

UK fishing gear strategy and targets required to reduce waste and environmental impact

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WHALE AND
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CONSERVATION



ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Marine Debris Workshop, OGrove, Spain, 15th April 2023

Waste fishing gear - types

EOL	ALDFG
Old or broken gear	Abandoned or lost at sea
Removed from operations because of wear and tear	Keeps on fishing both target and non-target species ('Ghost fishing')
Relatively clean, could be recycled	Entangles and kills marine animals
Often piled in harbours, due to lack of waste management plans	Damages coral reefs and the seabed through smothering & abbrasion
Ends up in landfill or incineration	Supports spread of invasive alien species
	Safety hazard for shipping and maritime activities
	Economic threat to fishers
	Eyesore on beaches
	Clean-up costs



Waste fishing gear - numbers

- 5.7% of all fishing nets, 8.6% of all traps, and 29% of all lines are lost around the world/year (Richardson et al. 2019)
- 11,000 tonnes/year abandoned or lost
 - ➔ 1/3 of marine litter found in European seas (EC 2018)
 - ➔ ~27% of beach litter in Europe (EC 2018)
- 60,000 tonnes of fishing gear in use across the UK of which an estimated 4,500 tonnes become waste annually (Chambers et al. 2021)



- Richardson, K., Hardesty, B.D., Wilcox, C., 2019. Estimates of fishing gear loss rates at a global scale: A literature review and meta-analysis. Fish Fish. 20, 1218–1231. <https://doi.org/10.1111/faf.12407>
- EC, 2018. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018SC0254>
- Chambers, K., Jarvis, F., Powell, K., 2021. Policy Options for Fishing and Aquaculture Gear in the UK Phase 1: Gear Inventory. ResourceFutures.

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Waste fishing gear – what is it made of?

- Majority of nets manufactured from **six** main polymer types: PA (Nylon), PES, PE, PP, aramid & HDPE
 - ➔ up to **700** different combinations of these polymers and other materials in fishing nets
- Difficult to recycle, because of diversity of materials used in fishing gear and potential contamination



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The UK situation - recycling



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The UK situation - recycling

Name	Country	Gear	Polymer type	Process	More Info
Aquafil	Italy (factories in Slovenia)	EOL	PA6 (Nylon)	Chemical	produce ECONYL® yarn (50% pre-consumer and 50% post-consumer PA)
Plastix Global	Denmark	EOL	PE, PP	Mechanical	produce OceanIX HDPE (monofilament line)
Nofir AS	Norway (factories in Turkey & Lithuania)	EOL	PE, PP, Lobster traps		
Odyssey Innovation	England, UK	EOL, ALDFG	N/A	Mechanical	Ships some gear to Aquafil and Plastix
Milspeed	UK	EOL, ALDFG	Trawl nets only (HDPE, PP, Nylon)	Mechanical	Produce plastic pellets
MyGroup	UK	EOL, ALDFG	Any	Mechanical	Produce plastic boards
Small businesses	UK	EOL, ALDFG	N/A		Repurpose ropes/nets to make doormats/dog toys etc. or plant pots/garden furniture from pellets supplied by the above companies

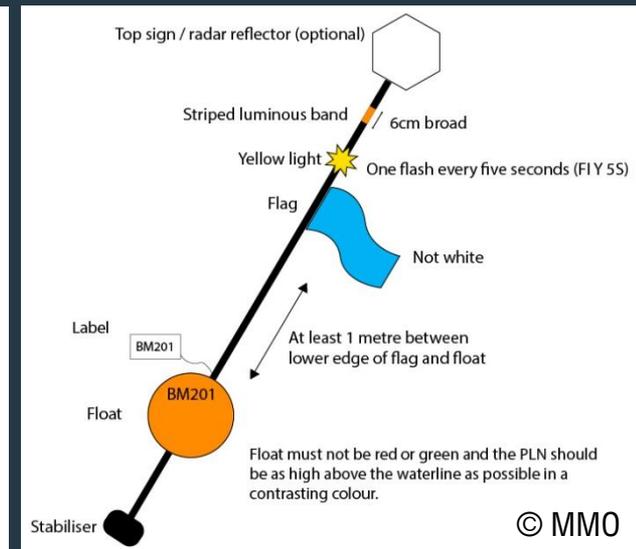
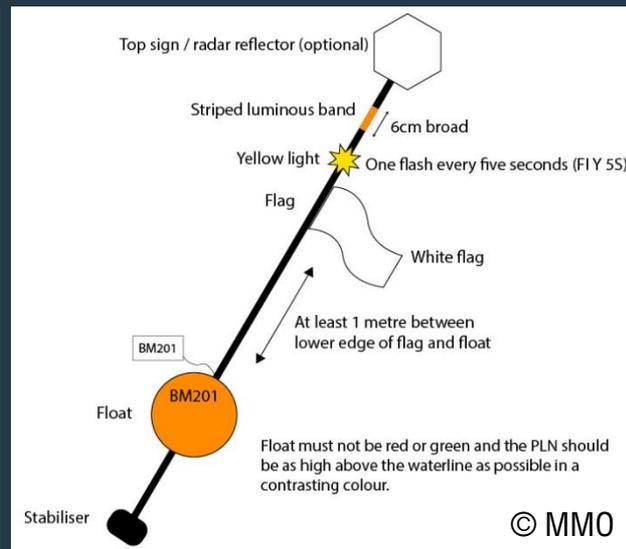
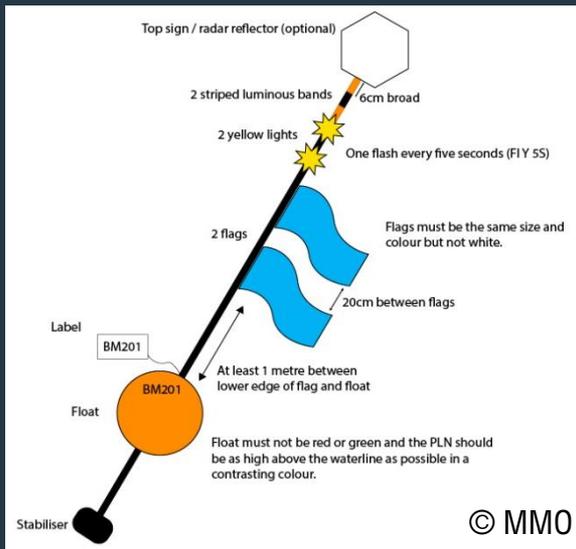
The UK situation - legislation

- MARPOL convention → prohibits discharges of waste, requires adequate port waste reception facilities
- “The PRF Directive”, Directive (EU) 2019/883
 - indirect fee, separate collection, waste reception and handling plans
- “The Single Use Plastic Directive”, Directive (EU) 2019/904
 - EPR schemes
 - Awareness
 - harmonised standards for circular design of fishing gear
- OSPAR → “to substantially reduce marine litter in the OSPAR maritime area to levels where properties and quantities do not cause harm to the marine environment” → Fishing for Litter



The UK situation – legislation cont.

- EU Control Regulation 2009/1224 and the Implementation Regulation 2011/404 make marking of fishing gear mandatory (still valid after Brexit)
- Guidance of how/where to mark from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
- Marking of gear for visibility and to alert other sea users to the presence of nets, rather than to trace the net back to the owner



Conclusions and Recommendations

- Minimum collection targets by 2025 and 2030 with a separate reuse/recycling target
- A comprehensive strategy to effectively tackle EOL and ALDFG gear is needed:
 - Engage and lead in international negotiations to develop robust binding measure on ALDFG at IMO and as part of the plastics treaty negotiations
 - Best practice guidelines for and engagement of fishers
 - Implement effective gear marking, incentivise reporting, recovery and responsible disposal
 - Remove legal, financial or practical barriers to and provide incentives for returning ALDFG and EOL gear to shore for appropriate disposal/recycling
 - Provide appropriate waste management provisions at ports/harbours
 - Gear specific design modifications

Conclusions and Recommendations – cont.

- Targeted ALDFG removal activities
- Fishing for Litter initiatives in all UK ports/harbours
- Support those that collect and bring ALDFG to shore
- Appropriate management of fishing activities in high loss areas
- Local recycling companies to reduce transport costs and environmental impact
- Evaluate feasibility of EPR, recycling and other waste management options
- Mandate reporting of products placed on market, and data on the collection and treatment of waste
- Understand current waste management costs to fishers

Thank you!

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