# Occupational Stressors Identified by North Carolina Commercial Crab Pot Fishermen

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*Purpose:*
This work builds upon previous research conducted with commercial fishermen that identified four high-risk crab pot fishing tasks for intervention. We interviewed fishermen to identify jobs and/or tasks of concern in order to guide and inform current ergonomic interventions.

*Methodology:*
We administered surveys to two groups of southeastern US commercial crab fishermen: a prospective cohort contacted by telephone and fishermen recruited at 11 local fish houses. Fishermen were asked to rate physical stress of selected work tasks and conditions on a scale from 0 (no problem) to 10 (major problem). Fishermen were also asked open-ended questions about other work-issues of concern.

*Results:*
Fishermen who completed the survey (n=92) were predominantly male (90%), white (96%), with a mean age of 50.1 years (range 19 to 73). The five most physically strenuous tasks and conditions as rated by fishermen were pulling pots by hand (mean 6.4), rough weather (6.1) or rough water (6.2), unloading without mechanical assistance (5.8), and long work days (5.3). Task stress ratings with the most variability measured by the inter-quartile range (IQR) included: pulling pots by hand (IQR=5), unloading without mechanical assistance (IQR=5), gear maintenance (IQR=4.5), and moving boxes and baskets on board (IQR=4.5). Other situations that fishermen identified as a problem included: economic, off-shore work, declining industry, mental stress, environment, regulation, conflict with other commercial or recreational fishermen, issues with crew, sun (glare or burn), and breaking up frozen bait.

*Conclusions/Recommendations:*
In general, stressful tasks identified from previous research were rated similarly by the fishermen surveyed.

Keywords: intervention, musculoskeletal stress, injury

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