

The Conch Sz1Ep10CrystalSandersAlvaradoCOMPLETE.mp3

Julie Kuchepatov [00:00:04] Welcome back to part two of my conversation with Crystal Sanders- Alvarado. As I mentioned at the end of part one, our conversation was so good that we kept the tape rolling and decided to release this conversation as a double episode. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. You know, we've talked about theories of change and those are definitely roadmaps to the future and the impacts that you hope to see, at least in my understanding of the definition. What do you want to see for Seaworthy in the future?

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:00:31] You know, we're going to continue supporting organizations like SAGE, for example, and their

Julie Kuchepatov [00:00:35] Yeah!

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:00:35] And our other clients on their journeys as they test their theories of change as they work to develop who they are in this space and helping them with strategies around that and knowing we're still in a global pandemic, even though a lot of the privileged among us like to pretend that we're not, we are always weighing with our team community safety first around Covid, but also how we consistently create equitable and just community spaces in which everyone can show up as their full selves and speak their full truths. And that's, you know, it's a lot of work for us as a team to make sure that we're doing that and it's also what's needed for us to not just be performing what we say we're doing, right, but to be actually doing it. And so, you know, working into the future around how that looks continuously and we have some exciting projects that are in various phases of ideation and execution and sometimes have to kind of throttle or not based on what's happening globally. And yeah, we're hoping to start to have the opportunity to share some of this soon as we continue to work through it, but just make sure that we're doing it from the most space of integrity that we can.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:01:43] Mm-Hmm. That's great. I agree with you around creating the safe space. I don't have a team. I'm constantly thinking about how to create a safe space for myself. So I hope that someday we can, you know, meet and share a drink together and reminisce about this time when we're still in isolation, essentially. So throughout your daily activities or your weekly activities or annual activities for Seaworthy, what are the challenges that you are seeing right now in the seafood industry itself? Clearly, you know, SAGE is here to address the inequities around gender and women's empowerment, like build women's empowerment in the industry and in global seafood production. But what are some other challenges that you see in the industry today?

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:02:28] I feel like every question we say, we can have an entire podcast on.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:02:30] Exactly. It's called long term, what is it called, job security?

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:02:38] Totally! We are accepting funding for continuous conversation.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:02:42] Yes.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:02:42] You know, I mean, just so many that are so intertwined and come down, you know, like can't be separated, but climate change is

huge. We mentioned environmental colonial privatization of fishing rights out of the hands of people who have traditionally held them and to concentrated means of people who are again causing the issues we say we are trying to address and then calling that a solution, right? You know, the nonprofit industrial complex in the way that it allows the co-opting of well-meaning organizations and people within them into serving the corporate capitalists that are destroying our oceans, right? And then all of that comes down into the like things that we're looking at specifically like overfishing, plastic pollution, habitat destruction, ocean acidification, social injustices like human trafficking, slavery, gender pay gaps, worker exploitation. And you know, I think we've mentioned that these are systematic things, right? And that we're operating within a system. and the system that we're operating in is our economic system. And then everything that we do, the organizations that we create, the work, the theories of change, the teams that we put together are smaller systems within a big system and really having that systems look and viewing things through a systems lens is really important to work against this way in which we silo things right, such as like ocean and land conservation, like we can't be separated, right? And so many things can't be separated. And so I think all across the industry, we see these systems of injustice being replicated over and over and over again. And so we need to really look at how we can make change at a systematic level, right, versus just like, OK. Julie, you work in seafood. Crystal, you work in music, but now working in music and seafood, and how do we reach to the culinary community, which is a lot of work I've done previously is working with chefs and restaurants and helping them with their seafood purchasing and their policies, and then connecting with consumers who are interested in that information and the way that their seafood choices affect the environment, right? And just continuing to like, have these conversations and connecting without being like, OK, academia is over here doing this one thing and then nonprofits over here doing this other thing. And they never talk to each other. And they certainly never are allowing for a conduit of information to flow to the general public who actually have the means and abilities to change things, right? And that's all by design. It's not an accident. So I think it's really like digging in again and being honest with ourselves about the overall systems and the way that oppressions are both environmental and social and everything in between result from the system that we're in.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:05:29] Yeah, and that's the biggest challenge, right, is when you think about things as a system, you can't just address a singular individual or a singular problem and not recognize that it's part of a system. And by addressing, you know, like I said, like supporting an individual or trying to, you know, solve a problem that doesn't take into account that you're in fact in a system, you're not helping, you're not changing anything. And so I like to think about it when I think about gender equality and the seafood industry, you know, the seafood industry is operating within a system that is designed by the people in power, right? And so the power structure is set up to benefit the people in power, and the power structure will not change until that system is addressed. So when you think about a system, I like to think about it and I said this to you before, it's like the matrix, right? Everyone, I'm sure, has seen the movie The Matrix and Keanu Reeves is in there, and Laurence Fishburne offers him the pill or the two pills and he says, you know, if you want to see reality, take this pill. I can't remember the exact details, but anyway, so Keanu Reeves takes the pill, and then he spurts out into this like crazy system of people that are in these pods with these things in their back of their necks that are feeding the system, right? And that's the system that has power on them. When I think about what we're doing and when we say about systems, we're addressing that matrix, which is essentially a system. A matrix is a system synonymous for a system.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:06:57] Yeah, yeah. I think that's the metaphor.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:06:59] So that's the metaphor that I think of when I think of that. And so when I take that pill as someone who's working for SAGE and try to, you know, support gender equality in a system that's built to not really support gender equality and not empower women, it's like, how do I do that? And so again, it's a journey. It's not easy. It's about constant reevaluation and learning. I really don't want to confuse people, but it's really important to understand that we are all operating in systems and they are overlapping and multifaceted and very, like you said, by design.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:07:34] Yeah. And I think maybe this is a good time to point out some nuance in words and the lexicons that we use.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:07:40] Yes, please.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:07:42] And pointing out that there is a difference between equity, equality, and justice and a lot of times there are all three conflated as if they are synonymous and the same thing when they're very distinct. And so just kind of root in some definitions. You know, when we look at equity, we're making sure that individuals are given different supports so that they have equal access, right? If we're talking about equality, we're assuming that everyone will benefit from the same support by virtue of just being treated equally. And then when we look at what justice is, no one needs support or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed by removing the systematic barrier that created it, right? And so when we're framing our work and if we're going to use words in our work saying that we're working towards equity, towards equality, towards justice, right, that we're rooting into the historical movements around these issues that are not new. The seafood industry and air quotes, sustainable seafood movement, has only in the very recent blip of the history started even looking at injustice and inequity and there was for the longest time by the people we uphold as the authorities, right, of sustainable seafood just a pushing off of, Oh, we're not going to address human trafficking, we're not going to address slavery in our food supply chain. We're not going to address gender inequality, the gender pay gap. We're just not going to talk about these things because we're focused on ocean health, right? So again, it's that siloing that ocean health is separate from the communities that rely on the oceans, everything. And then as we came to our senses very recently still coming to our senses,

Julie Kuchepatov [00:09:31] We were slapped into our senses. I think.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:09:34] Exactly. Rightfully so. You know, started addressing some of them and again in quotes, and then looking at some of the programs that came out of doing that and scholarship papers, the white papers from the organizations who say that they're going to be addressing this and let's take slavery, for example, right? I've read countless of white papers from organizations say they're addressing slavery in the seafood supply chain. I have yet to find any organization that actually names the root cause of slavery, which is racism, and talks about it in a way that is framed of, actually, if we want to end slavery in our seafood supply chain, we have to address the racism that allows us to think that people are unworthy of dignity in their employment solely by virtue of the color of their skin and the origin of where they're coming from. Right? But then we just say, Oh, we're going to go in to another country in the global south, and we're going to attach the standard United States Equal Opportunity Employer statement and then call that doing something towards ending injustice and slavery in the seafood supply chain, which it doesn't end it in the United States so why would it end it by some nonprofit going into another country and putting this framework in place?

Julie Kuchepatov [00:10:53] I think you nailed it on the head that I think a lot of the solutions that are being put forth are addressing the symptoms like you said and not the root causes. And I think it's in everybody's benefit to really take a step back and examine, like you said, the root causes because I agree with you, I've never seen anyone say this seafood supply chain has its problems with forced labor because of racism. No one is positing that as far as I've seen. So if someone in our listeners knows of research like that, that would be great to share and you can send it to SAGE to our website.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:11:24] I'm sure not nobody, but I'll also back up and frame it as like in the United States, right, and from our very much white male-led nonprofit industry around seafood specifically. And that Black and Indigenous scholars, especially Black and Indigenous women and femmes, have been naming this for centuries that you actually can't disconnect these things and that's where intersectionality comes from, right? Kimberlé Crenshaw coined this term in 1989 and Black women and femmes have been saying this for centuries through chattel slavery that experiences as women can't be separated from their race, right, that gender and race are inextricably linked and can't be separated, right? And so when we are writing these white papers, when we're saying, here's my theory of change, here's the way that we're going to solve this, and we're completely discounting centuries of knowledge from people who have been experiencing these things, then we're actually not working to do what we say we need to do, right?

Julie Kuchepatov [00:12:23] Yes. Again, the discussion around intersectionality, the discussion around the long tradition of white men leading environmental nonprofits in the western world. This is the title of this episode is called "that topic as a whole other episode in and of itself."

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:12:43] Yeah. Here's our brainstorm session for Season 2.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:12:45] This is our brainstorm session for Season 2. Yeah, but I mean, you know, I say this a lot, and I've said it to you a lot. It's like I struggle sometimes to find a balance between this, that and the other thing. And I think I absolutely want to talk about these issues, and I absolutely want this podcast to be a platform where we can learn and educate ourselves and really jumpstart some critical thinking, which is sorely lacking in our society today in general. But I think potentially in the sustainable seafood movement as a whole, because, like you said, it's historically rooted in certain demographics that are benefiting again from these, you know, matrix style systems of power. So again, these are heavy, heavy topics and I do want to have them and additionally deeper dives in these in the future. But right now, I want to learn more about you and some more thoughts about you. And obviously, we don't have to change the topic unless you want to because this is a place for you to amplify your voice, right? And so I couldn't be more thrilled, right, about this, so

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:13:43] Yeah, and I think we could definitely deep dive and it does get heavy because it is heavy and also knowing that a want to change things is coming from like a most like loving space, right? So that we actually can have equality, right? And that we can have justice and a hope that it is possible, right? It's not like, Oh, well, if it's hopeless, we're just going to stop. And who cares, right? But like doing this work and it's an everyday practice. And like everything we do and every breath we take both personally and what we come into our communities with, right? And I think that for me at least and I think from a lot of people I work with and hear from in different spaces is coming from this space of just wanting more for everybody and wanting there not to be just

this like concentration of power so heavily that benefits only a few people and to the detriment of both our environment and a whole lot of other people, including our fishing communities, right, that we can actually move to a space that we have enough faith in ourselves that if we continue having these conversations, if we show up to the table and have the conversations, you know, like, I feel like you and I do constantly when we're like either after or before recording or in our planning meetings, like we're having these conversations, right, and I think that that's all we can continue to do and like have the conversations and then move that into action, right? So I think it can easily get very heavy, but that it comes from a place of love, right?

Julie Kuchepatov [00:15:07] Yeah, and that's another thing I try to say as much as I can, so people understand is that I am here because I love the seafood industry and that sounds so weird, like I love an industry, but I do. I mean, this industry has given me a career. It's given me lifelong friends that I love to death and would do anything for. It's given me knowledge. It's opened doors to opportunities that I would never, ever have had ever in my life, I'm sure. So again, coming at these problems from a place of love and wanting to see that everyone succeed, whatever your definition of success is, is absolutely 100 percent right.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:15:42] Yes, I totally agree. Same, you know, I also love the seafood industry.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:15:47] It's weird to say that, right?

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:15:48] Yes, it sounds weird, I think, to people who are not in it. And yeah, for people who are in it, totally understand it. You know, everyone I talk to is like, once you're in, you can't leave. You can try, but it got your hooks in you, like pun intended. It's like, you're not.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:16:02] It's like Hotel California.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:16:03] Yeah.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:16:04] It's like Hotel California. Once you check in, you can never leave.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:16:06] Exactly.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:16:08] Great. Nice analogy. So, you know, one of the things that I like to do is, you know, we talk about problems all the time. We could talk about problems, problems, problems, problems again, deep dive into the problems. But let's pivot to some solutions. So, you know, and SAGE, is here to increase women's participation in leadership and decision making around the industry and down the supply chain all the way to participation in management decisions around fisheries management, around the fishery resources. So what kind of solutions do you have, maybe in your pocket or at top of mind in order to increase, I guess the gender equality, but also women's participation at the leadership level, really specifically in the industry because that's really what SAGE's focus is.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:16:54] Yeah, I think there's like all the questions, we go in lots of directions. And yeah, I think solutions come from self-reflection, both individually as well as organizationally and when we're talking about concepts like equity, equality and

justice. There's no other way, right? And one I think it's important to name when we talk about gender equality, right, that gender is not a binary, right? I am a queer, trans, nonbinary individual, and that doesn't mean that I exist between masculine and feminine or woman and man. It means that there is infinite genders, right? And so if we're talking about equality and equity and gender justice, it's an acknowledgment of that. And through colonization, we were given the gender binary, right. Gender binary is a colonial concept and then puts us into these roles of male, female, masculine, feminine. And then in the system that we talked about creates all the opportunity for especially the white men. And then after the cis hetero white men come with cis hetero, white women, right. An exclusion completely of non-binary folks, trans folks, gender variant folks, intersex folks, the complete gender rainbow that there is, right? So I think as a solution very first and foremost, we have to name that. And then part of the self-reflection practice can be folks in the seafood industry really analyzing and looking within themselves and their organizations and the communities that they're existing within who are operating in these positions of power in their just little bubbles, right? Like go into the warehouse that you work at, the fish house, the production facility, the boat. Who's in power? What do they look like? What are the people who are being paid the least and doing probably the most amount of work? What do they look like? What's the difference between their pay? What's the likelihood that the people who are being paid the least are having any sort of say in how the business is operating? Is their labor being exploited? Are they being provided health care? Are they being allowed time off to be sick? To be with their families? You know, all of these things and with each of us looking at how these systems are operating immediately around us and our own operation within the system, right? Like, I love Adriana in her previous episode of the Conch, you know, she names that in a lot of this we're talking about primarily cis hetero men, white men, and saying that we also need the women to like, self-reflect a little bit in the ways that we, as women and non-cis hetero men talk down and put barriers up to women, trans folks, non-binary folks, gender variant folks in the industry. And I see a lot of that within all realms of, you know, the sustainable seafood movement, the seafood industry, in that a good example is I hear a lot of primarily white women say, Well, I don't experience inequity and or if they say that they're experiencing it, they're equating inequity with sexual harassment only as if the only inequity we could experience is sexual harassment versus like looking at something that's very well known and there's lots of statistics around, like the gender pay gap, right, and like the information that you have at SAGE around leadership structures. Who's in what position, right? And to me, that's like there's a quote about like a fish doesn't know what water is. And, you know, I think it stems from a joke where it's like, Oh, you know, two young fish say to the two older fish, "Hey, how's the water?" and the older fish look at each other and say, "What the hell is water?" You know, so it's if we're not intentionally looking at what's around us and like asking what is water and we're in these systems and we have these blinders, right, that we can't see. And so I think solutions start with each individual and then our direct communities around us. And how do we start asking these hard questions of each other? How do we start having these conversations like you and I have so often where you're paying me to be the audio engineer of this, so, like, by virtue of that you have a power dynamic over me, right? And I'm still going to challenge that by being like, you just said this thing and we need to have a conversation about it, right? But at the end of the day, I'm doing it because I value you and I know that you value me and I value our relationship with his friends and his colleagues and a working relationship in which we get to co-create and work within this industry that we like love together, right?

Julie Kuchepatov [00:21:29] It's coming from a place of love. Yeah, yeah. I think it's important to recognize that these systems are set up where you might not necessarily be experiencing an inequality or experiencing something directly yourself. But that doesn't

mean that inequalities don't exist, right? Because the systems are set up that way to perpetuate these inequalities and make it beneficial to the people kind of that are absolutely, you know, creating these systems. But then they need people to support the system, even though they're the ones that might also be experiencing some inequalities. They need that kind of veneer, right, of no, this is great, there's nothing to see here. And so that's why we will hear sometimes people say, Well, I don't actually experience racism. I haven't experienced racism, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:22:15] Yeah, exactly. And that's what we call privilege, right? It's saying that something is not a problem just because you don't personally experience it while not acknowledging that there are other people saying that they are actively experiencing it right and right, that does a disservice because privilege doesn't exist in a vacuum. It's not a zero-sum game and in order to have privilege, there has to be oppression on the other side. So any privileges that we may have in any of our intersectional identities come at the expense of groups of people who are being oppressed. Right, right. And so as a solution, we need to work to get rid of those inequalities and those inequities so that we're not, so my benefits don't come at your expense and your benefit doesn't come at my expense right?

Julie Kuchepatov [00:23:03] Yeah, exactly. And I think to really sum this up, the focus on solutions is that we worked with a consultant that another place that I was working at and they basically said straight up, they're like, this is the motto of this work that we're doing right now. And it was quote, this shit is hard unquote. And this is a perfect example. I mean, this stuff that we're trying to do and trying to see and trying to again benefit everyone and at the expense of no one is really hard. And so all I can say is I'm here for the long haul and I hope everyone will join me. I know you're already here. Crystal, but I

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:23:36] I hope people come too.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:23:39] I hope others come along too.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:23:42] What's the metaphor all boats rise in the high tide or something like that?

Julie Kuchepatov [00:23:48] Ah, I've said this before a million times, too, it's a rising tide lifts all boats. Yeah, but you have to recognize that people are in different boats. Like some people are in yachts. Some people are on homemade rafts. Some people are on literally sticks that are lashed together.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:24:06] Some people are floating on their backs.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:24:07] Some people don't even have a boat, right? And not only that, people are on different boats, but we're also on different seas like we're on calm seas in the Mediterranean, we're on raging rapids, wherever you know, 30 foot swells, whatever. So again, these solutions have to take into account all the kinds of boats and all the seas so that everyone can come safely to shore. And I've said that before, and I truly, truly believe it.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:24:34] Yeah. And I think it's an important point to us if we are fighting for the most marginalized, most oppressed, and ostracized individuals in society, then we're actually fighting for everybody, right? And so we don't need to say we're going to solve for all of these boats. We just have to find the most vulnerable boat that's

about to sink, and we have to figure out how we work together to make sure that that's not going to happen, right? Maybe that's why bringing all of the boats together to support and tying off to each other right, and lifting up each other as a community, which is absolutely necessary and so I think if we look at society, right, and we say, who are most marginalized people in our society, it would definitely be Black trans women and femmes, right? And if we are working, even if we just pull this down into the seafood industry, right? If we are working to uplift the voices and experiences and knowledge of Black trans women and femmes in the seafood industry, everybody else is going to benefit and nobody loses. Everybody gains. It's not high.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:25:42] Yeah, exactly. And so I mean, this is a call to the Black femme trans women/people in this seafood industry, you know? Call us, we'd love to hear you.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:25:54] Yeah, well, and it's actually a call to how are you creating safe spaces? How are you creating inclusive spaces where you're going to welcome a leader into your company who's a Black trans woman or femme and actually listen to what they're telling you?

Julie Kuchepatov [00:26:10] Exactly. Yeah. OK, there's the call to action. So again, you know, SAGE and specifically, this podcast, is about amplifying diverse voices in the industry, and I'd love for you to take this opportunity to amplify and uplift someone and who would you?

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:26:32] Hmm. I have a little bit of of a list.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:26:35] Do it! I love it.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:26:37] I think, first and foremost, just uplifting the voices of Indigenous women and femmes who've been at the forefront of quote unquote sustainable seafood and all movements really who have always had the knowledge and the technologies that we need to actually live in harmony with our natural environment and to achieve what we now call as sustainability, right? And also uplifting my team at Seaworthy. I have the honor to work with three amazing women of color and who are dear friends and just love creating and ideating with them. And just like really in it together and working to have these hard conversations among us too, right. And I already mentioned it, but I'll just say Adriana Sanchez, her episode of the Conch. I love her and, you know, a dear friend of both of ours. And that was a super fun episode.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:27:28] Episode four!

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:27:29] Be a part of and to listen to and refer back to and yeah, I just really love her. And then again, I already said you and thank you for your work and just the ways in which you step into this obligation to question yourself, to question your own thinking and really put forth this challenge to the seafood industry through what you're doing to challenge yourself, right? I feel you're using it as a mirror, right, of like, I'm actually challenging myself to do this, and I exist within the seafood industry and I'm going to challenge everyone around me.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:28:04] You're all coming with me.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:28:06] Yeah. And you know, that's just really what we need everybody to be doing, right?

Julie Kuchepatov [00:28:11] Thank you. I mean, that's really sweet. I think the team obviously has a great advocate in you. And Adriana, of course, is amazing and I'm also amazing. Yeah. Have you seen that meme the one from Mean Girls, the film, where she drives up and it's like, Get in losers, we're going shopping, or I think she might think it in bitches, but she's just getting losers were going shopping. That's like me. I'm pulling up and I'm saying to the industry like, get in, losers, not that you're all that you're all losers, but get in, we're going to, like, smash some stuff and create some new paradigms, I guess. Right?

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:28:45] Yeah, we should make a meme.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:28:46] I'm going to make I meme. Let's make a meme. I'm not good at that. So you get on it because you're the talented one here. So again, I think given all of the challenges that we've discussed, why do you stay in the seafood business? And I think I feel like we have probably very similar answers and I've already said my answer. So just please, tell me, why do you stay in this business?

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:29:09] I mean, well, first of all, I love the ocean and I really love fish. You know, it sounds weird, but it's true. I love them as animals and their existence and everything that they like, you know, all kinds of things.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:29:20] I love them too. I love them.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:29:22] And just like the amazing community that I've built and gotten to know some of my best friends now I've known for years and we met in the seafood industry in some form or fashion. And they're the only people who get what you say when you say, I love fish. And again, I think it's just this energy that is here that like when you try to leave something just like continues to just like draw you in and I see that with a lot of people are, like, I'm going to try something else, but then always kind of like, come back. And I think that even in myself, I'm like, All right, I'm going to dive a little bit deeper into audio stuff and music stuff. And then here I am coming back.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:29:56] Well, you've found a way to merge them all. And really, I think, there's a bright future in this for you.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:30:02] Yeah, and I think I've learned so much that I wouldn't have ever like asking my childhood self even that I would have like becoming immersed in the culinary industry within the seafood industry and learning from all of these amazing chefs like I have a culinary education that I had obtained by working with outstanding chefs in like the Bay Area and the Pacific Northwest and just in building a relationship with them and trying to understand their business, trying to understand what they needed as far as their seafood choices, and then them bringing me into their kitchens and showing me and teaching me lessons on flavor, on texture, on cooking. And now that's a knowledge bank that never in my life would I have assumed that I would have, and also has been a major influence in where the trajectory of my work and my daily life and values around working in the food system, right, and also coming to the place of, like, I can't just talk about the ocean. If I care about the ocean, I have to talk about the land. I have to talk about the people on the land. I have to talk about all of it, mm hmm, if I want to solve any of it right, and I think that the seafood business is that all encompassing

connector where we get to have a lot of fun together, you know? Well, pandemic, but you know, previous times.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:31:21] Yeah, I mean, I think a really good example of that is kind of the connection between the land and the sea and the ecosystem is, like, I remember back when I was working with salmon, I think the name of the book is Salmon in the Trees, and I can't remember the name of the author, but she found salmon DNA in trees that were really far from any water source.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:31:45] Amy Gulick.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:31:46] Amy Gulick, yes, thank you! And that's like amazing, like who would think that ever? No one. Unless you were a scientist! To me, that's the most incredible real life example of what you just explained.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:31:58] Yeah. And I also really love redwoods and redwood forests and the dependence on redwoods and the salmon runs, you know, and the overlap of. Here the coastal redwoods habitat is a very defined area, right? It's been obliterated. So a much smaller area, but a very defined area overlapping with salmon habitat, right? And so if we're looking at redwood conservation, we have to look at the salmon, right? As a marine biologist, when I was in school, what we were trained to do as far as our field observations and out in the field, is you wake up every morning and you do a bird survey and you do another bird survey in the middle of the day and another bird survey before you go to bed. And you do this because in order to study fish, you have to study birds. And when we know what birds are in the sky, it gives us a little bit of insight of what they may be eating in the water without us having to, like, be submersed in the water the whole time.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:32:58] It also probably gives you the idea of where they're going to drop it. A specific type of bird? Yeah.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:33:04] Yeah. Where their nest is. Are they taking it back to. And the the otoliths. Here's one fun fact.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:33:10] Give it.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:33:10] To bring it full circle is. OK. Otoliths are found in bony fish. So sharks and rays don't have them, but fish with bony spinal cords have them. And every species of fish with an otolith has a specific shape to that species. And so scientists can look at bird poop, pull out the otolith and understand what species of fish that they're eating and that they're bringing back to their nests. And if that fish hasn't been found yet near that nest, it's like, Oh, OK, well, this bird is traveling this far, right?

Julie Kuchepatov [00:33:43] Fascinating and so fascinating. That's amazing. And by the way, I say that's amazing a lot in this podcast, but it's absolutely not just a turn of phrase, I really mean it when I say, I say, that's amazing a lot, but I mean it. So tell me, how can our listeners find you on the internet? Like, what's your website and anything else you'd like to share about, you know, your presence on the web?

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:34:06] Yeah. Website is seaworthyexperiences.com. You can go there if you want to get in touch, there's a contact form. Reach out and say Hi. You can put consultations. You can buy merch. If you'd like to support our team with an offering

for our work, our Venmo is at seaworthy_experiences. On socials - kind of not really active, kind of also not trying to promote Mark Zuckerberg's Metaverse

Julie Kuchepatov [00:34:29] Right.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:34:29] in any sort of way. Working on detaching from all of that. So. Yeah. Contact us directly.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:34:36] That's awesome. So thank you so much, Crystal, for obviously coming on the show, sharing your experiences, sharing a lot of wisdom. That's, I'm sure, hard-earned right. And then being able to clearly explain things to me and to our listeners has been super helpful. And honestly, I just really appreciate you and your candidness and your observations and your knowledge, and I'm really happy that we're working together. And so I wanted to again say thank you for coming on the show, but also thank you for being the engine behind the scenes that helps run this whole ship.

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:35:08] Yeah, thank you for having me. All your work and friendship and conversation.

Julie Kuchepatov [00:35:13] Yeah. All right, we'll see you soon. Thank you for tuning in to the Conch podcast. It would be amazing if you could take just two seconds to leave a review and share this podcast with your ocean loving friends. Thank you!

Crystal Sanders-Alvarado [00:35:28] 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.