

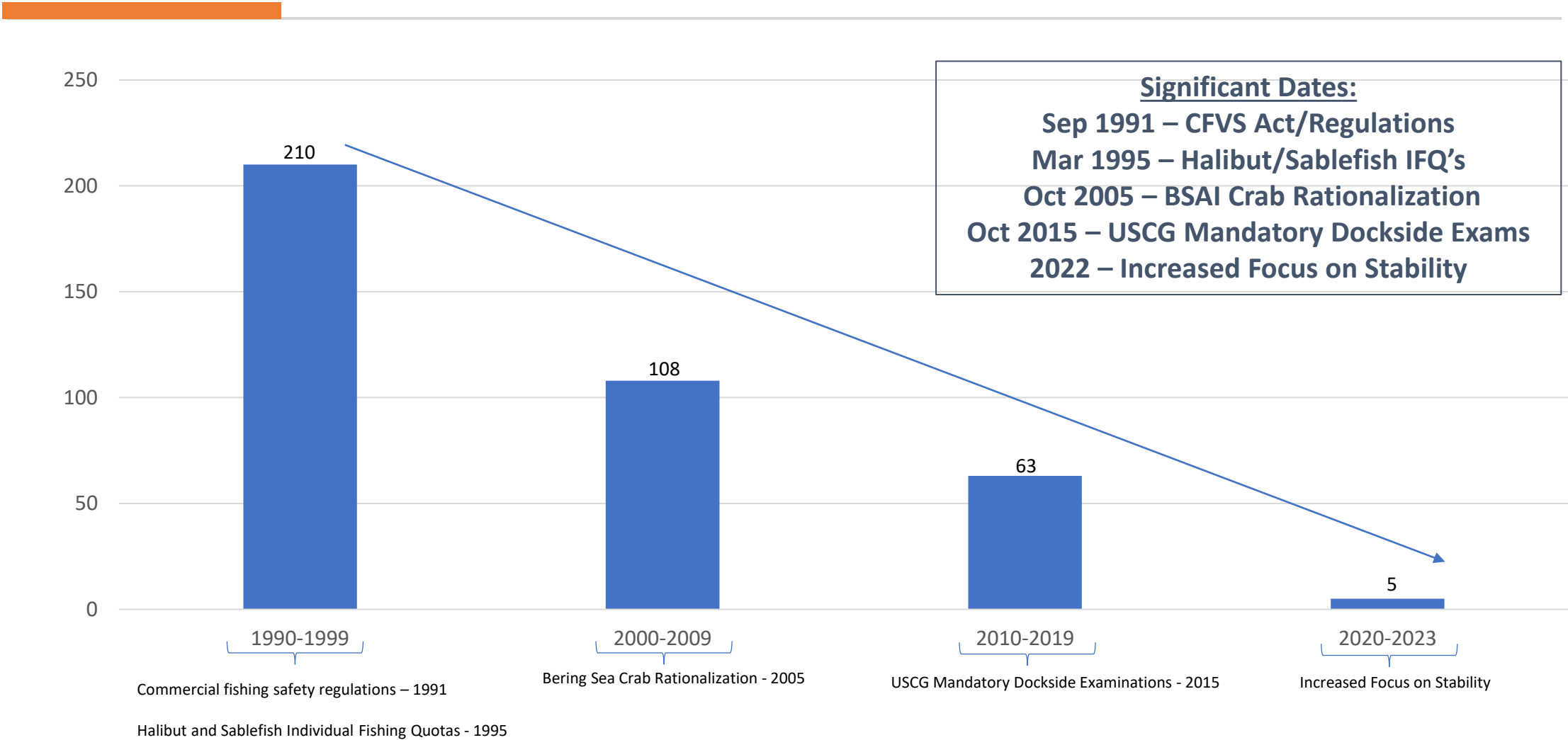


Strategies for Fatality Reduction in Commercial Fishing in Alaska

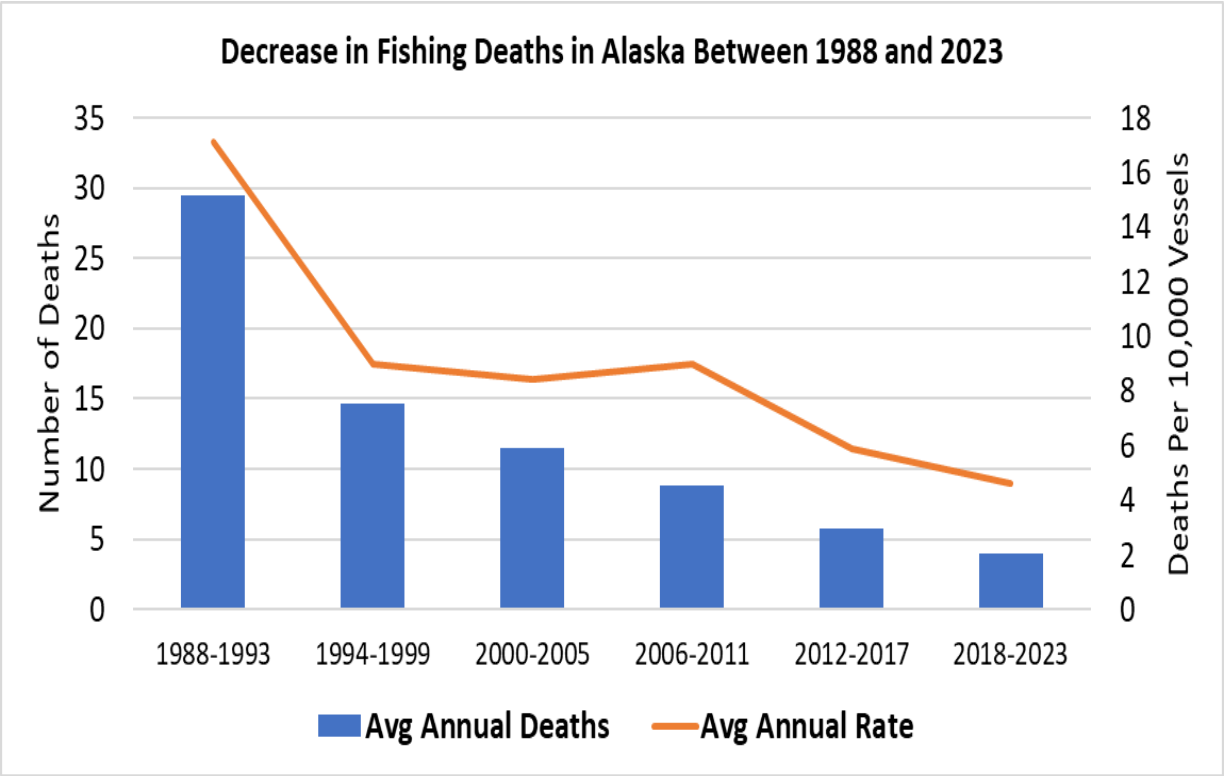
Mr. Scott Wilwert
United States Coast Guard
Commercial Fishing Safety Program Manager
17th Coast Guard District
Juneau, Alaska



OPERATIONAL FATALITIES IN ALASKA BY DECADE 1990-2023



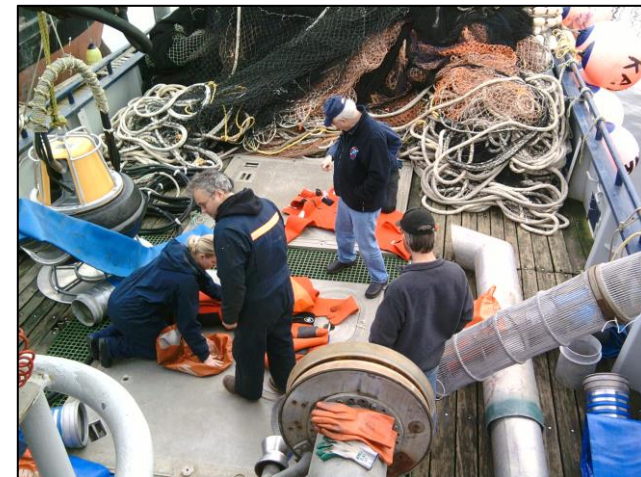
OPERATIONAL FATALITY RATE PER 10,000 VESSELS



6-Years	Avg Vsl	Avg Annual Deaths	Avg Annual Rate
1988-1993	17231	29.5	17.1
1994-1999	16363	14.7	9
2000-2005	13958	11.5	8.4
2006-2011	9868	8.8	9
2012-2017	9803	5.8	5.9
2018-2023	8482	4	4.6

REGULATION

- Establishes the minimum required safety equipment
- Can be a slow process
- Is often met with opposition
- Needs advocates from industry
- May come as a result of casualty investigations /safety recommendations
- “Keep banging the drum!”



RATIONALIZATION

- Creates a safer approach to fishing/safer loading
- To some extent, allows industry to make decisions on when to go and when not to go
- May be driven by economics, controlling fleet sizes or purely based on species management
- Regardless, it appears to have had a positive effect on safety



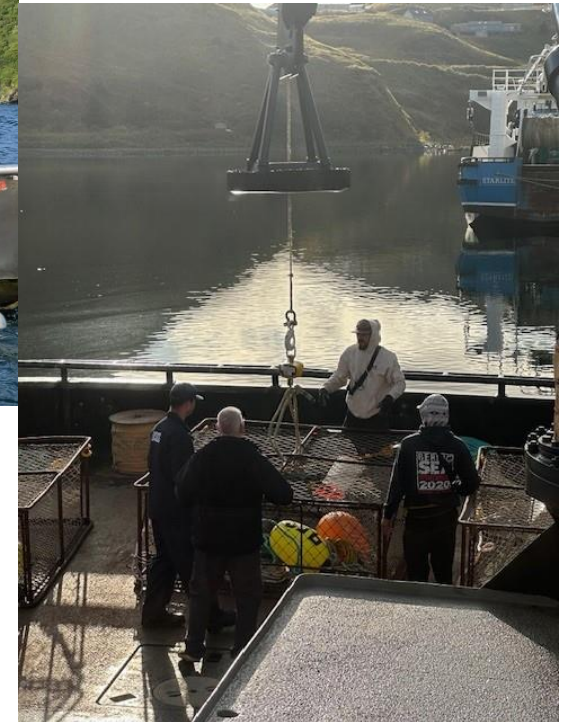
COLLABORATION

- “Can we talk?”
- Opens important lines of communication
 - Industry > Government
 - Government > Government
 - Industry > Industry
- “Agreement” based programs with industry input
- Outreach, advisory committees, public meetings and trade shows



INNOVATION

- Leveraging technologies
 - EPIRBS, AIS, Satellite communications, survival equipment
- Creative exemptions and alternatives to existing regulations
 - Alternative Compliance Programs
 - Stability and gear weighing initiatives
 - Personal locator beacons, personal flotation devices



TRAINING

- “Drills, Drills, Drills”
- Practice and muscle memory have been proven to positively impact survivability during incidents
- “ All the equipment in the world won’t help you if you don’t know how to use it or are unfamiliar with it!!”



Why Training.....

Fishing Vessel MASONIC: Was examined by the Coast Guard with several deficiencies noted (AIS, Bilge Alarms, Suit Zippers, Drills, etc). A follow up exam was conducted, and all deficiencies found to be corrected along with safety orientation and drills conducted.

A few days later, the vessel ran aground at 0200 hrs. Crew of 5 donned immersion suits and abandoned ship into the vessel's life raft.

Coast Guard Helicopter located vessel with only their AIS Signal. All were hoisted and returned safely to Sitka with no injuries sustained.



CONCLUSIONS

Commercial fishing will likely continue to be considered one of the most dangerous occupations on the planet due in part to the nature of the equipment, weather and platforms on which fishermen work.

Though it may be impossible to remove all the risk in this occupation, it has been and continues to be possible to lessen it through:

Regulation and creative alternatives to regulation when necessary;

Collaborating with industry, government and fishery management;

Embracing technologies and,

Understanding how fishermen perceive risk, acknowledging their feedback and experience while working together to achieve a safer industry.

Thank You!

Questions?