



Photo: Fishing net wrapped around. © Malik Naumann / Marine Photobank

## THE BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF FISHING GEAR

**Abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG)** is a major source of marine litter. It has numerous impacts, including the continued catching of target and non-target species (so called ‘ghost fishing’), entanglement of marine wildlife, physical impacts with the seabed and its communities, as well as being a hazard to shipping and navigation.

There are multiple reasons why fishing gear is lost, abandoned or discarded. The Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) has developed this framework to enable and encourage stakeholders throughout the seafood supply chain – from gear manufacturers to fishermen, regulatory authorities and seafood businesses – to reduce both the cause and impact of ALDFG through better management practices and processes.

## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Fishing gear is valuable, but in certain circumstances can be lost or abandoned, such as in bad weather or through equipment malfunction. Fishing gear can also be deliberately discarded, especially when being used in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fisheries. ALDFG can then go on to cause considerable death, damage, economic losses and suffering before it become inactive or is, on rare occasions, recovered.

## WHAT IS THE BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF FISHING GEAR?

Most fishermen do not want to lose their fishing gear, and few intentionally dispose of it in the ocean. This said, there are a number of ways to reduce gear loss or having to abandon fishing gear in the first place, and to lessen the impacts of ALDFG once gear has gone. This framework provides a holistic combination of principles for best practise, considered and targeted best management practices and case studies to build awareness and enable practitioners to reduce the incidence of ghost fishing worldwide.

## WHO IS IT AIMED AT?

It is not just fishermen who can influence gear loss – gear manufacturers, fishing organizations, fisheries managers and regulators, port operators, researchers, seafood businesses and NGOs all have a role to play in preventing fishing gear being lost and reducing its subsequent impact on the marine environment.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

It is critical that greater dialogue and cooperation between players in the fishing industry and the rest of the seafood catching and post-harvest supply chain, including those government bodies overseeing the fishing sector, work together to determine why fishing gear is lost and what can be done to prevent and mitigate this problem. This effort will need to be at multiple levels, from local, small-scale fisheries to regional fisheries management organizations.

## BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

Join the Global Ghost Gear Initiative - a cross-sectional alliance committed to driving solutions to the problem of lost and abandoned fishing gear worldwide. The GGGI aims to improve the health of marine ecosystems, protect marine animals and safeguard human health and livelihoods.

Email our team for more: [gggi@worldanimalprotection.org](mailto:gggi@worldanimalprotection.org)  
[ghostgear.org](http://ghostgear.org) @GGGInitiative



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## FURTHER READING

Brown, J., G. Macfadyen, T. Huntington, J. Magnus and J. Tumilty (2005). **Ghost Fishing by Lost Fishing Gear**. Final Report to DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs of the European Commission. Fish/2004/20. Institute for European Environmental Policy / Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Ltd joint report

FAO (2016). **Report of the Expert consultation on the Marking of Fishing Gear**, Rome, Italy, 4–7 April 2016. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1157. Rome, Italy

Gilman, E. (2015). **Status of international monitoring and management of abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear and ghost fishing**. Marine Policy 60 (2015) 225–239

Macfadyen, G., T. Huntington and R. Cappell (2009). **Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear**. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies, No. 185; FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper, No. 523. Rome, UNEP/FAO. 2009. 115p.