Driving Solutions to the Problem of Lost and Abandoned Fishing Gear Worldwide
‘Ghost gear’ is the common name for abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG).

Being purposely designed to capture aquatic life, “ghost gear” is the most harmful form of marine debris.

Much of it is made of modern plastics that can last up to 600 years in the ocean, continuing to capture and kill marine life and fish stocks, and damage the marine environment for much of its lifespan.

In 2009, UNEP & FAO estimated ~10% of marine debris is fishing gear.

More recent studies suggest that fishing gear could make up 46%-70% of the floating macroplastic in the ocean gyres by weight.

An estimated 5-30% of global harvestable fish stocks (depending on fishery / geography) are killed by ghost gear every year, which is a major threat to global food security, coastal communities, and fisher livelihoods.

Photo: GGGI - Shin Arunrugstichai
## Impacts of Ghost Gear

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Impacts of ALDFG</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mortality of harvestable aquatic species, vulnerable marine animals and birds via entanglement and ingestion.</td>
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<td>Habitat and benthic damage from nets and heavy structures e.g. on coral reefs.</td>
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<td>Social impact of fishing debris (e.g. recreational value of coastal waters) and impact on social license to operate.</td>
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<td>Potential vector for aquatic alien species (i.e. transport of nonindigenous species across ecological barriers).</td>
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<td>Navigation hazards including fouling and entanglement of propellers and rudders.</td>
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<td>Contribution to aquatic microplastics: lost plastic items, nets, ropes, etc. will abrade over time, contributing to micro- and nano-plastics.</td>
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Effects on Marine Wildlife
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What Causes Ghost Gear?

**DIRECT CAUSES**

- Adverse weather conditions or strong currents
- Marine traffic (shipping, transport, recreation) unintentionally running over deployed gear
- Spatial pressures – resulting in gear conflict & resulting in vessel conflicts with gear
- Malfunctioning of tracking systems
- Snagging on submerged features or damage by marine organisms
- Improper gear design or upkeep with repairs
- Improper fishing methods
- Intentional discard – often linked with illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

**INDIRECT CAUSES**

- Lack of disposal facilities
- Inaccessible disposal facilities
- Expensive disposal facilities

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Photo: GGGI - Joel Baziuk
Aims:
• To improve the health of aquatic ecosystems;
• To protect aquatic life from harm;
• To safeguard human health and livelihoods.

Approach:
• Preventing gear from becoming lost by promoting best management practices
• Mitigating the impacts of gear that does get lost
• Remediating the effects of lost gear via targeted removal efforts

Housed under host organization Ocean Conservancy, the Global Ghost Gear Initiative® (GGGI) is the only cross-sectoral alliance committed to driving solutions to the problem of lost, abandoned and otherwise discarded fishing gear worldwide.

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A Global Reach

135 member organizations
20 supporting governments
4 high level global affiliates

- 1-3 members
- 4-8 members
- 9+ members

GGGI Projects

GGGI / FAO Workshops
OUR MEMBERS

We have over 100 member organisations from the fisheries sector, industry, retail corporations, academia, NGOs and government.
Industry Engagement

- Raise awareness about the issue and learn from the industry about causes of gear loss.
- Develop innovative solutions with industry to minimize gear loss and reduce its impact if lost.
- Work with industry to appropriate disposal options for end-of-life gear.
- Ensure solutions are viable, lasting and make sense for the industry.
Best Practice Frameworks for the Management of Fishing/Aquaculture Gear

- Comprehensive guidance documents referencing all major actors in the seafood supply chain for wild capture and aquaculture.
- Guidance is across prevention, mitigation and recovery strategies.
- Designed to be incorporated into sourcing policies, CSR documents, fisheries management plans, seafood certification programs, voluntary guidelines, workshops and more.

Photo: Emerald Sea Protection Society – Shayd Johnson
The GGGI houses the largest collection of ghost gear data on earth at: https://globalghostgearportal.net/
Solution Projects

Canada

Nigeria

Indonesia

Mexico

United States

Caribbean

Vanuatu