

Personal life essay sample



After moving to Maine last summer, I was looking for a summer job. I was given the opportunity to fill in as a stern man for a local lobstermen in Falmouth, Maine. I took the offer without hesitating and was very excited to experience lobster fishing first hand on the Jerry Rig II, which was the name of lobsterman Jerry's boat. Jerry and I started our first day together around 8 in the morning, he was very laid back and treated lobstering as a hobby rather than a job, not to say we wouldn't work hard. I met him in front of my apartment and we drove to the Portland harbor where he bought the bait we would use for that day.

He uses haddock, which was fileted the night before and sold, by the barrel to the local lobstermen. After we loaded the barrels of dead haddock, we were off to Falmouth to load the boat. Jerry has been lobster fishing for almost 20 years and is very passionate about lobstering. He has 800 traps in the water which is the maximum amount allowed by the State of Maine. He has accumulated this many over the years after starting with only 25 traps. He has ten traps on a string, so he has 80 strings in the water. Once arriving to the Falmouth Town Landing my real work began.

Jerry rowed out to his boat that was secured on a mooring, and I was in charge of dragging the barrels of bait down to the dock. Once the bait was loaded, we began heading out to the traps. I was told to grab the steering wheel as Jerry suited up in his rubber gear. After he was done, I was told to suit up as well. Once having the rubber coveralls, boots and gloves, it became a reality that I was to be a true stern man in Maine. We didn't waste any time and he began to teach me what my responsibilities would be. It turned out that he was putting a lot of trust in me.

My job included preparing the bait, baiting the traps, and dropping the traps safely. I began baiting the rods with two haddock for each trap. The traps were on strings of ten, so he had about 80 strings. The most common bait lobster fishermen use is haddock with has already been fileted so the head, backbone, and tail are the only parts left. Other fish is used for bait such as pogies, which is cheaper and the whole fish is used. Inside the traps are strings that the bait fish are put on, rods are put through the fish eyes and then brought through the string.

This is a very fast process and there are usually two or three haddock in each trap. Once the trap is baited they are organized along the gunwales in order to drop them back in the water safety. There are a couple different reasons why each string only has ten traps but the main reason is because the boat we used only could fit ten safety and leave space to work efficiently on the boat. After the last trap of the string is pulled Captain Jerry would position the boat where he wanted the traps redropped and then he would drop the first one and I was responsible for getting the next nine off safety.

It can be very dangerous if you are not fully aware of where the ropes are because they can easily get tangled or catch your foot. Once we were finished with our day's work, which was usually determined by when we ran out of bait, we would go to Long Island, Maine which is east of Falmouth and sell the lobsters. During the time I worked as a stern man we averaged about 150 to 200 pounds of lobsters each day, and sold them at about \$3. 75 per pound.

The ride over to Long Island took about 20 minutes, during the trip I was responsible for cleaning the boat which consisted of spraying down the boat with water, washing out the bait totes, and making sure the boat looked better than when we got into it that morning. Occasionally Jerry or I would accidentally get a rope stuck and wrapped around the propeller. When this happened I would have to swim under the boat and untangle and cut the rope from the propeller. Though it was very cold water and somewhat scary it was worth it because I was given a bonus for getting the rope dislodged.