

Ghost Nets

What is a ghost net?

Ghost nets are fishing nets that have been dumped or lost in the ocean by individual fishermen or fishing fleets. They can be left tangled on a rocky reef or drift in the open sea.

If it were only a few nets it wouldn't be big deal. However, each year around 640,000 tonnes of fishing gear set adrift globally.



How does it impact marine life?

As they drift, ghost nets capture anything in their path. This includes fish, sharks, dolphins, seals, marine turtles and seabirds. They have also been known to kill crocodiles, dugongs and other invertebrates. But it is marine turtles that are most at risk. During a recent cleanup of ghost nets on beaches in Australia's Gulf of Carpentaria, over 80% of the animals found in nets were marine turtles.

What can be done?

Although the main solution to the problem of ghost netting is obviously to have no nets in the sea in the first place, this is a very difficult strategy. We don't know where more than half of the nets come from, although studies show that about 4% probably come from Australia.

GhostNets Australia is an Australian organisation that collects data about abandoned fishing nets and supports Indigenous rangers to collect them from beaches between Cape York and the Gulf of Carpentaria. They are also working with Indonesian fishermen to help them understand the problems associated with ghost nets.

See more here: <http://www.ghostnets.com.au/about/>

What can you do?

Ghost nets are not the only form of pollution causing problems for marine life, and there are things we can all do to keep our oceans healthy, no matter where we live:

Keep waste out of the sea. This means keeping waste off the land and out of waterways, as waste will blow from the land into waterways and then into the sea. If you see some waste at the beach or the park or when just walking down the street, pick it up and put it in the bin.

Don't leave your fishing gear behind. If you go fishing, take your rubbish with you when you leave, including fishing lines and hooks.





Become an Ocean Guardian and join the global movement now!

Go to the Blue website to become an ocean guardian and take action for our ocean (<https://bluethemovie.org/take-action/>)

Reference list

- Ghostnets fish on: marine rubbish threatens northern Australian turtles - <https://theconversation.com/ghostnets-fish-on-marine-rubbish-threatens-northern-australian-turtles-11585>
- Ghost net art - <https://australianmuseum.net.au/ghost-net-art>
- Explore the issues - <https://bluethemovie.org/explore/>
- Ghost nets Australia - <https://www.ghostnets.com.au/>

