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

By Pine Eisfeld-Pierantonio

ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Marine Debris Workshop, OGrove, Spain, 15th April 2023
# Waste fishing gear - types

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


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
The UK situation - recycling

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# The UK situation - recycling

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

- MARPOL convention prohibits discharges of waste, requires adequate port waste reception facilities

  - indirect fee, separate collection, waste reception and handling plans

  - EPR scheme
  - 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

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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!