

## The Conch Sz1Ep3MCoombs-FINAL.mp3

**Speaker 1** [00:00:04] Hello, my name is Julie Kuchepatov and I'm the host of this podcast, The Conch. We are excited to continue our journey with this podcast and talk about the seafood and the ocean and most importantly, showcase the incredible women working in the seafood sector. Share their journeys, examine the challenges they face and the triumphs they've achieved. In this episode, we are so fortunate to have a very special guest joining us. Monique Coombs. Monique is an advocate for American fishermen and spends a lot of time talking and writing about seafood, the ocean and health and wellness on her blog, Aragosta Mama. She has been married to a fisherman for almost 20 years and has two kids, both who fish for lobster and have their own company. Monique works for the nonprofit Maine Coast Fishermen's Association and is the board president of the Casco Bay Tuna Club. So we have a lot to talk about with Monique. Welcome and thank you, Monique, for joining me today on the Conch. Let's get started.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:59] Julie, thanks so much for having me.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:01] I am so interested in learning more about you as you have a very interesting life in terms of how your different roles intersect. You're a fisherman's wife. You work at a nonprofit which supports fishermen and you have a company with your kids and husband selling lobster and perhaps other fish. I don't know, but we'll find out. Perhaps we can start with your back story and what led you to the place you are today.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:24] Sure, back story goes pretty far back, I guess I fell into working for the fishing industry simply because I was married to a fisherman, and they think that when you're around that type of passion and connection to an industry, it's hard not to want to become a part of it. My husband and I have been together for almost 20 years. I started working for the industry just by working and writing for publications like National Fishermen and Commercial Fisheries News. From there, I started to contract with organizations like the University of Southern Maine, MIT, at the time, Penobscot East Resource Center and even Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, working on projects around seafood, seafood distribution. And then about seven years ago, Ben Martens, the executive director of the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, offered me a role at the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association. Initially, actually, I believe it was just part time just working on seafood. But he and I grew my program and position quite a bit. Obviously, I'm full time now. My role as the director of community programs, so our our mission at the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association is to restore the fisheries in the Gulf of Maine and sustain Maine's fishing communities for future generations. And the way we kind of describe my job is that I get to work on that second part of that mission sustaining our fishing communities. So I do a lot of work around the working waterfront, and most recently, I am running a fishermen wellness program, which has been awesome because it's sort of full circle for me. Before I started working in the fishing industry. I was a personal trainer and I was taking classes in nutrition and health and wellness. Now I'm going to bring some of that knowledge to help advocate for more resources and funding to be put towards fishermen and a lot of those social issues that they're going through, supporting them and getting counselors and just sort of advocating for more mental health support for commercial fishermen.

**Speaker 1** [00:03:33] That's an incredible back story. I am so excited to hear more, and I want to hear more about what are some of the issues that the fishermen are facing, especially, you know, it's no secret that the global pandemic has affected us all, right, in a myriad of ways. So how did the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association and the fishermen in Maine like manage during this extremely difficult time? And maybe you could share some

of the things that you've done to support the fishermen and some of the challenges, maybe even around mental health, that they're facing because I think this is probably not unique, right?

**Speaker 2** [00:04:09] Right. Yeah, sure. The pandemic was bizarre, which is like an understatement, I guess, and also a very obvious statement. We like to think at Maine Coast Fishermen's Association - our slogan is actually together we persevere. So we like to think we didn't pivot. We just persevered through the pandemic. Seafood sales in Maine actually did OK. We supported some fishermen that developed a Facebook group that allowed them to sell directly to people within their community, and that went really well. It also allowed the fishermen to interact with people who had questions about seafood and the price around seafood and how seafood was accessible. So that was a good thing then, and other people within our organization did a couple of webinars for fishermen around how to access some of the COVID relief funding and the PPE stuff. And I, for lack of a better expression, use the pandemic as a point to really elevate some of the fishermen wellness work we were doing prior to the pandemic. Unfortunately, sometimes when I brought up mental health and wellness in the commercial fishing industry, it wasn't necessarily received the way that I thought that perhaps it should be, but the pandemic because of a lot of the rapid funding and I think everybody is understanding that mental health was something that needed to be considered during that sort of precarious time, we actually started to get a little bit better reception and a little bit of funding to really kick the program in the butt. So we got five or ten thousand dollars and we were thinking about what we could do with that. Do we build resources? Do we build a website? And what we chose to do is actually give it right back to the fishermen by means of paying for counseling for them. So I reached out to a couple of people with whom we had network about some of this fishermen wellness stuff and said, Can I get a list of counselors that can make appointments within twenty four hours that allow cancellations that understand the uncertain schedule that fishermen have to abide by and the weather? And we did. We got a list of about 10 to 15 counselors. And when someone reached out to me, I sent them the list of the counselors and then the counselor would let me know and working with the fishermen and MCFA would pick up the invoice for a few sessions with the idea being that we just wanted to break down as many barriers as possible for fishermen to entering into counseling because sometimes just the thought of making the appointment and having to keep it if it's like two weeks out or three weeks out or even a month out, the idea of having to figure out the billing and insurance through counseling processes can be overwhelming. So we just really wanted to weigh as many of those barriers as possible. And so ever since we started doing that, we have continued to build relationships with partners here in Maine - Mid-Coast Hospital, Health Affiliates of Maine, NAMI Maine - or just as a means to have these partners that we can reach out to when we need support. And they're helping us build resources for fishermen and our staff has gone through mental health first aid training. I am especially proud of this program. I think it's necessary because even though the pandemic has shifted into this next phase, there's still a lot of things, as you know, Julie, that are occurring in the commercial fishing industry. But I think fishermen can use some support other than just regarding their businesses.

**Speaker 1** [00:07:35] Absolutely 100 percent. I am so thrilled to hear what you just said about supporting the mental health of the people that are doing such an incredible, strenuous, really hard, unsecure type of work. It's really, really a testament to your efforts, and I have a few things to say. So one is that I love that you framed your work during the first year of the pandemic. I guess you could call it as not pivoting, but persevering, because that's a real interesting choice of words because we are all persevering and pivoting, yes, of course, but persevering through these challenges that we've all faced in

different ways and supporting the mental health of fishermen. I think this model is something that you could export literally to any fishing community, probably in the world. Honestly, I do think so. And I'm wondering, actually, I'm curious, is that something that you have considered?

**Speaker 2** [00:08:33] Yeah, absolutely. I mean, we are working with a few organizations outside of Maine that have done a little bit of work around wellness, specifically around safety and injuries, like the Fishing Partnership Support Services, which is out of Massachusetts, the Northeast Center for Occupational Safety and Health, which I believe is based in New York. And it is definitely something that's not just for Maine and that we would love to see expanded and we would love to work with partners in other fishing communities on this type of thing. And we actually we got some really good press from Hakai Magazine. I think it was in the midst of the pandemic and somebody out of Canada who I cannot. I think it was like the P.E.I. Fishermen's Association or something that they're doing some of this work too. So nationally, internationally, it's definitely something that fishermen across the globe I think can benefit from.

**Speaker 1** [00:09:28] I totally agree, and I give you a hearty kudos for elevating these issues, you know, wellness and mental health specifically up because, like you said, a lot of people in general can be stubborn, right, about this. Absolutely. And not acknowledge that there's an issue and be hesitant to reach out for help. So I think that's so great. Just removing those barriers and exemplifying that this is possible is amazing.

**Speaker 2** [00:09:54] Thanks, Julie. Pretty proud of it.

**Speaker 1** [00:09:56] You should be. So I have a question around environmental nonprofits. OK, let's segue into a different topic right now. OK, so environmental nonprofits make a lot of demands of the seafood industry around sustainability and responsibility, and fishermen many times ultimately bear the brunt of these requests in terms of implementation, as well as the financial burden. So this happens internationally as well. So not just domestically, but you know, these demands to name a few are around traceability and transparency. There's asks to engage in policy or to reflect the true cost of seafood in price, and the list goes on. So because you're in this unique position of working for a nonprofit dedicated to sustainable fisheries and from the MCFA website I'm quoting, it says shaping the future of Gulf of Maine Fisheries through advocacy, fisheries policy, research and leadership, as well as a commercial fishing family that depends on marine resources. So in your experience, what should nonprofits know or remember when dealing with fishermen, particularly when making requests around environmental and social responsibility? So how do we find the balance that will be a win win for us all?

**Speaker 2** [00:11:13] That question actually segues from our previous discussion because I think a lot of it and I've said this for the past decade, I think one of the biggest issues that we have in the commercial fishing industry is that it's incredibly dehumanized and that when we're talking about all of those things that you just mentioned, usually it's focused on the fishermen's business and not the fishermen's health and well-being or even safety. And I think that that piece and especially at Maine Coast Fishermen's Association is one of the most important parts to us is commercial fishermen are human beings. They're people on those boats that have families that have financial stress like everybody else does, that have schedules, that have feelings, you know? And I think that unfortunately, sometimes I think when we're speaking about the commercial fishing industry, both types of onshore impacts aren't necessarily considered in the process. And that's the part that I think needs more attention paid and weight to it within these

conversations. And the specific example I use sometimes, actually all the time, is if you go to NOAA's sustainable seafood website, Fishwatch.gov, it's all about seafood, of course, but the only mention of fishermen on that entire website is under a tab "enforcement," which to me not only is dehumanizing, but has the potential to vilify. And that makes, it breaks down trust, it breaks down respect. And it makes it really hard to have a forward thinking, progressive, thoughtful, impactful conversation when the people that are most impacted don't necessarily feel as valued in the food system. If you go look on the USDA's website about the local food and agriculture, there's pictures of farmers that are smiling and holding carrots, and they're much more obviously valued in that system. And I'll say it over and over. I just don't think all the time that the fisherman's role in the food system is as elevated as farmers happen. And I think that that's part of some of the biggest breakdowns that we have, whether it's an environmental conversation, a policy conversation or otherwise.

**Speaker 1** [00:13:27] Yeah, that's a really good point, and I think I was on a webinar yesterday and the discussion was around the elevation of aquatic foods as a food system. And I think this gets to what you're saying is that globally anything you know, from seafood to anything taken out of the ocean to be eaten, right? Yeah. The term is morphing into aquatic foods now, but it's really not been formally recognized as a food system. And so therefore, not only are aquatic foods not being recognized as a food system, but the people behind them are also being neglected and not recognized and valued for their contributions to global food security and nutrition security, et cetera. So I think that will change eventually and with the support of people like you bringing this to the attention, like hello, NOAA, put some pictures of some people that are bringing this food to your table. That would be really helpful, and that would be a really good first step. You know, in recognizing that again, there are people behind not only bringing this food to us to eat, but also in cases where there's issues, right? These are people-made issues or these issues are made by people. So I think the lack of recognition of people in general, in fishing and in fisheries and aquaculture, for that matter, is really I think it's changing, but it's very slow, right?

**Speaker 2** [00:14:53] Incredibly slow. Yes, yes. And I hope it is changing. I do.

**Speaker 1** [00:14:57] Yeah, me too. So you and I are both pretty active on social media, and I think maybe that's where we met. So yeah, social media!

**Speaker 2** [00:15:06] I think it is. I think it is.

**Speaker 1** [00:15:07] I'm pretty sure. But you know, and I follow a lot of Mainers and they're mostly fishermen, and I've developed a sense that Maine's fishermen's livelihoods and traditional ways of life are under threat due to new federal fisheries policies and the development of working waterfronts into something other than working waterfronts. In fact, a woman from your neck of the woods wrote to me once and said, I'm going to paraphrase what she said. But she says, yeah, fighting for gender equality in the seafood industry is necessary, but there's a war against our industry, and I need to focus on that. So is my impression, correct? Can we fight for the industry and gender equality, which is what I'm fighting for? Are they mutually exclusive and what are your thoughts on this?

**Speaker 2** [00:15:51] It's a tough question because we're in a very precarious time right now because there are multiple, what could be considered, existential threats that are creating a sense of what I sort of call perpetual job insecurity among fishermen. And that includes both men and women. Just to be clear, in Maine, women who fish also prefer to

be called fishermen. But I think just as women cognizant of that or not, there's always work to be done. Obviously, when I think about fighting for the industry and fighting for gender equality, I think they do go hand-in-hand because I think about my daughter, Jocelyn, right? She wants to be a lobsterman and she's got her student license and she's working very hard. I think about her both in regards to supporting her as a commercial fisherman and also just having her back as a woman in the industry. I think the reason I sort of stumble over this question a little bit is because I, as a woman and the role that I have feel incredibly empowered by many of the men with whom I work. And so I think women should never stop fighting for gender equality. I think for me at least, and I'm thinking about my daughter and I work with some just really bad ass women. I mean, I think about like Patrice McCarron is the executive director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association, Annie Tselikis is the executive director of the Maine Lobster Dealer's Association. People like Bri Warner, who's the CEO of Atlantic Sea Farms, I mean, they are some pretty rad, awesome, strong, smart, confident role models for women in this industry, and I think we're so lucky that they're in the roles that they have. And so I think that the things they sort of happen together, whether we see them happening or are working on them intentionally or not, because we need the women like Annie and Patrice and Bri all fighting because of some of those existential threats that are worrisome for the future of the industry.

**Speaker 1** [00:18:08] That's really powerful. I think that's a fantastic answer, and you gave a shout out to some great women. So one major challenge globally for women in seafood is the amount of unpaid labor they do in their home. The contributions of fishermen's partners to global seafood supply chains are significantly under-recognized, if recognized at all, while fishermen's partners might not be steering a boat, they keep the literal ship afloat through their support of their fisher partner, be it through assistance with gear maintenance, keeping the books, caring for the children and the home, or waiting with a warm meal for their partner to return. So in your experience, how has being a wife and mother in the seafood industry been a challenge? And in what way? And how have you met these challenges?

**Speaker 2** [00:18:54] Biggest challenge being a fisherman's wife and a mother of fishermen is honestly the fear and risks involved with commercial fishing and thinking about my family being on the water. And that is an incredible heavy weight that I carry on my shoulders that was exacerbated and really brought to the forefront last year, January 23rd, 2020, when the fishing vessel Haley Ann sank and the two fishermen aboard died and their bodies were brought home. It's really hard to consider that as the reality of fishing is the risk, and for me, that's my biggest challenge. I think your points about unpaid labor that happens in the industry from women is completely true. I think it's gotten better over time. So the cottage industry in the United States, I think about my husband's great aunts who used to literally sit on the wharf and watch the water until their partners came home or they would pick crab meat or lobster meat. I'm not sure that they ever necessarily thought about it as being like unpaid labor, or if they just thought of it as a means to cope while their partners or their husbands were at sea. And I think that now the role of women has sort of changed. I think there's a lot of women that still help with the books. There's women like myself that work for the industry or there's women that have other jobs. But being the wife of a commercial fisherman, I think the challenge of living with someone whose life is at sea so often for me is the biggest challenge. And that's like I said, exacerbated by working in the commercial fishing industry and sort of knowing and dealing with a lot of the risk and existential threats on a daily basis, you know, the circle back to the beginning of our conversation that weighs a lot on my own mental health. I deal with anxiety on a regular basis and under normal circumstances, and they're just exacerbated when my

husband's at sea overnight. And it just sort of changes my perspective on everything, I guess.

**Speaker 1** [00:21:27] Yeah. Who takes care of the people that are the caretakers, right?

**Speaker 2** [00:21:33] Good question. I mean, I think that for me, I'm very thankful that I'm very interested in mental health and wellness, and I have learned coping mechanisms and I've got a fully well supplied toolkit with tools I've learned over the years to sort of help when I'm struggling. But I think this is where fishermen wellness programs, hopefully, maybe I'll get to a point where we can extend some of that support to other people within fishing families who have loved ones that are struggling with substance use disorder, or they've lost someone at sea, or they have a loved one who's a fisherman that's struggling with undiagnosed depression or anxiety. And hopefully, those types of things can help support everybody in the fishing industry.

**Speaker 1** [00:22:24] So, yes, I completely agree with you. And I think that's the task right, is to make sure that everyone has access to the support that they need because again, it's about this unpaid labor and when we don't recognize what partners of commercial fishermen are doing on behalf of the industry, for instance, or, you know, even their families, then they won't get access to the support that they need. But by recognizing that and recognizing they're a piece of this puzzle, this big picture, then things open up for them. So I really am very encouraged by what you just said. And I definitely think about these things a lot because fishing is one of the most. I think it has been designated the most dangerous profession. So thinking about the men and women that go fishing every day and keeping them in our thoughts is really, really important.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:16] Yeah, absolutely. It's definitely in the top 10 most dangerous civilian occupations in the United States.

**Speaker 1** [00:23:23] Wow. So given all these challenges that we've discussed, and I might know the answer to this, but why do you stay in the seafood business?

**Speaker 2** [00:23:32] I have no idea. I think that I have been incredibly fortunate to find myself a position within an organization like Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, and I'm able to surround myself with people that I care deeply about, and that's incredibly motivating. I mean, my job is basically to support my community, my family, my friends, and I love seafood, not just because I work for the industry either, but because it's just so good for you. I don't understand why people don't eat more seafood, zinc, selenium, vitamin D, and these are all things that support our immune system that can be found in abundance in seafood, and we should all be thinking about how to better support our immune systems right now. I think it's just such a incredibly cool food and incredibly cool to be able to have my job to be to care about the ocean and to care about seafood and to care about the harvesters. There's like a holistic thing about it that's motivating. That's not to say that sometimes I don't get incredibly frustrated and down, but oftentimes that's not because of the seafood. It's not because of the fishermen. It's because of some of those existential threats that we talked about the beginning of this. Things that are outside of our control, that we're trying to be more impactful, more involved in, but just feeling like our roles are sort of diminished in that process. That's pretty frustrating and can be very tiring and trying sometimes. But then it's just a matter of a couple of text messages to a few friends that are fishermen, and then I feel better. So I guess I just feel so fortunate and lucky to be working and what I do.

**Speaker 1** [00:25:24] Yeah, I mean, I wish that for everyone that they have the passion and the joy, and of course, there's challenges, but I think if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life or whatever that saying is. And I think, you know, for me, that's definitely true. Of course, we all work very hard, but loving what we do is very important. And I agree with you, people should be eating more seafood literally. Like, What is the issue? I have no idea. So I think we'll continue to work to support that and we can give a shout out to the Seafood Nutrition Partnership both you and our members of

**Speaker 2** [00:25:57] Yeah, absolutely,

**Speaker 1** [00:25:58] who support increasing seafood in the amount of seafood eaten by Americans and supporting, you know, seafood. So I really agree with you there, and there's so many great things about it that it just brings your mood up. It's nutritious. It's delicious. All those things, you know, you mentioned before that you have written for a lot of great publications. And I wanted to ask you about your blog Aragosta Mama

**Speaker 2** [00:26:25] It means lobster in Italian.

**Speaker 1** [00:26:27] That's awesome.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:29] Yeah. So I wanted something somewhat alliterative. Feel free to include this or not. I grew up in Germany. My father worked for the military. But do you know how to say lobster in German? No, it's "hummer," and I don't think I didn't think Hummer Mama would be the right, the right website for the whole different crowd

**Speaker 1** [00:26:50] that, yeah, I don't think that would work.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:54] Yeah, no, not so much. So Aragosta Mama, it sounds nice, right?

**Speaker 1** [00:26:59] Right? So tell me about Aragosta Mama.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:03] Sure. So actually, when I was writing for the fishing industry way back in 2008, I had a blog called Lobsters on the Fly, where I just shared my perspective as a fisherman's wife about things that we were concerned about in the fishing industry. And then when I started working for Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, I didn't necessarily have as much time to dedicate to it that I wanted in the past four or five years, especially because of everything that's going on in the industry, I decided that I wanted to kind of pick it up again, and mostly because also when I was on Lobsters on the Fly, social media wasn't as big of a deal as it is now. And so I started writing again just to share some of the community and culture that's inspired by commercial fishing, especially here in Maine. And you can't go into a store that doesn't have something that has like a lobster on it. There's pillows with lobsters. People decorate their houses with buoys. All of these things, and I just wanted to find a way to reiterate to people that you can't have those things without commercial fishermen. And so if we're going to be celebrating colorful buoys and lobsters on pillows and stores, then we need to make sure that we're making that connection back to what it is that allows us to do that, which is the act of fishing. That such a lobstering and seafood is such a huge part of the culture in Maine, and I just wanted to sort of celebrate it. So I change it up a couple of things on my website. It's really been a lot of fun to just sort of talk about my fishing family in a way that maybe is accessible for other people and does that thing that I want so bad, which is to humanize the industry.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:44] That's great, and we will definitely share how we can find you on the internet at the end of this podcast, and I have another question around the Casco Bay Tuna Club, which I mentioned in the beginning of the podcast. So tell me about this and tuna. What kind of tuna are we talking about?

**Speaker 2** [00:29:02] So the Casco Bay Tuna Club is the longest running bluefin tuna tournament in the United States. It was started in 1938. There was one in Nova Scotia done the year before in 1937. Casco Bay Tuna Club's Bailey Island fishing tournament is the longest running. I became president of the organization two years ago, but of course we had to cancel last year's tournament because of the pandemic and we did end up canceling this year as well. I've been involved with the tournament and on the board for about 10 years. My family, we go tuna fishing for bluefin tuna together in the summer. My kids absolutely love it. I started getting seasick a few years ago, so I don't get to do it as much. But a bluefin tuna fishery in Maine is a thriving fishery and the tuna harvesters. We use sustainable methods. It's highly regulated. Restaurants are serving it in very cool ways. Pelagic Labs at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute does some amazing work with bluefin tuna, and it's just one of those species that I think people have been, and I don't want to say, afraid to talk about, but maybe a bit more hesitant because there are some tuna species that are we can't fish for them, and I don't know if they're endangered, but their stocks are lower. But the Atlantic bluefin tuna that is in the Gulf of Maine is, you know, people can go look actually on GMRI's website to get more information about how well they're doing. But it's a really cool fishery, and I'm excited to be a part of the tuna club. We're expanding. There's going to be a tournament on Bailey Island again next year, which is where we originally are. But I'm working with someone who's been a part of that tournament for a long time. He wants to expand and there'll be a tournament in Portland next year. And then we even want to think about a tournament in the Muscongus Bay up in St. George in coming years. Just it's a very cultural fishery. People within the fishing community celebrate quite a bit and it's something that we want to share with more people to get excited about. So, yeah, it's pretty cool.

**Speaker 1** [00:31:15] That sounds incredible. By tournament, do you mean they fish for number of fish or they fish for the size?

**Speaker 2** [00:31:24] Yeah. So with the bluefin tournament, it's usually the size of the fish that you're considering. So there's regulations about how many fish you can catch. Sometimes the bag limit's one a day. Sometimes it's two a day. For the commercial bluefin tuna fishery, it has to be over seventy two inches. And so with the tournament, they can bring their fish in and it gets measured and weighed and at the end of the tournament of course there's first, second and third place with the Casco Bay Tuna Club, we really try to focus on like community, conservation, and education. There's other components to it as well. For example, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Walt Golet at Pelagic Labs, he has a crew and they take the heads and they extract the otoliths. Then, you know, they show people how that's done to be able to highlight the science side of things. We also have a pretty abundant junior tournament, so kids are catching like mackerel and harbor pollock and things like that. It's pretty cool to get kids on the water and excited about the ocean and the species that live there. It's incredible. Being able to interact with the ocean is the best way to get them to care about it, and then for kids to also then go on to explore possible careers in marine resources or biology or any of these things. And so there are some prizes and trophies, and that's a lot of fun.

**Speaker 1** [00:32:47] That sounds like a lot of fun. And hopefully one day I'll be able to experience that. Just for our listeners, an otolith is ear bone and scientists extract those to



learn, and they can gather a lot of information about the fish from these ear bones. And I don't know exactly what's included in there, but I know that there's a lot of information just in those tiny air bones. So I've actually seen that process happen at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in person. So I do know a little bit about that and the extraction process, but it's truly fascinating. So we are coming up to the end of our talk. And I wanted to ask you one more question about, well, two more questions. One is what should we know about you that you haven't already shared that you really want to share? And then how can we find you on the internet and, for instance, at Aragosta Mama?

**Speaker 2** [00:33:40] I'll answer the second question first, so people can follow us at Maine Coast Fishermen on all of our social media sites, that's for MCFA, and to be clear, it is plural - M E N -@mainecoastfishermen. And then they can find me also on most social media @aragostamama, like you mentioned, I do have a website Aragostamama.com. Maine Coast Fishermen.org. They can find me on all of those places and something people should know about me. I guess just in case people ever meet me, they should know. I'm incredibly awkward, give them that heads up, but I guess I can't really think of anything off the top of my head, but I probably share too much information on my social media. So if people follow me, they'll learn a lot.

**Speaker 1** [00:34:30] I think that's a great answer, and I would never, ever consider you to be awkward. We haven't met in person, so maybe I'll maybe I'll change my opinion, but I doubt it. You've been very generous with your time and with your information and your passion, and I hope that our listeners will check out the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association and read more about the great work that you're doing and follow your journey on your social media platforms. Because you are a truly an interesting person and I think you are an inspiration and the way you support fishermen and the way you support your family and your children is really inspiring. And I can't thank you enough for being on the podcast, and I wish you all the best.

**Speaker 2** [00:35:12] Thanks, Julie, and right back atcha, and thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to chat with you on this.

**Speaker 1** [00:35:17] It's my pleasure.

**Speaker 3** [00:35:22] The Conch podcast is a program of Seafood and Gender Equality, or SAGE. Audio production, engineering, editing, mixing and sound design by Crystal Sanders Alvarado for Seaworthy. The theme song Dilation is written and performed by Satan's Pilgrims. Funding for the Conch Podcast is generously provided by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.