



Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Importance of reporting lost gillnets in Puget Sound

The mission of the Northwest Straits Initiative is to protect and restore the marine resources of the Northwest Straits by supporting research, monitoring, restoration, stewardship, conservation and education programs and projects both at the local and regional level.

Derelict fishing gear entangles and kills marine animals, smothers and degrades marine habitats and poses a danger for human safety and navigation.

More than 290,000 animals representing 241 unique species have been found dead in removed derelict gear including: porpoise, sea lions, scoters, grebes, cormorants, canary rockfish, Chinook salmon, and Dungeness crab.

An estimated 10-30 gillnets are lost each fishing season in Puget Sound. Loss is accidental, resulting from mechanical malfunction, weather, or other unforeseen circumstances. **The only way to prevent impacts from lost fishing nets is to report the loss promptly so the net can be found and removed before it becomes derelict.**



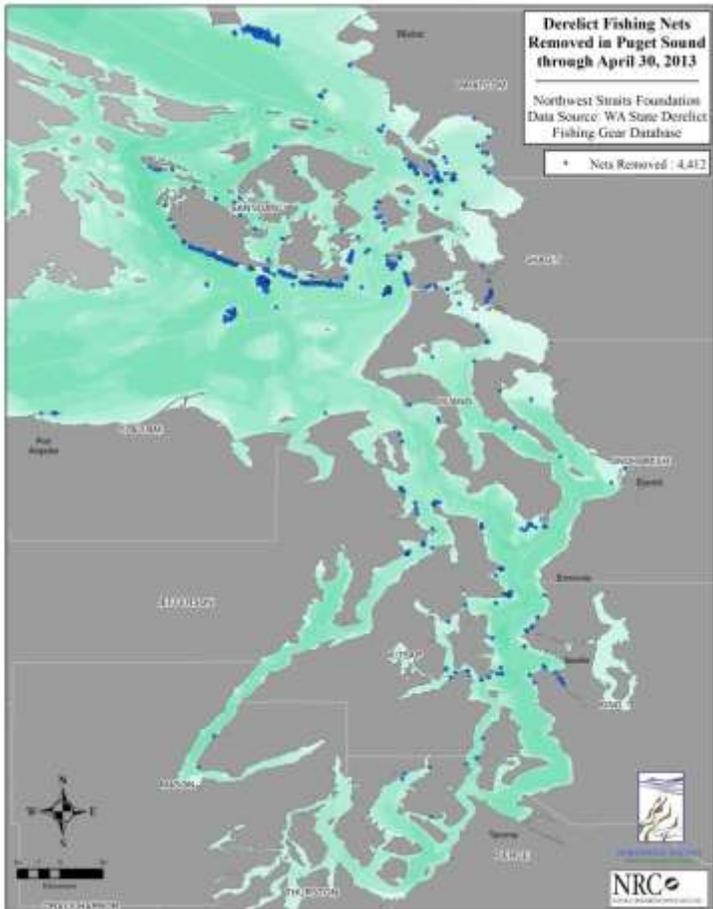
Bird carcasses from one derelict net in Port Susan



Dungeness crabs killed in a net at Pt. Roberts

Derelict Gear in Puget Sound

- 4,412 derelict nets removed
- Over 2,900 derelict crab pots removed
- 625.3 acres of marine habitat restored
- 298,383 animals found in nets
- Statewide derelict gear reporting system and database operational
- Quantified economic impacts of derelict crab pots
- 30 full and part time jobs created
- Four vessels operational, including Nisqually tribal vessel
- Over \$350,000 worth of crab are lost to derelict nets in Point Roberts alone



Since 2002, the Northwest Straits Initiative has removed over 4,412 derelict net remnants from Puget Sound, restoring 625 acres of marine habitat in the process. Each remnant averages about 1,000 square feet.

What we find in removed nets is only a snapshot of the long-term impacts. Using a catch rate model developed by researchers at UC Davis using our data, we estimate that removing 4,412 nets protects more than **3.2 million animals** annually from entanglement.

The Northwest Straits Foundation currently has funding to respond to and retrieve newly lost fishing nets from Puget Sound.

Finding and Retrieving Reported Lost Nets

To find newly lost nets, we depend on reports from fishermen and others who are on the water. To ensure these lost nets do not become derelict, the Foundation responds to those reports cooperatively with fishermen, and fisheries agencies to ensure prompt removal.

If retrieval by the fishermen or fisheries agencies is not possible, the Foundation will mobilize a removal vessel. From that vessel, divers will manually retrieve the net. We follow state-approved removal guidelines and safety is our first concern.

Please report lost fishing nets to your tribal fisheries agency or use the statewide reporting system at www.derelictgear.org or call 360-733-1725 Northwest Straits Initiative or 855-542-3935 (WDFW).

What's Left

We estimate there remain over 1,000 derelict nets in shallow sub-tidal waters of Puget Sound. These nets are entangling hundreds of mammals and thousands of birds and fish annually.

We know of about 100 derelict nets in waters deeper than 105'. We believe there are many, many more, possibly entangling listed rockfish and other deepwater species and destroying habitat.

In addition to derelict commercial fishing nets, about 12,000 crab pots are lost every year in Puget Sound, costing the commercial fishery up to \$700,000 in lost harvest revenue.

For more information contact:

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