:53] So the attachment to the water, your attachment to the water, and then your children's attachment to the water.

[00:15:00] **Paul Moore:** Well, I, I think that anybody that's in the fishing industry has a, a, a genuine attachment to the water. You would have to. I enjoy running the crab boat more than anything, tell you the truth.

If I could do it every day, I would do it. Now as far as my kids go, they understand the attachment to the water. They worked at the restaurant, my family's restaurant, and they understand how, you know, how the fishing industry works. And I think from time to time, come here to the fish house and you know, we'll show their kids.

And but I don't believe they have the same attachment to the water as I did. So I think I'm probably the last line of fishermen in my family.

[00:15:48] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Could you talk a little bit more about the job that you do now too? I mean, what does it mean to be in charge of of the dock and what all happens here and what are people doing?

[00:16:05] **Paul Moore:** All right. Well, my job as it stands now is I'm the pretty much the dock manager here at Cortez Bait and Seafood, and that pretty much entails, just running the crew. When the boat comes in, offloading the fish. We're processing our, our main deal here is commercial fishing bait, and our main product is the thread herring.

So we have two purse seine boats that go out into the gulf and catch the fish. They come back here, we offload. We have a series of conveyor belts and hoppers and a bunch of machinery. Basically, we run the fish out of the boat into the hopper, up the conveyor, into a box. The box gets stapled, put on a rack, put in the blast freezer.

We freeze 'em for 32 to 48 hours, then they're palletized and shipped out. So my job is basically just to keep everything rolling. I keep the crew rolling. I keep everything moving, keep boxes in place and racks in place, and put stuff in the freezer and keep track of the weights and it's it's quite a dance.

[00:17:14] **Tina Bucuvalas:** It's, it sounds like a lot of details, but could you explain to me what palletized means? Put on pallets?

[00:17:22] **Paul Moore:** Well after, after the product is frozen, it's on a, on, on a big metal rack, and they hold, depending on what size box we're building that day or we're filling that day it could be a 50 pound box, a 25 pound box, a five pound box.

And it depends on, you know, if it's, if, if what size the box is, it's how much is on each rack. So then once that rack is frozen, we pull it out of the freezer and then we stack the boxes onto a pallet, wrap 'em and shrink wrap, and then they go out for delivery.

[00:17:59] **Tina Bucuvalas:** So you're sending out the whole fish, is that correct? I mean, just, just the whole fish. I mean, I'm just asking this because I was down in the keys a couple years ago and at a fish house that was making chum, you know, and and boxing it up and, and selling it. And they sort of, you know, they mashed it all up. So I'm just asking about that.

[00:18:24] **Paul Moore:** Well, here we mainly run the whole fish as bait for say like a group of fishermen or the snapper fishing.

[00:18:32] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Okay.

[00:18:33] **Paul Moore:** But we also do chum.

[00:18:34] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Okay.

[00:18:34] **Paul Moore:** And that involves, grinding the fish in a giant grinder, kind of like your, at your butcher shop where they're making ground beef. But this thing is monster and it, it shoots it outta there like you wouldn't believe, that's not very pretty. But and then we will put that into a 25 pound block or a five pound block and also, you know, it, then it's frozen and then it's palletized, boxed and sent out.

So we do both chum and whole fish as bait. That's our main deal here.

[00:19:05] **Tina Bucuvalas:** And actually we were talking about this because we, we had a, a question about it and it, it, it, and it comes from me having been in the keys and noticing that the primary workforce in this in this fish house, you know was Haitian. And I understand that you have a lot of Haitian workers here too, and I'm kind of curious about why there are whole groups of Haitian workers in one place and maybe Latino workers in another. Is, is there some connection that they have with other connections with the fishing industry or something?

Or does it just sort of whoever came and asked for a job or, you know, kind of a chain, you know, in getting jobs or can you talk about that a little bit? About your workforce?

[00:19:55] **Paul Moore:** Well, our main workforce here is, I would probably say Haitian. Haitian people. Why that is, is, well, I hate to say it, they don't mind working. They'll come to work every day and they'll work as long as you want 'em to, and they'll, and they'll come back the next day. You know, I mean, I know they're from a, a, an island in the Caribbean, so I'm sure that they're all familiar with the fishing industry. Probably not like it is here, as mechanized.

But they all know about fish for certain, and that's our primary workforce. So it can be a little challenging, you know, communicating with them. But they do a very good job for us, and we're glad to have them.

[00:20:42] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yeah, I can tell you if I'm having lived in Miami for a long time, that the Haitians were just happy to have a job, really happy, you know, because there weren't jobs so much on Haiti, so.

[00:20:52] **Paul Moore:** Right.

[00:20:52] **Tina Bucuvalas:** They did a great job. What else? And, so when you sent, when you ship your things out, where do they go to? All around the state. All around the country. Who are your primary customers here?

[00:21:13] **Paul Moore:** Well, the primary customers for our product are commercial fishermen, grouper fisherman, snapper fisherman, snapper fisherman use a chum.

A lot of our chum goes to the keys where they, where they you know, catch the snapper at night, they chum the water, bring the snapper up, and they're catching them by hook n line. Grouper fishermen on the long line boats, in the bandit reel boats use the thread herring. We have blue crabbers that also use the thread herring.

We have a group of blue crabbers that we deliver to probably twice a month in the St. Augustine area that work the St. John's River and they like that product. It works good for them. We do send it out internationally, not a whole lot. We send some to California. We send to the Bahamas, but mainly it stays here in the state.

[00:22:11] **Tina Bucuvalas:** So, all right. Well, I kind of wanted to ask you what the best part of your job or, or what you like the most about fishing or, or your job here, and also what you like the least, you know? But for instance, are you in this because you love the water? You know, what, what, what is the best part about it to you, and what is the worst part, part about it to you.

[00:22:42] **Paul Moore:** Well, I think the best part of my job is that I'm working here on the water every day. I'm right here on the water. It's not a high pressure situation and it's nothing that I don't already know. I didn't have to learn anything new. The worst part sometimes could be the hours . There's days where you're working 16, 18 hours a day for several days in a row, and then there's days like today where you sit around and watch it rain.

So, you know, it, it, it equals out. But I enjoy it. And I'm working for a guy that I've known for I can't tell you how long I went had sleepovers at their house when I was a kid. We went to elementary school together. His brother and I were best friends all through school. So it's, it's pretty easy.

[00:23:38] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Alright, the...

[00:23:39] **Kristin Sweeting:** Would this be a good time for the memory.

[00:23:43] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Yes. And also about young people going into it.

[00:23:46] **Kristin Sweeting:** Yes.

[00:23:47] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Do you feel that young people are going into maritime occupations, whether it's on land or on the boats or anything? And I have the sense from very, well from Tarpon, certainly and from other people that not as many young people are interested and kind of curious why that is.

[00:24:07] **Paul Moore:** Well, I think that the next generation of fishermen, we definitely have some here. And I don't believe that we're any, we're in any, were in any danger of losing fishermen. We have quite a few young guys that are fishing. I don't know if there's hardcore as the old guys. Probably not , but I don't think we have a problem with the, we're not gonna run out of fishermen anytime soon.

[00:24:34] **Tina Bucuvalas:** That's good news. That is good news. . And do you have any, what is your best memory of fishing? Because, because we've noticed that, well, as we've talked about, people do this work because often because they a personal attachment to the water. Does one memory pop out to you as maybe one of the best times that you've had?

[00:25:05] **Paul Moore:** Well, as far as one of the best times I ever had fishing goes, I would say, you know, I was, like I said before, I was really a stone crabber. I wasn't really a net fisherman or any of that. I'd done it, but that wasn't my thing. I was my father taught me stone crabbing as his father taught him and

even though when I graduated high school and I went right to work for him on the boat, so I'm on a boat, a 35 foot boat with my father and two other gentlemen his age.

And at first I hated it. I, you know, I thought my dad was a S.O.B., but now I understand that he was trying to teach me and I understand he did teach me a lot, and I think my fondest memory of fishing is the best day we ever had crabbing. We pulled around 500 traps and had about 1400 pounds of claws that day.

And it was, it was something, every trap was jacked, full crabs on the outside, crabs on the line. It was unbelievable. And I've never done that again. And I would say that was my favorite, favorite day.

[00:26:22] **Kristin Sweeting:** Can I elaborate on that? Can you tell us like approximately when that was? Like nineties, eighties?

[00:26:33] **Paul Moore:** Oh no, that was, that was probably 1984 would be my guess on that.

[Edited - production comments]

[00:27:03] How that, well, I was 18 when I graduated, or 17 and a half graduated high school, so it was probably 19, that 19 or 20, maybe that year.

[00:27:15] **Production Crew:** So maybe you can say that best memory was when I was 19, around 1984.

[00:27:22] **Kristin Sweeting:** And was it Everglade City or was it here?

[00:27:23] **Paul Moore:** Not Everglade City.

Yeah. When that day happened, I was probably 19 or 20 and that was fishing right here off of Long Boat Key. We weren't three miles offshore and every trap we pulled was jacked full, and it was, it was amazing. We filled I don't know, probably not familiar with the wooden fish box, there's one sitting, one sitting right over there, they hold about a hundred pounds. We filled 17 of those and built a barricade across the stern of our boat and just started throwing 'em on the floor. And I was, at the end of the day, I was standing knee deep in solid crab and we cracked crab clause for four hours. It was, it was something else.

[00:28:10] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Wow. So we also want to talk about how things are now, you know, for fishermen as opposed to how they were in the past. And as you said in that memory, you know, that happened. That was in the 1980s and it's never happened since. Well, has it never happened since?

Because water quality has diminished, the number of crabs have diminished. What has, what has happened in the last few decades in the Gulf?

[00:28:44] **Paul Moore:** Well, in my opinion, what has happened to as far as water quality goes is, you know, I mean, everybody knows, you know, you have the Piney Point debacle. You have any given weekend, you're just look in the bay and there's hundreds of boats.

I can remember when I was a kid, I would go fishing and never see two or three boats a day. As far as crabbing went, when I, I previously telling you about that day, there was maybe three people in Manatee, Sarasota County that were stone crabbing. Nobody else cared about crabbing. That was before the net ban.

You know, you had your, your fishermen were, you know, catching mackerel and mullet and Pompano and whatnot, and nobody really wanted to go crabbin. So, we didn't have any competition. Now there's, you go out there opening day and you can walk on Buoy's cross the water. There's so many, so, you know, I don't know that it's any more, that there's less crab than there was back then.

It's just, there's more people crabbin. That's my opinion anyhow. I mean, of course the water quality is probably less than it was in the 80's.. But I mean, that's to be expected with just the number of people that are enjoy, using the water. I mean, any given Sunday look out and it's like the boat Nicks, there's, you can't, there's a hundred boats in each direction.

So I don't know that that's something that we can control any longer.

[00:30:11] **Tina Bucuvalas:** And it's interesting that's only happened in a few decades because you remember, you know, when you were much younger it was quite different. So have you noticed that there's any changes in sea level rise or the temperature of the water or anything like that, that might be affecting other things than just the crabs, the fish in general. And can you talk about Red Tide as well?

[00:30:43] **Paul Moore:** Well, it, it, the way I see it as far as Red tide and global warming and all that. Red tide's been around forever. It's not anything new. We're helping it along, obviously with the phosphates that we're dumping

in the water, but it's a naturally occurring event, so you know, there's years when you get it and it's yours when you don't, and when you do, I've seen, of course, it, it kills fish and that's catastrophic.

But other species seem to bloom. Like a year after red tide, shrimp are insane. Blue crabs insane. I don't know. I can't explain it, but that's just, you know, I've seen it. You know, I, I, of course I would, I would love to see less phosphates dumped into the water. Sea level change. I really haven't seen it.

I've lived on Long Boat Key my whole life and my house, we've, my family home's been on Long Boat Key for 40 years. We've never had water in the front yard in a worse hurricane, so, I don't really know if I buy all that, so I dunno what, I dunno what else to say about that.

[00:32:05] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Okay.

[00:32:07] **Production Crew:** Is that cuz the scavenges, the shrimp, the crops?

[00:32:10] **Paul Moore:** That's what I think.

[00:32:12] **Production Crew:** Dead bodies.

[00:32:13] **Paul Moore:** Yeah. I mean shrimp, it's, it's, it's ridiculous. Mm-hmm. shrimp in the bay after a red tide. The summer after a red tide.

[00:30:36] **Production Crew:** It's nature.

[00:32:22] **Paul Moore:** Yeah.

[00:32:23] **Production Crew:** When tree blow down, something grows up, right?

[00:32:27] **Paul Moore:** Yeah. You don't get a pine tree until the forest fire opens a pine cone.

[00:32:32] **Kristin Sweeting:** That's true. Can interject real quick. Can you, if there's a memory that stands out about the 2017 red tide, what, well, actually, I don't wanna phrase. Is the 2017 red tide from what you witnessed the worst one that you've come across?

[00:32:56] **Paul Moore:** Well, as far as red tide goes, I would say the worst one that I can recall would be, I believe it was 1974. As I told you before, my family owned a restaurant and it, it's on the water. And we actually had a dolphin in a pen and he was our pet dolphin. And every day we fed him and people would, hundreds of people would come see it.

Well, we had to remove him from the bay because the red tide was so bad. And we took him to a place in Venice. It was at the time it was called Florida Land. It doesn't, it doesn't exist any longer. And it was two months before we were able to bring him back. And the, the dead fish was unbelievable.

We had to, to rake fish off the beach all day every day. So, and that was a long time ago. So, and that was before Piney point and all that. So, you know, I, I just think that red tide is just one of those things that happens in nature and it's meant for some reason, you know, got to thin out the herd. That's my opinion anyhow.

[00:34:04] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Okay. So I think we've covered a lot of, a lot of the topics that we've, that we wanted to address here. But in general, you see the future as it sounds like you see the future of. All sorts of maritime industries is fairly bright because you talked about not a shortage of fishermen.

The stone crabs seem to be fine. Could you elaborate on, on what you see the future bringing?

[00:34:40] **Paul Moore:** Well, as far as the future goes, I think we're gonna be all right. As long as we can keep people that don't know about fishing industry, making rules for the fishing industry, I think we'll be fine. You do have a bunch of people that are making decisions about the fishing industry that don't know anything about the fishing industry, then you've got a problem.

[00:35:04] **Tina Bucuvalas:** How do you think, how do you think we, you can address those problems to make sure that doesn't happen?

[00:35:12] **Paul Moore:** Well, I think to help that from happening. Fishermen have to get involved. You have to do stuff like me standing here talking to you. You have to go to the meetings. You have to make your voice heard. You have to get like my boss here, Mr. Banyas, he he works with the state every year tagging redfish. They go out and they purse seine up redfish during the, during their spawning season, and they tag 'em and take DNA samples. They put trackers in them. And that's, you know, that's fishermen helping fishermen, you know, keep the viable, keep it viable.

And that I think is the most important thing is you have to keep fishermen involved in any decisions being made for the fishing industry.

[00:36:01] **Tina Bucuvalas:** That sounds like a, that sounds like a really important step.

[00:36:05] **Paul Moore:** Yes. I, I, I, I believe that's a very important step, and I know they do a lot of that in the Keys that are real good about that.

They have an organization down there that, that are very involved and I think everybody needs to be, and, and I, I see it happening. I don't, I'm not saying that fishermen don't wanna be involved, but I think more need to be.

[00:36:26] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Do you see the future of the maritime, do you see expansion into other kinds of fishing in this area in the future, or do you think it'll pretty much stay the same in terms of what your what you guys are looking for or maybe what other fish houses are looking for?

[00:36:44] **Paul Moore:** Well, as far as future goes, I think due to regulations that you know, I don't see, you're gonna see a lot of different species being targeted and you know, you have to, there, there's so many restrictions now on all the different species that you have to apply and be granted permits for almost every one of 'em.

If you're, you know, if you're catching kingfish, like we just went through kingfish season, there's only 15 boats in the whole state that are allowed to catch kingfish. There's a 600,000 pound quota and 15 boats fish it. Once that quota is done, it's over. That could be two days. It could be two weeks.

Depending on, you know, on, on the catch. And so with, with the regulations that are in place and the ones that are probably going to come in place, I don't think you're gonna see a lot of expansion, but I don't think you're gonna see anything diminish as well, cuz I believe we're in a pretty good spot.

[00:37:42] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Is there anything else you would want us to know about your family's past the business or fishing in general in this area or in Florida?

[00:37:55] **Paul Moore:** Well, one thing I would like to say is, is to the consumer is buy Florida produce or products. Try and stay away from the Vietnamese shrimp that are grown in a bomb shelter or a bomb hole in Vietnam.

And, and let's not buy tilapia from China. Let's buy local fish. Keep your local fishermen fishing.

That to me is very important.

[00:38:25] **Production Crew:** Can we have him say that one more time?

[00:38:28] **Tina Bucuvalas:** All right. Can you say that ..

[00:38:30] **Production Crew:** Any way, any way that you want. So they ask the question again. Anything else you want to add about local fishing?

[00:38:37] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Interesting local, state, your family, the business, something you'd like, what you people to know is great.

[00:38:44] **Production Crew:** You can just say it again in any way that you want. All right.

[00:38:48] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Well, I think the last thing I would like to say is that I'd like to see the consumer make a conscious effort to buy Florida Fish, Florida shrimp, Florida crabs, Florida lobster. Not buying the, the stuff that's coming in from Thailand and Vietnam and China because those markets undermine ours and we need our people to buy our products.

[00:39:25] **Kristin Sweeting:** So I have one, I think this is probably the last question, but is there so obviously there's a lot of misconceptions about the commercial fishing industry. Is there anything that you would want the public to know about the behind the scenes stuff that maybe you've heard? People miss talk about before, if that makes sense.

[00:39:51] **Paul Moore:** You sure you want me to say that?

[00:39:52] **Kristin Sweeting:** Yeah, let's do it. .

[00:39:54] **Paul Moore:** Okay. Well, I could say that one of the most misconceptions about the commercial fishing industry is the commercial industry, fishing industry is raping the sea, taking all the fish and leaving none for anyone else. Yes. Well, that's just ridiculous. We're more regulated than anybody.

And if you look at just the state of Florida alone, commercial fishermen versus recreational fishermen. Recreational fishermen are way up here. Commercial fishermen are way down here. Commercial fishermen are more regulated and more responsible in the fishing industry then, then the recreational fishermen will ever be, even though their organization tries to demonfy the commercial fishing industry.

So I don't really think that's fair. You know, you just look at any, any place in Florida. You, you got here, you've got Madeira Beach, anywhere like that. Just see the sheer numbers of recreational fishermen. They're out there fishing every day. If each one of 'em catch one fish, there's still millions of fish a day.

So, and a lot of the species that they catch we're not allowed to even touch. So I think that's a big misconception and the more people that understand that, the better in my opinion.

[00:39:32] **Tina Bucuvalas:** Okay, good. Cuz I have to cough.

[00:39:36] **Kristin Sweeting:** Great. Thank you so much.