

BE A GOOD STEWARD:

Help Reduce the Adverse Impacts of Derelict Fishing Gear

Economic Loss

Economic consequences of derelict fishing gear include:

- **Ghostfishing** - Derelict fishing gear continues to fish after it is lost reducing the amount of fish available for commercial catch.
- **Safety at Sea** - Derelict gear can become entangled on boat shafts and propellers reducing fishing time and poses a threat to craft and life.
- **Loss of Gear** - Fouling by derelict gear can facilitate the loss of additional gear and damage set or working gear.

Environmental Impacts

Healthy sustainable fisheries need healthy marine environments. Environmental issues related to derelict fishing gear are:

- **Habitat Destruction** - Derelict fishing gear damages essential habitat, such as coral reefs, for commercially important species.
- **Animal Entanglement** - Derelict fishing gear can entangle threatened or protected species causing injury and/or death.
- **Spread of Non-Native Species** - Derelict fishing gear can transport potentially harmful alien species from one place to another as it drifts with ocean currents.



Derelict net found off the coast of Florida. The net contained hundreds of sharks, barracudas and one sea turtle. Picture: NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office.



Crab caught in derelict monofilament fishing line. Picture: Northwest Straights Commission



In 2002, South Korean divers removed over 390 pieces of derelict fishing gear and related fishing debris from the waters around S. Korea. Picture: The Ocean Conservancy



Hawaiian Monk Seal caught in derelict fishing gear in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Picture: NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE THE ADVERSE IMPACTS OF DERELICT FISHING GEAR:

- Contain or securely store net pieces, waste line, old ropes and other trash related to fishing activities (such as plastic salt bags, gloves, and packing bands) for disposal on land.
- Retrieve derelict fishing gear when possible and dispose of it properly.
- Dispose of obsolete gear (and all other non-biodegradable waste) properly.
- *Inform others about the issue and set an example to foster good environmental stewardship throughout the fishing community.*