

Lost fishing gear in the Nordic countries

The impact on the aquatic wildlife and environment

The occurrence of abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) in aquatic environments have a huge environmental and socioeconomic impact. This study compiles data from Nordic countries on the quantity and composition of lost fishing gear, primarily from sport and recreational fishing. It also explores the presence of harmful chemicals in the lost gear and their potential effects on the aquatic environment.

Methodology

Along with a web-based survey dedicated to gather information from the sports- and recreational fishers, the following methods were used:

- Literature survey
- Stakeholders dialogue
- Analyzation of information on sales statistics from retailers and producers
- Compiled relevant national import and export statistics

It is important to recognize that the quantity of lost fishing gear is difficult to estimate due to the general lack of data within the Nordic countries and low response rate on the surveys. The estimates presented should be considered indicative.

Key findings from the report

The study has estimated a total annual loss in the Nordic countries of 774 tonnes fishhooks, 78–235 million meters fishing line and 518–1035 tonnes of fishing gear containing fishing nets. Harmful substances that exist in fishing gear has not been possible to quantify.

Conclusion

To clean up and recover abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear is challenging, time consuming and expensive. The better, more cost efficient and less environmentally challenging solution would be to implement preventive measures.

"Abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear is a global problem, and an extended geographical approach is required."

The following measures are suggested

1. Municipalities and retailers should provide more information regarding lost fishing gear, more frequently, to increase the awareness among fishers
2. The encouragement to reuse, recycle or recover fishing gear should be improved
3. Improve the communication and information regarding chemical substances in fishing gear
4. Ban harmful substances including lead in fishing gear
5. Conduct clean ups of ALDFG hotspots



Furthermore...

The report suggests that the implementation of the single-use plastics directive within the EU together with the new extended producer responsibility including fishing gear will be important drivers to prevent lost fishing gear going forward.

To learn more about lost fishing gear that affects the aquatic wildlife and environment in the Nordic countries, please read [here](#).