

## HSE for Fisheries

Compilation of interviews with fishers who are not members of OHS service

Finland / Spring 2014

### I Mental well-being

What causes the biggest worries and stress in your work?

#### a. In general

- Rough weather on sea
- Paper work (the catch report has to be filed in 48 hrs)
- Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*, merimetso), Seals
- Authorities, especially concerning fishing of salmon
  - restricted catching periods, you feel you are a thief if you do some scouting catches outside the period
  - restricted total catch of salmon, you have acquired all the equipment and are then not allowed to use it
- Getting up early to be first on the best catching areas
- Envy others for their good catches

#### b. Concerning safety of work

- Rough weather on sea, especially if boating in shallow/rocky area at heavy winds
  - due to catching time restrictions you have to go out there when allowed, not when the weather conditions are suitable and safe
  - the weather reports are nowadays better than earlier – could be more precise though
- Nothing, you get used to everything. Never thought of it really.
- Sometimes you take risks like not wearing the life vest because it's uncomfortable

#### c. Concerning health and well-being

- Fatigue / sleep deprivation, you can fall asleep almost anywhere
  - during winter there is time to sleep
- Back / sciatica problems due to lifting heavy loads
- Hand joints due to handling cold water and fish & dragging nets
- You feel better if the catch is good
- One should go to health checks more often, but time is limited
- Injuries & strain from previous occupations (e.g. forresting) get worse
- You take a pain killer, wait for a moment, and go on working
- A net winch would mitigate a lot of the strain, but as a part-time fisher (andraklassfiskare ?) you hardly get any financial support to buy one. If you get support, you have to stay in the business for five (?) years, which is not obvious given the way things are nowadays.

#### d. Length of working day

- The length of the day varies a lot depending on season. Even 48 hours is not uncommon.

- Getting onto fishing site very early in the morning is common practice. Depending on site, fishing gear and catch, return to landing may happen even before noon.

## II Physical wellbeing

Your own safety

a. What are the biggest safety risks in the fishing trade?

- to fall into the sea
- bad weather, ground hits, engine failures (which often follow each other in this order)
  - it is very important to service the engine
- the most important thing is to stay alert despite fatigue to avoid problems
- in case of an engine failure, the boat is too heavy to row to a harbour
- to slip and fall into the sea, no other risks if you are careful
- in winter, when you go out on the sea ice, you just trust them to bear your weight

b. What are the biggest safety risks onboard?

- slipperiness
- to fall - into the sea or onto structures on lower parts of the vessel
- to get squeezed between (winches, other load handling?)
- engine failure
- to hit your head onto something sharp due to the ship's movements
  - you have to be careful and not have ropes and stuff lying around the deck and gangways
- you can not wear the life vest because it is stiff and hampers your movements
  - => falling into the sea without a life vest
- sometimes you just have to leave the nets in the water if weathers get rough and you're fishing in shallow water, because it is not safe to collect them
- (to fall through ice during winter fishing)

c. What are the biggest safety risks in the harbour or harbour area?

- slipperiness on the quay during fall/winter (ice)
  - also during boarding and leaving the ship
- sprains due to lifting heavy loads
- get crushed between the quay and the ship
- if the harbour lights are out when you arrive at the quay

d. What are, according to you, the biggest long term health risks in fishing trade?

- tennis elbow due to fish handling
- shoulder and arm injuries & pain from lifting heavy loads
- back problems
- "I have heard, you can even get rheuma if you work in cold weather without gloves"
- aching back and joints when out on the sea
- irritation on knee joints due to constant standing and movements of the boat
- asthma due to handling and cleaning equipment in a closed garage?
  - fine dust from sea flora debris & other stuff

- maybe some other exposures from new equipment (PAH?)
- economic pressures
  - profitability of the fishing business is very low, there is no future
- more and more control of fishing
  - there may soon be no fish to control...
- no health risks
- heart problems due to irregular sleeping hours and sleep deprivation
  - this has always been the problem in trawling
  - "I remember I once only slept 11 hours during a whole week. I fell asleep while driving a tractor and eating a banana"
- joint wear and aches

### III OHS Services

OHS services include health checks, working place visits, and training to mitigate work related injuries and diseases.

a. Are OHS services available in your area?

- a private health center is available
- don't know of such a thing, I go to the ordinary health care center
- yes, but I am now retired, so I can't use it anymore
- don't know
- someone once mentioned something about these
- no, only private
- I have to take care of myself, do not know of any OHS services
- you have to get a doctor's certificate if you have a boat that is big enough
- you go to the municipal health care center if you need to
- Yes, but I am not a member of the OHS system. I guess you have to pay for it. I prefer the municipal health care.

b. Have you used this kind of services, how did you like them?

- Training
  - Sea safety course in Turku, arranged by the Fishers' association. It was mandatory.
- Health checks
  - some maybe
- Experiences
  - yes, it works well, but I have not had too much use for it
  - no, not as a fisher
- No, No, No, No, No...

c. Are you aware of the benefits you can get by joining the OHS services?

- Do not know of such a service
- Vet inte av någon sådan..
- No, No, No, No, No...
- Only, that you pay something and then you probably get something for the money. But that you can get also by paying and going to a local private health care service.



## IV Occupational safety training

### a. What training have you had?

- Sea safety course ( use of safety flares and rockets, life saving = how to fish up a person from the water)
- Red Cross First Aid courses IA and IIA
- I have not heard of any training
- I there were more people onboard, the First Aid course would maybe be feasible
  - Else, you can save the courses for younger fishers
- I have not taken any courses
- Hygiene certificate
- Some course to get certified to get compensation for seal induced damages
- Safety risk course which included RC IA, satellite navigation, entrepreneurship and use of computers in fishing
- engine technology
- Fire course
- Some safety has been discussed at some meeting

### b. Who organized the courses?

- The fishers' Association
- Red Cross
- The Swedish Vocational Institute (Vasa Yrkesinstitut)
- Fiskarförbundet

### c. Length of the course

- one week
- three evenings
- two whole days (majority of courses had this length)
- 2-3 days

### d. When did you attend to the course

- sometimes in the 90's
- around 2002,2003
- can't remember
- 2005
- the latest First Aid course for about four years ago

### e. How often have you participated to a course?

- Summary: Only a few courses a lengthy time ago, maybe clustered around a few years.

f. Do you get information concerning occupational safety from some other source than the courses?

- Mostly "No" answers here
- The Farmers' Social Insurance Institution, though this is more like health care
- Newspapers, fairs, news

g. Do you think training has been useful to you?

- One could probably participate
- If you needed some courses, they probably had been useful, but I have managed without
- You learn the most part by yourself
- Yes
- It does probably not hurt you to participate, you can always learn something.

## V OHS use: Your experiences and development ideas

- No. No. No, difficult question. No. No. No. No. No. No. No, don't know what it is all about.

## VI The HSE for Fisheries project

**In this project we aim to develop OHS services for fishers**

a. Do you have suggestions on how to develop it?

- I have not needed any OHS services yet.
- As a fisher, you have the Mela (Farmers' Social Insurance Institution) insurance. Afterwards, when you're retired, you have to have a private insurance, but both work well.
- No need for OHS services
- No. No, don't know.
- Never been there
- Maybe I should consider if I needed OHS services. You need to take the time to get there.
- The OHS services are close by (2 km), so there's no point in OHS when you have the municipal/public services.

b. What kind of service would you benefit from, so you could stay healthy and avoid injuries?

- You just need to keep yourself going.
- Don't know.
- I would need a trainee/apprentice who could give me a hand with heavy work tasks. Or a winch.
- I have back problems, so it would be good to have access to a chiropractor or physiotherapist.
- If someone called me to get a health check e.g. once a year automatically, that would be good.
- Don't know. I use the ordinary health care services if I needed any.
- Work that involves heavy lifts should be reformed, need access to lifting equipment and fork lifts.

## VII How do you like the idea of

a. A safety check on your boat by an OHS nurse, physician, and/or physiotherapist, who would make suggestions on how to enhance safety on board?

- No need, because she/he wouldn't know how to make things better onboard.
- There are no risks in small boats. And if there are, there's hardly anything you can do about it.
- Maybe a physiotherapist for the tennis elbow.
- Don't think it would work.
- It should be someone outside the health services, someone who knows and can see risks. On the other hand, one sees the risks himself and it's most often a matter of spending money if you want to do something about them.
- Not necessary. Nothing to make better. One has what is required.
- The inspection done by the Finnish Transport Agency is enough.
- A safety check is not needed
- It is not a good idea to introduce an outsider who tells the fisher what to do. It probably only leads to more restrictions and costs.

b. taking a health check?

- This is something you do anyway at some point. But maybe some regularity would be good.
- He visits a private physician anyway for a certain condition, so not needed.
- If one is sick, he gets and receives help. How could there be resources for something on top of that?