



Image: A volunteer clears up ghost fishing gear in Hawaii, United States.

The Global Ghost Gear Initiative

We were known as **WSPA**
(World Society for the
Protection of Animals)

Creating a sea change: towards ghost-gear-free seas

World Animal Protection is launching a new, global initiative – an initiative that will save the lives of millions of marine animals and create safer, cleaner oceans. And we need your input and support.

What's the problem?

According to UN agencies, some 640,000 tons of fishing gear are lost or discarded in our oceans every year.¹ This 'ghost' gear is now found in every ocean and sea on the planet. It has a devastating effect on marine animals, injuring and killing millions

of seals, whales, turtles and seabirds. And it doesn't just cost lives – it also costs governments and marine industries millions of dollars in clean-up expenses and lost revenue each year.

A significant number of governments and intergovernmental bodies now have marine litter, including ghost gear, on their agendas, and reduction targets in their sights. Effective solutions are being found locally and nationally. Yet there remains no global approach to enable the problem of ghost fishing gear to be monitored and solved at scale. This is a global problem, requiring a global solution.

#seachange

Creating a sea change: towards ghost-gear-free seas

To find a lasting solution to this problem, World Animal Protection is launching the Global Ghost Gear Initiative: an alliance of governments, industry, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, with a shared commitment to tackle the problem of ghost fishing gear. The initiative will:

- Share data, intelligence and resources to understand ghost gear abundance, causes, impacts and trends.
- Promote a shared commitment to support the expansion and replication of existing effective solutions to reduce ghost gear.
- Share learnings and resources from effective solution case studies, in both policy and practice, to enable replication and expansion.
- Be a platform to drive and develop new ways to tackle the ghost gear issue.
- Enable solutions to be focussed in areas where ghost gear is a particular problem, and create funding opportunities for projects in these areas.
- Enable global monitoring and showcase the impact of projects that can catalyse further change.

1. Macfadyen, G., Huntington, T., & Cappell, R. (2009). *Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear*. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies, No. 185; FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper, No. 523. Rome: UNEP/FAO

The power of a unified approach

The Global Ghost Gear Initiative is about worldwide collaboration and worldwide action. Members will decide its exact design, but its functional elements will likely include:

An online data hub – to record and analyze ghost gear volumes, geography and trends in order to more accurately describe and quantify the problem. Data could be used to underpin and direct urgent mitigation responses in identified ‘hotspots’, and allow monitoring of solution project impacts against baselines.

A virtual communication platform – to facilitate sharing of intelligence and challenges and to showcase existing effective solutions in policy and practice. The platform would represent and empower a global virtual community of people and organizations committed to tackling ghost fishing gear. It would act as a global repository of information to inspire and enable the growth of solutions.

Steering group – to oversee development, evaluate progress and agree priorities for future action. The initiative could benefit from biennial meetings to evaluate progress towards shared goals, and to agree recommended priorities for future action by partners.

By uniting global efforts to tackle ghost fishing gear, and underlining our shared responsibility to redouble these efforts, we will ensure that ghost gear does not pose an ever-growing threat to our oceans or the animals that live in them.



For more information please visit:
worldanimalprotection.org/gggi

To work with us to build the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, contact Elizabeth Hogan at:
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Image: A seal entangled in a fishing net is rescued.
NOAA



Image: A group of volunteers clear up ghost fishing gear in Hawaii, United States.
NOAA / NMFS

