

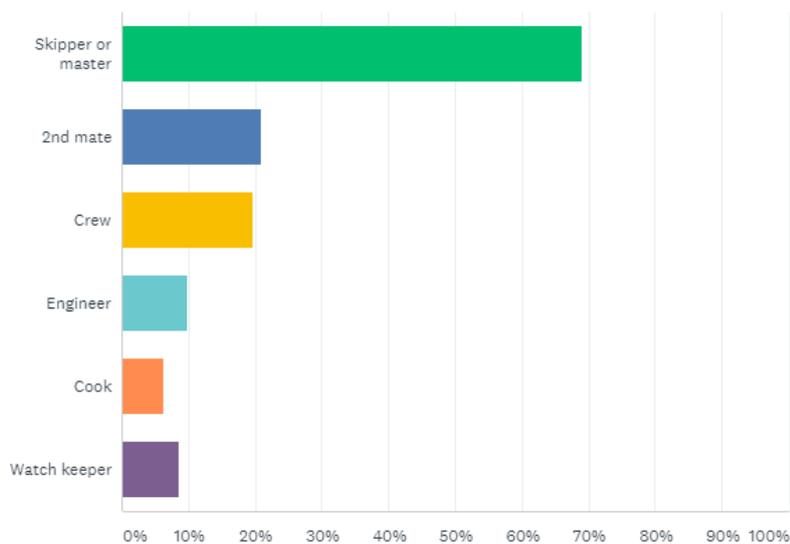
FATIGUE IN COMMERCIAL FISHING

2018 survey results

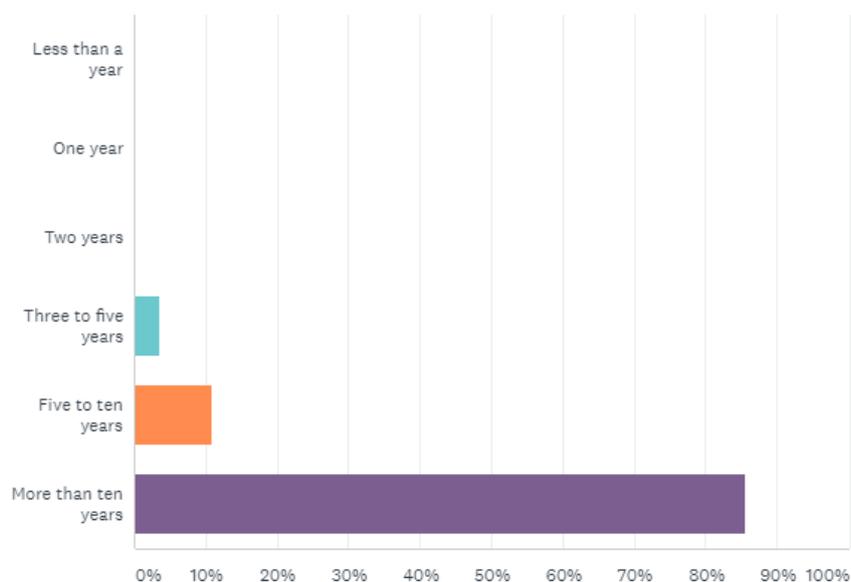
In January 2018 we surveyed people who hold fishing-related certificates. We asked them their thoughts on fatigue – their understanding, their experiences, and the steps they're taking to minimise it.

Most of the 318 respondents are skippers, and 82% have been working in the industry for more than 10 years, suggesting this group has the greatest concerns about fatigue.

Who are the respondents?



Length of time spent in the fishing industry



Our focus – commercial fishermen who spend more than a day at sea

To gain insight into the awareness, understanding and prevalence of fatigue in the fishing industry, we focused our analysis on the 83 commercial fishermen who reportedly spend more than a day at sea at a time.

“It is rife and a real problem.”

The problem with fatigue

Fatigue is a common problem for those spending long periods at sea. All the fishermen we analysed are aware of fatigue’s potential danger, with most having experienced some of the warning signs.

Over all, the respondents agree that fatigue is ‘somewhat of’ a problem (5.5 on a scale of 0-10), with one respondent saying: “Fatigue is not a dirty word, but a human condition that does not reflect weakness or lack of commitment. It’s a medical condition. Fatigue can be deadly”.

Yet, worryingly, almost 40% claim to not have received any training on how to combat fatigue. This is despite having learned about safety either at maritime school or on the job.

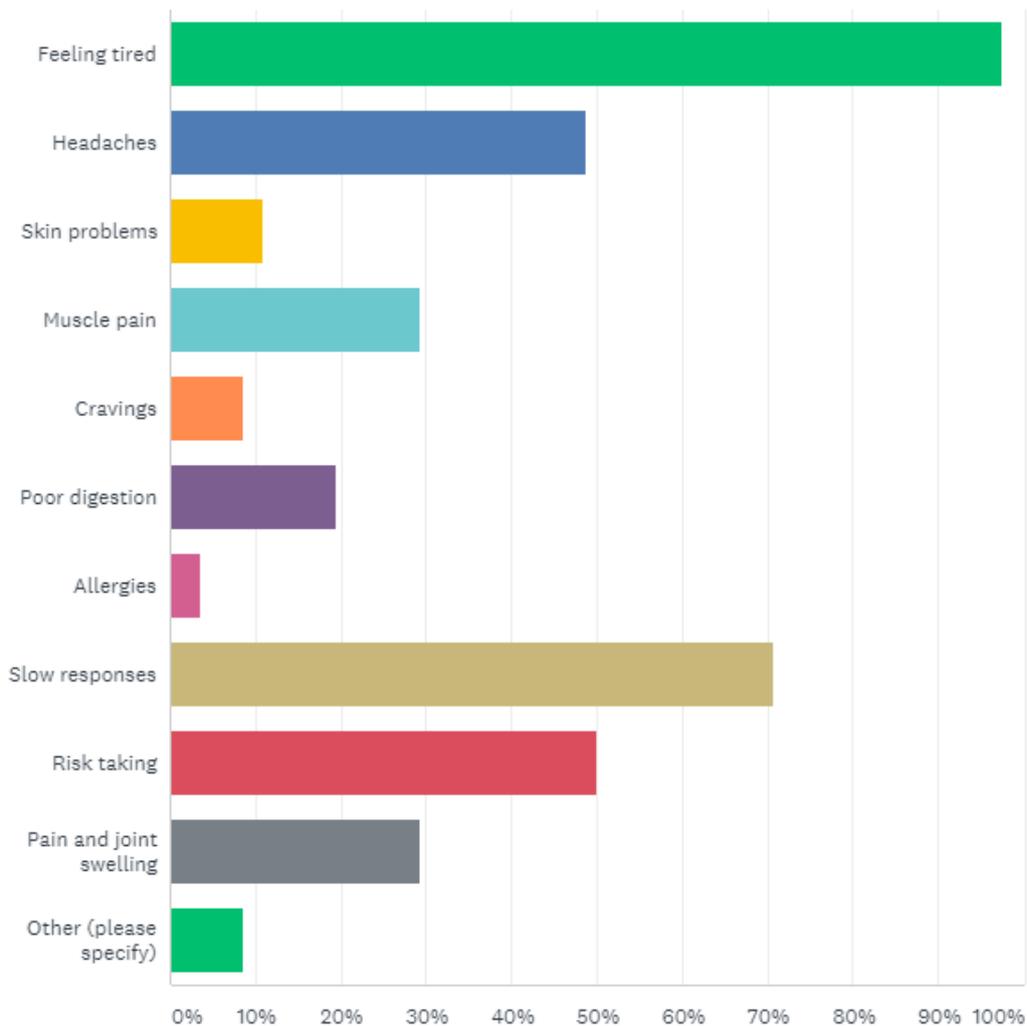
“Owner operators never get a proper break and become mentally tired, which can lead to depression and poor seamanship.”

Understanding the warning signs

Fatigue shows itself in a number of ways. 'Feeling tiredness' is the most widely recognised, with 96% of respondents identifying it as a warning sign. This is followed by 'slow responses' (72%) and 'risk taking' (50%).

Some of the lesser known warning signs include 'skin problems', 'cravings' and 'allergies', which are only recognised by 10%, 8% and 4% of the respondents respectively.

Signs of fatigue

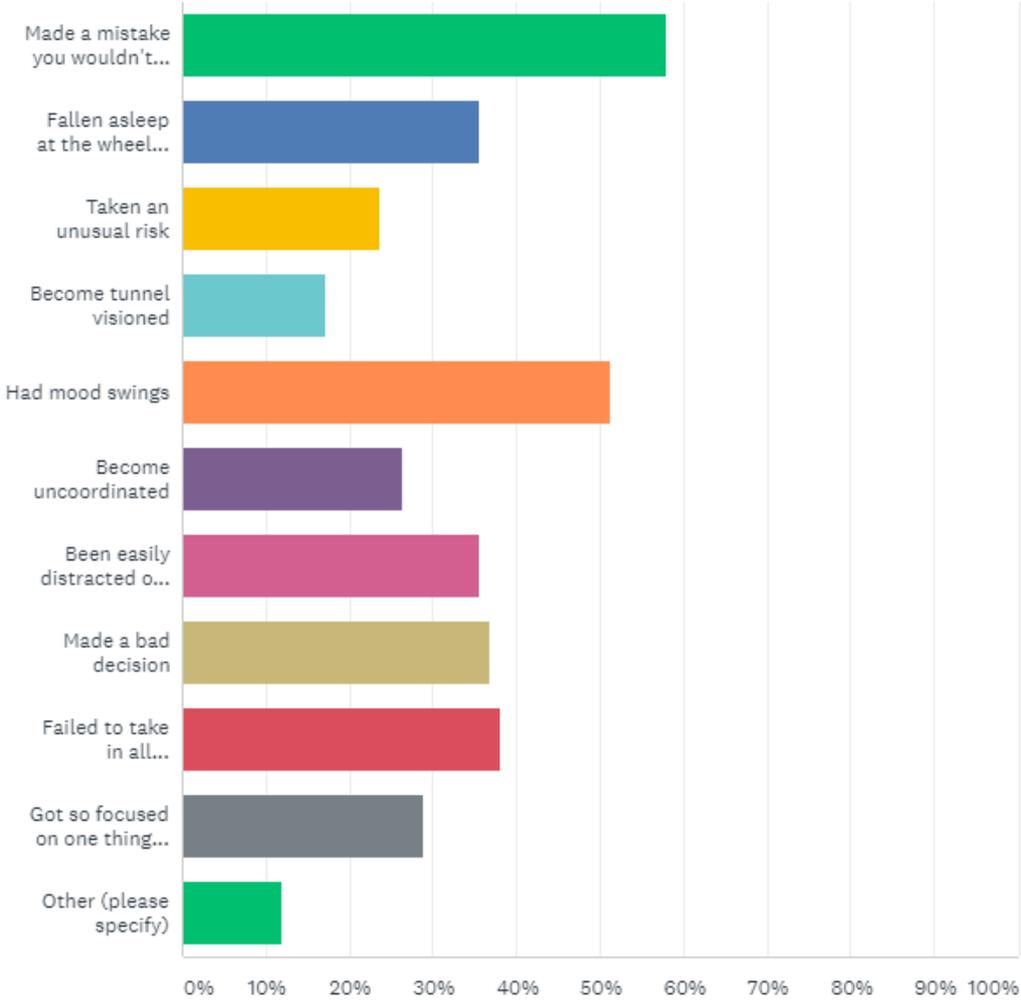


The impact of fatigue

More than half of the respondents (52%) experience mood swings as a result of fatigue, with even more (56%) admitting they'd made mistakes on the job when fatigued. Then there are those who fell asleep at the wheel (34%), made a bad decision (42%), and were easily distracted or unable to concentrate (39%) – all because of fatigue.

One respondent says: “Falling asleep I see as the main problem. A live fisherman always does better than a dead one!”

Fatigue experiences



In fact 70-80% of maritime accidents are thought to be a result of human error, and our survey results emphasise the role fatigue plays in causing such errors. Falling asleep, taking risks, making mistakes or bad decisions – any one of these side-effects has the potential to cause a serious, if not fatal, accident.

“Fatigue is a killer and it will catch you out.”

Managing fatigue

With only 40% of respondents reporting that they have a sleep roster on their vessel, despite many of them travelling for days at a time, it’s clear that much more can be done to manage fatigue.

A number of respondents say they have some measures in place. Some manage fatigue on the job, while others take preventative steps before sailing. Here are a few of the steps they're taking:

On the job

- ensuring two people are on the bridge, or using a watch alarm
- following a sleep roster and watch-keeping timetable
- taking power naps
- monitoring themselves for warning signs.

“Keep an eye on your mates and notify any risky behaviour.”

Before sailing

- getting adequate sleep
- eating and drinking well, and avoiding alcohol
- developing a fatigue and/or time management plan
- carefully planning trips
- employing enough staff to ensure everyone gets a break
- keeping the vessel well maintained.

“Refreshed crew are more efficient and more safety conscious.”

Survey sample

- We emailed a Survey Monkey questionnaire to 1,565 people who hold fishing-related certificates.
- From the 318 responses, 138 are currently working as commercial fishermen.
- We focused on the 83 commercial fishermen who reportedly spend more than a day at a time at sea.
- Our margin of error is 10% (at most), at the 90% level of confidence.

FATIGUE FACTS

Based on our study:

- **the average length of a sleep period is less than 6 hours**
- **the longest time spent awake on a single trip is 20 hours**
- **less than half of vessels have a sleep roster (even though they're travelling for several days at a time).**