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Staying Afloat in a Dying Industry

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Staying Afloat in a Dying Industry

Reporter: Naomi Yane

Producer: Shelby Boamah

Producer: Shari Straker

Video (TBA)	Script
Naomi VO	62- year- old commercial fisherman Joe Lauro's been in the business since he was 13 working on his father's fishing boat in Sheepshead Bay. Joe's family came to America from Sorento in August of 1905.
Joe Lauro Commercial Fisherman	My dad and his family came from Italy and landed at Ellis island and they ended up in Coney Island which is only ten miles away so as they were coming in with the ship, they saw the area and they were commercial fishermen in the Mediterranean in southern Italy so they got back into the fishing business right away
Naomi VO	In 1947, the Lauro family bought Stella Maris bait and tackle shop. Stella Maris means star of the sea. It's one of two bait and tackle shops still in business on Emmons Avenue. There used to be about eight.
Joe Lauro Commercial Fisherman	Back then it was just a bigger business it seems like not as many people are interested in it. I don't know if it's because the prices have gone up for bait, tackle, line, everything, to go out on the boat is a lot more money so I think everything contributes to it and the fact that you're not allowed to keep as many fish
Naomi VO	Sheepshead Bay is home to several types of fishing including commercial and recreational. Commercial fishing is done on a larger scale with the end goal of market selling while recreational fishing is done for pleasure or sport. But according to local fishermen, increasing regulations on fishing catch is forcing fishermen into early retirement.
Joe Lauro Commercial Fisherman	They just keep choking ya and trying to make it, it's very hard to make a living with what we're allowed to catch. Me and my partner both have our own licenses so we're allowed 50 fish but we're only allowed to go out and catch 25 at a time come in tie them to the dock and then go out and catch the other 25, which is kind of silly to me no matter what business you're in conservation or commercial fishing. Its more time, more money for fuel it's not too smart.

Naomi VO	<p>Government agencies like the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration say, it's necessary to impose regulations on fishing, to avoid overfishing, which happens when the stock is depleted below a level that's not sustainable.</p> <p>Both commercial and recreational fishing are regulated by the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management plan.</p> <p>In the last ten years, regulations for both commercial and recreational fishing has moved to more science-based limits.</p>
Wynn Carney Mid- Atlantic Supervisory Enforcement Officer	<p>We have scientist. We have biologist who determine whether areas are overfished. We have fisher management councils.-And with the fishery management council, they determine whether the fishery should keep on going. What the size of them should be. What the amount should be that we take out of the ocean.</p>
Naomi VO	<p>Retired party boat captain Richard Arneman worked his way up on his father's boat from bait boy to captain. For years, Arneman tried to keep the family business afloat and ultimately said goodbye to the fishing industry last year. He now works as a plumber to make ends meet. He agrees there should be restrictions on commercial fishing instead of recreational</p>
Richard Arneman Retired Party Boat Captain	<p>They should be putting restrictions on the draggers and so on and people who fish on the pier that don't oblige by the rules. Us on our boats, we try to obey by the rules no matter how tough they are or not in our favor we obey by the rules and they're just too tight a restriction for us to really keep our boats afloat.</p>
Naomi VO	<p>By the late 19th century, the south shore of Brooklyn was a booming resort town that comprised Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach, Coney Island and Sheepshead Bay...which was destined to house a fishing industry.</p>
Ron Schweiger Brooklyn Borough Historian	<p>One of the developers who moved in Benjamin freeman was his name. And Mr. Freeman he called the area sheepshead bay because of the abundance of fish in the local waters, called the sheepshead. And the teeth of the sheepshead fish resembled the teeth of a sheep. Hence, that's how the bay and the neighborhood got its name. Most people don't know that.</p>
Naomi VO	

	<p>By the 1920's and 30's the fishing industry began to take shape as a way to make a living. The 1940's and 50's saw their first charter boats for day fishing. Today they're known as party boats, and the industry grew from there.</p>
<p>Ron Schweiger Brooklyn Borough Historian</p>	<p>You had, I would guess, between 40 and 50 for charter fishing boats. All docked along the pier along Sheepshead Bay along Emmons Avenue.</p> <p>you could go down to the water on Emmons Avenue and wait for around 4pm in the afternoon when the day long fishing trips would come in and you could buy the fish right off the boats.</p>
<p>Joe Lauro Commercial Fisherman</p>	<p>We usually used to deal directly with the restaurants themselves or the fish stores. back then each fish store had their own truck so it was nothing for them to stop here and get some fish here, get some fish in Sheepshead Bay, get some fish out of Flatbush Avenue you know.</p>
<p>Naomi VO</p>	<p>Today the chain of events is a little different for Lauro. He sells all his fish to one dealer who then sells to restaurants and fish stores</p>
<p>Joe Lauro Commercial Fisherman</p>	<p>It's just easier that way because we have to make the two trips a day instead of one and we don't have the tanks in our trucks, which we would put if we could do it, but it becomes too many hours a day so we sell to one wholesaler he buys all our fish and he delivers them to the fish stores and the restaurants.</p>
<p>Naomi Yane</p>	<p>Lauro Says that being a fisherman was once a lucrative career where you could make at least \$100,000 a year. That number has been cut in half and he blames tighter restrictions.</p> <p>Recreational fishing limits the number of species while commercial fishing limits by number of days at sea as well as number of species.</p>
<p>Naomi VO</p>	<p>US fisheries contributed just under \$208 billion in sales, a drop from 2014 of \$214 billion according to the US fisheries economics 2015 report. Fisheries jobs are also down to 12 percent.</p>
<p>Wynn Carney Mid- Atlantic Supervisory Enforcement Officer</p>	<p>There's a balance between what we can take and what we have to leave for the future. And with that it goes back into sustainability. The whole purpose of what we do is to make sure that the fisherman and the American people can get as much as they can out of the ocean, but at a level that we can make it sustainable and keep it sustainable for years to come.</p>

<p>Naomi VO</p>	<p>Bay Improvement Group President Steve Barrison said, Sheepshead Bay has seen a decrease in fishing fleets from 30- 40 boats to half a dozen boats and organizations like his work to bring attention to the waterfront and preserve the livelihood of this coastal community.</p>
<p>Steve Barrison Bay Improvement Group</p>	<p>The city of New York has turned its back on an industry worth millions of dollars that provided thousands of jobs.</p> <p>If you chip away at the fleet, which serviced a couple thousand employees and millions of dollars of revenue for the city, and instead changed the zoning and allow improper waterfront shopping which is not part of what the zoning is and what the waterfront culture is.</p>
<p>Richard Arneman Retired PartyBoat Captain</p>	<p>I'd like to see Sheepshead Bay come back and thrive again. I mean it's thriving now, we have a lot of restaurants that's pretty good if you want to bring your family out to eat but nobody comes down for the fishing boats no more...</p>