

Port Walk #19



Danger at Sea

Fishing is one of the most dangerous jobs in America. Fishermen battle enormous waves, howling winds, blinding fog, and massive freighters to bring in their catch. Many have been lost at sea.



Capsized

A sudden change in wind and wave conditions can prove deadly for fishing vessels top heavy with crab pots or a deck load of fish. The fishermen in this photo were lucky. Their capsized vessel stayed afloat long enough for them to be rescued by the Coast Guard. Many capsized vessels go straight to the bottom, taking their crews with them.



Cold Water Can Kill

Although most fishing boats carry the latest safety and navigation equipment, accidents still happen. When a boat is in danger of sinking, crew members put on survival suits. The one-size-fits-all suit guards against sub-50° waters. Without such protection, crew members could die within minutes.



Michael Koepf, Fisherman

“The Farallon Islands were killers of ships, rocky sentinels set in foggy sea twenty-five miles west-southwest of the Golden Gate... Here, reef, rock, and pinnacle lurked. Everywhere, the chart was marked with the symbols of wrecks: a single line crossed three times by shorter strokes.”

- From *The Fisherman's Son*, 1998