2/14/2024

BD033

**Interviewer 1:** Um, alright. So, just so you know, everything that we are about to ask and all of your answers are completely confidential and anonymous. So we don’t include your name or anything like that in any of our research.

**BD033:** Ok.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok! So how many years have you been a Dolphin Cruise guide.

**BD033:** Um, just over 3. Since July of 2020.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. July 2020. And obviously you’re a Dolphin Cruise guide, and you also participate in fishing, are there any other marine recreational activities that you participate in on a regular basis?

**BD033:** I mean, I do like island hopping. If you want to say stuff like that.

**Interviewer 1:** Like on the boat? Just boating around?

**BD033:** Yeah.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** Because it’s not all Dolphin Cruises. But it’s all pretty much the same thing. You’re just driving around on a boat, so if you want to just classify it as that that’s fine.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** Because it’s either that or like, I’m going from island to island, or…

**Interviewer 1:** When you explain what you do, would you say you’re a Dolphin Cruise guide or would you say you’re a boat cruise guide and sometimes you see dolphins?

**BD033:** I’d say I’m a Dolphin Cruise guide that does some fishing. Thank you.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. Alright, so…

**BD033:** Because that’s 90% of my business, and the other - maybe 80%. And then 10% fishing and 10%, you know, sunset cruises…

**Interviewer 1:** Right, booze cruise.

**BD033:** I do grill and chill, booze cruise.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. And then are you involved in fisheries management, local government, environmental groups. Anything like that, do you attend government hearings in regards to your profession.

**BD033:** No.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. Um, ok. So, getting down to it… so this is the first time I’ve ever done this, so I’m a little…

**BD033:** Well you did Richard!

**Interviewer 1:** Well, um, so you’ve never met [Interviewer 2], but she’s one of the students in our lab so this is her project, and she’s facilitated all of them since now. But now I’m taking over the interviews locally. So she did - I went with her, and she did Richard’s and I watched.

**BD033:** Ok.

**Interviewer 1:** Well so basically what we’re going to do is -

**BD033:** Well I’m a good person for you to start off with.

**Interviewer 1:** I know, I know. That’s why I wanted to start with you. And we’re going to interview a bunch of other big names in the industry, and so I wanted to practice with something I was close with first.

**BD033:** Yeah. I didn’t look at your whole line up. You’re going to right it in.

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah.

**BD033:** Ok.

**Interviewer 1:** So what we’re going to do now is we’re going to talk about how biodiversity affects you, and it’s called cognitive mapping and it’s basically like a psycho - a psyche map of what you view as positively or negatively affecting your environment. And that could either be how it affects your business or how it affects you personally. And I’m going to have a physical representation, writing everything down, and then we can go over everything in the end and you can say ‘no, that doesn’t make sense’, or ‘no, I want this to have more representation within my psychological map’ or whatever. Ok. So what specific aspects of coastal or marine biodiversity affect you?

**BD033:** That is such a broad question.

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah, so -

**BD033:** Like y’all don’t have any other detailed portions of that?

**Interviewer 1:** Do you want to know what biodiversity means?

**BD033:** Sure.

**Interviewer 1:** The variety of living things. So how does the -

**BD033:** Wow.

**Interviewer 1:** It’s the variety of living things. How does that affect…

**BD033:** Well, I guess there needs to be a variety of living things if we’re going to have big predatory animals, like dolphins, so there needs to be a variety of marine life for them to feed on. If there wasn’t, then we wouldn’t have large predatory animals like dolphins. Their populations would be a lot less, it would probably be a lot harder to find them.

**Interviewer 1:** Mhm.

**BD033:** Um, and then I guess when it comes to snorkeling, um… you know, you want biodiversity for snorkeling so people can see different marine life.

**Interviewer 1:** Mhm ok.

**BD033:** Let me know if you want me to slow down.

**Interviewer 1:** No, I just really don’t know what I’m doing. But you’re ok. I know. Ok. Um, -

**BD033:** And then for fishing as well. You know, you need a healthy diversity of fish in order to catch the target species, or else they just won’t be here anymore.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. And, is there anything negatively, that you can think of… like things that happen in the environment. And I’m not just talking about the variety of things…

**BD033:** That I see that people do?

**Interviewer 1:** Or environmentally, or economically, ecosystem wise, negatively, positively. Things like that.

**BD033:** Well I think we could protect our seagrass over here a little better. Because this whole area over here, by the island, it runs out by St. John’s Bayou there - it’s a huge seagrass bed.

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah.

**BD033:** They protected around the island, but they don’t protect it in other locations. It’s just - it deteriorates a lot. Like you can notice it year by year.

**Interviewer 1:** How does protecting seagrass affect you, your business…

**BD033:** So, protecting it - because that’s the area that I take people snorkeling. So protecting that area would protect the snorkeling habitat that I take people to. And quite honestly, I think that’s the only reason why we get manatees in this area. I’ve seen a few manatees here, but they really don’t poke a lot further west. You know, you don’t see them a lot by Dauphin Island, they kind of like stop. They make a hard stop around here, and that’s because that’s kind of where the seagrass trickles off and we don’t have as much of it over there, we have more oyster shell reefs. You know, protecting the things that are really unique to our ecosystem and keeping them healthy so we don’t see a ton of negative effects from destruction.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. And are there any particular species or habitats besides seagrass that are important to you?

**BD033:** I think oysters are super important to our area, oyster reefs and everything. They’re just unique. And they get a ton of - they clean the water, and filter stuff.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** I think Little Lagoon in general, a lot of those smaller bodies of water, like Little Lagoon, Weeks Bay, are just super unique ecosystems. And like, being able to protect some of those unique ecosystems a little bit further would really be cool.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. Um -

**BD033:** And the thing that I’m talking about is maybe different regulations in that area. I know that in like Weeks Bay, I don’t think you can recreationally shrimp in there, or commercially shrimp in there. So they protect in some ways like that. But doing that to more of our water, I think it would be beneficial.

**Interviewer 1:** More regulations. Ok. And, so, let’s talk about the economical benefits of aspects of biodiversity and how they affect it.

**BD033:** Uh, well I mean, since we do have a good biodiversity here, I’m able to easily find dolphins all year round feeding in the area. And if I can consistently put people on dolphins, then I get great reviews, and I can book more trips. Straight up. And I think that goes the same for snorkeling. If people have a really great snorkeling trip and they see cool stuff, then they write a good review and then I end up booking more trips.

**Interviewer 1:** Mhm. Ok. Are there any positive, or that is positive. What about negative impacts. Economic negative impacts.

**BD033:** I don’t know, I mean, I haven’t been doing it very long. So I haven’t seen any negative impacts.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** Um. Every year I’ve been doing it it’s been better. So it’s hard to say that haven’t - that I’ve had negative economic impacts based on marine life at all.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** I mean sometimes people bail out on a snorkeling trip because there’s too many jellyfish, but like, that’s biodiversity.

**Interviewer 1:** Right. Ok. What about social benefits or negative impacts in relation to biodiversity? Do you need me to expand on the question?

**BD033:** Sure.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. So, social benefits are location, or like who you know, do you see any negatives or positives in the people that you interact with or the people that hire you, or anything like that?

**BD033:** Because of biodiversity?

**Interviewer 1:** No, just, forget about biodiversity. Let’s talk about the social impacts.

**BD033:** Of being in this field?

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah.

**BD033:** Oh, well it’s great. I’ve met a shit pile of people. Put that. Shit pile of great people too. It’s just, like, sharing common beliefs and common shared interests, it sparks friendships.

**Interviewer 1:** From your dolphin cruises? Or just from being in the area.

**BD033:** Just being in the area, yeah.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** Um, and I think just being in the industry is what I’m saying, I guess. Like being a charter captain in the area, you meet a ton of people. Um, yeah.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. What management decisions are currently affecting you? And are there any specific policies that affect your system? Recreational fishing, snorkeling…

**BD033:** Um… I wouldn’t think so. If anything, I’d want slightly stricter regulations. So, I think they’re fine right now. I think they could be revised, but nothing…

**Interviewer 1:** Mm… you want them to be revised to be stricter?

**BD033:** Some, yeah.

**Interviewer 1:** Like what?

**BD033:** Like, we mentioned, I think Little Lagoon should have it’s own regulations.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** Certain estuaries should be protected in different ways. You know, it’s just like - it’s such a unique fishery and there’s certain areas that we have like that around here, like Heron Bay is a super area as well. And like protecting those fish that are in that area in a different way, like saying if you’re catching speckled trout in Little Lagoon, you can only keep 2.

**Interviewer 1:** Mhm.

**BD033:** And there’s a different size regulation. It just protects the fish that are in there.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** And I don’t think we need to be able to keep 10 sheepshead. I think flounder should have a slot. I mean especially the amount of money that the state puts into flounder research and all the spawning stuff, it’s like, why aren’t they protecting their investment? Just by putting a slot in, they’re protecting their bigger breeder fish. I don’t know, that doesn’t make sense to me.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** And as guides, I think that we - I mean a lot of us put our own regulations on the boat.

**Interviewer 1:** Sorry, say it again?

**BD033:** As guides we put our regulations on the boat. Like if you get on Richard’s boat -

**Interviewer 1:** Right, he doesn’t kill red drum.

**BD033:** Right. And you can’t keep fish over 20. So it’s like, you know what I’m saying.

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah.

**BD033:** I don’t think that regulations are holding us back, because we don’t want to keep as many fish necessarily. We want to try to protect what we have, kind of a thing.

**Interviewer 1:** Sure.

**BD033:** Other people get irritated by that obviously. But…

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. Um… I think I did some of them wrong. Because like, biodiversity that affects the dolphins, is that going the right way? Biodiversity that affects the dolphins, is that economically supporting… biodiversity supports, economically supports business…

**BD033:** Yeah. Supports health and life.

**Interviewer 1:** Alright. Now you and I will look at this. So, are there any other environmental factors, in your system, in your business, in your life, that affect snorkeling trips, dolphin cruises, or fishing recreationally?

**BD033:** Environmentally?

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah.

**BD033:** Uh, trash in the water.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. Just, like, litter.

**BD033:** Yeah, litter. Because like every trip I take I pick up trash.

**Interviewer 1:** Snorkeling and… everything? Dolphin Cruises?

**BD033:** Doesn’t matter. If I’m on a two hour trip, I’ll pick up at least one piece of trash. And it’s bad in the summer, obviously, because everyone’s over here.

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah.

**BD033:** There’s just shit floating everywhere. And then it flows out into the gulf, or it gets pushed back here.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. Litter, that’s a good one.

**BD033:** Yeah. There’s a lot of that. I mean you could say poaching because there seems to be a lot of that lately.

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah, let’s go with that. Can you expand on that just a little bit, how that affects you?

**BD033:** Um well, overfishing greatly impacts fishing guides in the first aspect because if you’re killing breeder fish or way more fish than you should every trip that you go out, it’s going to kill all of our spawners and stuff like that. But the other way, I mean, if everyone goes out and over 50% go out and harvest every time, then the dolphins aren’t going to have as much to eat anymore. And they may leave the area.

**Interviewer 1:** Genius. Ok. That was a good one.

**BD033:** I’ve just seen a lot of that lately. People getting busted by overfishing. Like some guy got busted a couple of weeks ago and had a bunch of red snapper in the boat.

**Interviewer 1:** Really?

**BD033:** Like 30.

**Interviewer 1:** Oh my gosh. One guy?

**BD033:** Yeah.

**Interviewer 1:** Ouch.

**BD033:** Yeah. No commercial license, obviously. Just him and his buddy maybe out there, just killing all of them.

**Interviewer 1:** That’s so dumb. Do you think this increase in people getting caught, do you think that’s the marine police stepping up? Or do you think there are more people that are doing it?

**BD033:** I think there’s just more of them.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** I think it happens so much. It’s just crazy. I mean I never get stopped when I fish over here. Never get checked, nothing. But when I go over on the west side, we get stopped probably 50% of the time we go out, we get stopped.

**Interviewer 1:** Damn, wow. Ok.

**BD033:** It may be less for them because they go out over there more than I do, so maybe their numbers are more like 30 or 40, but still. In 3 years, 4 years of fishing, I’ve never been stopped, checked, or anything for a fishing license.

**Interviewer 1:** But, is that frustrating for you? Like, do you wish you were getting stopped?

**BD033:** I do, because I don’t do anything wrong. And I just know that makes me feel like, alright at least they’re out there making sure that people aren’t harvesting 300 flounders.

**Interviewer 1:** Right.

**BD033:** Shit like that.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. Marine police, I’m with you.

**BD033:** But then if I go over to Florida, I mean it’s the same over there.

**Interviewer 1:** Are there any other factors that the marine police affect besides stopping overfishing?

**BD033:** Um, no.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** There was that one guy that got kicked out from over there…

**Interviewer 1:** From the club right? Andy.

**BD033:** I don’t remember his name.

**Interviewer 1:** You’re talking about like 2 weeks ago?

**BD033:** No. The, um, state trooper that was over there harassing everyone? I can’t remember his name. But he got kicked out from over there, and then he got sent back over here, I guess, or he’d already been here or something. And he was in the back bays and he pulled over the fucking southern rows. Which is like, one of the giant white dolphin, big huge white dolphin cruise boats, with like 100 people on it. Pulled it over, in the back bays which is like -

**Interviewer 1:** Oh my god. Why? What’s he trying to prove?

**BD033:** He’s like, you can’t watch dolphins here. You’re impeding the traffic of the intercoastal waterways. And we’re like there’s no one around! We’re the only boat out here! Like. And in that park, you can see a half a mile on either side of you. So you can see a barge coming through. And you could easily slide out of the way. But, yeah. That was the only negative that I had. But he’s gone. They got rid of him now, too.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok good.

**BD033:** He’s not in the state anymore.

**Interviewer 1:** That’s really impressive, that the marine police sort of have that integrity to kick out that officer.

**BD033:** Yeah, someone that’s really that stupid.

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah, ok good. Um… ok. Do you want to look at this and see how you feel? We need to add - so now, let me just -

**BD033:** This is hard.

**Interviewer 1:** I’ll walk you through it. It’s hard for me, I promise.

**BD033:** Do you always take notes like this?

**Interviewer 1:** Um, yeah.

**BD033:** Ok. See, my brain doesn’t work like that. I’m more of an outline guy.

**Interviewer 1:** Fair enough. This is called concept mapping, and it is an idea that we created. Like, our lab has developed it. And, so, it’s really hard for me to understand because it’s really soft science, you know what I mean? Because it’s just how your opinions affect your industry, and then I have to connect the dots. It doesn’t really make a whole lot of sense in my brain, because I’m more like hard biology, hard facts.

**BD033:** Right.

**Interviewer 1:** So this is hard! You think it’s hard for you, then imagine -

**BD033:** I’m confused now. Because I thought this was like you - this is how you did shit. But this is how you were told to do it.

**Interviewer 1:** Right. This isn’t my note-taking.

**BD033:** That’s what I was asking, like, do you always do this? With bubbles and everything?

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah, no. Ok so I want to go through and highlight your three points that sort of tie everything together. So it’s all within your business. You’ve got snorkeling trips, dolphin cruises, and recreational fishing. Um, and then, you have all these other things like the variety of prey, biodiversity, protecting seagrass, and marine regulations. We need to go through and we need to give things a weight. So from positive 1, 2, 3, and from negative 1, 2, 3. Like, how bad it is. So, for example, litter. Is litter - that’s obviously a bad thing for your business. But how strong? Is it a negative one, a negative two, or a negative three.

**BD033:** What’s the worst?

**Interviewer 1:** Three. Negative three.

**BD033:** Negative three.

**Interviewer 1:** For both fishing - all fishing, dolphin, and snorkeling?

**BD033:** Yeah.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. What about jellyfish?

**BD033:** They live here.

**Interviewer 1:** But is it negative, like how negative for your trips is it?

**BD033:** I don’t - they’re pretty bad. But, like, they live here, so.

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah, but how bad for your business? Negative two or negative three?

**BD033:** I would say one.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. That’s fair. A shit pile of great people. How positive has that been on your life?

**BD033:** Three.

**Interviewer 1:** What about the great people influencing the dolphin cruises, that’s also a three?

**BD033:** Yeah.

**Interviewer 1:** Um, the area that you’re in. How positive of an impact does that have on your life and your industry? Like how significant is the area?

**BD033:** Uh, two. Just because I could do it in other places as well.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok, good point. Um, regulations? How positive or I guess negative, if you want to go that route. There being a lack of regulation. But how is regulations affecting oyster reefs, estuaries, Weeks Bay, seagrass?

**BD033:** 3.

**Interviewer 1:** Positive?

**BD033:** Yeah.

**Interviewer 1:** Um… and you said boat traffic. How strongly do you feel about overfishing and how that affects you?

**BD033:** Um, I mean I feel strongly that it shouldn’t be done if that’s what you’re asking.

**Interviewer 1:** Does it affect -

**BD033:** I think it affects everyone. We just don’t know it’s happening.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** It happens a lot. I think it happens a lot more than people think.

**Interviewer 1:** Oh yeah. 100%.

**BD033:** Yeah. Like a lot.

**Interviewer 1:** And then, biodiversity. How positively, from one to three, is that affecting dolphin cruises, snorkeling, and fishing.

**BD033:** That’s a three. Essential.

**Interviewer 1:** Essential. Um, how positive does biodiversity affect your economic standing in your business?

**BD033:** I mean, I think it’s probably a three.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** Just because, I mean, the less biodiversity I have, probably the less economic growth I’ll have.

**Interviewer 1:** The more biodiversity, the less economic growth?

**BD033:** Did I say that wrong?

**Interviewer 1:** Did you say that wrong? Maybe I heard it wrong.

**BD033:** But you know what I mean. The less biodiversity I have, it’s going to hurt my business.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** Yeah, it’s going to economically hurt my business.

**Interviewer 1:** Um, and how important is it to you that boat captains - so you were mentioning that boat captains put in their own regulations, like Richard, he doesn’t kill red drum. How substantial or how significant do you think that is?

**BD033:** For me? Or for other people to do?

**Interviewer 1:** For you. Like is that a big deal? Or is it sort of like…

**BD033:** Yeah, it’s the law. I mean, like my boat regulations are what we’re going to keep. And if they’re not happy with that, then they don’t have to book the trip.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. Ok, well so that’s interesting. So do you have any regulations, like personally on your boat that is different from the state’s regulations?

**BD033:** Yeah.

**Interviewer 1:** Like what?

**BD033:** Um, typically I’ll have a 20 fish max. Period. End of story.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok, wow.

**BD033:** If there’s 20 fish on the boat, we’re not keeping any more fish at all. I don’t care what size they are. And if people are on good sheepshead bite or something, it’s around 5 a person if I have four guests. You know. But I don’t really do over 5 per person on sheepshead, flounder’s three, and I don’t do anything over 20 inches for trout, flounder, and red fish.

**Interviewer 1:** Have you ever had people cancel on you because…

**BD033:** No, just because I don’t get a ton of bookings.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** It’s not like I’m Richard. I get 90% of my bookings from dolphin cruises and that’s the other ones I think I can beat Icky. Like, I don’t do a lot of fishing charters. It kind of helps bring in a little more money in the winter, so I think I can be a little more picky.

**Interviewer 1:** Right.

**BD033:** Because I only want to take the people out that have that mindset. That, you know, we don’t need to keep all these fish. 20 fish is plenty for people to keep on a charter. And everyone’s always like, oh those people go out there to feed their family. I’m like, that’s the most fucking asenine thing I’ve ever heard. That’s the most expensive meal you’re going to get. Like, you go to pay $800 for an inshore charter.

**Interviewer 1:** Right.

**BD033:** Those filets are incredibly expensive. Especially if they’re like, speckled trout. Or white trout.

**Interviewer 1:** Yeah.

**BD033:** So, that’s not an argument as far as I’m concerned. People go for the experience, they experience a fishery and what it has to offer. And if you want to keep some on the side, then that’s fine. But I think it’s one way that I can try to promote, you know, sustainably keeping the fish.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok. Um, what about social media? So obviously, you have a social media presence. Are there aspects of that that affect your business?

**BD033:** In what way?

**Interviewer 1:** Like, do people book through you because they see you on social media?

**BD033:** Yeah, for sure. I get most of my fishing charters because of social media. Probably 90%.

**Interviewer 1:** Wow.

**BD033:** Yeah. And dolphin cruises not so much, I think it’s kind of a different avenue maybe, of where people find that information, I’m not sure.

**Interviewer 1:** But yeah, I guess you don’t really - your youtube videos aren’t about your dolphin cruise.

**BD033:** They’re not. But people know that I run charters and stuff. So they could look it up if they wanted.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok.

**BD033:** Yeah. I think it’s a totally different audience.

**Interviewer 1:** Ok! I think I’m done.