



Canada's Management Approach To Addressing Ghost Gear

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Regional Workshop on Tackling Plastic Pollution:
Cooperation, Best Practices and Sustainable
Solutions

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GHOST GEAR IS...

- Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear
- A leading cause of marine plastic litter
- A serious global issue



MANDATORY LOST GEAR REPORTING

- Reporting of lost or abandoned fishing gear has been recognized as an important intervention measure to address ghost gear and to help build evidence base knowledge of the scope of the problem.
- In 2020, Canada introduced mandatory lost gear reporting requirements in all commercial fisheries and harvesters must report details of lost gear (such as gear type, amount of gear, location of gear loss, date, etc.) to the Government of Canada.

The licence holder and fishing vessel operator, when fishing under these conditions of licence, is prohibited from discarding in waters under the authority of this licence from their vessel any item that may be harmful to fish or fish habitat including but not limited to plastics, ropes, fishing gear, garbage bags, fuel, oil, rags, glass, bottles, metal, extruded polystyrene foam (e.g. Styrofoam) and tires.

- The department continues to actively engaged industry on reporting and the use of the Fishing Gear Reporting System on social media, during industry and stakeholder meetings and during calls with harvester associations.

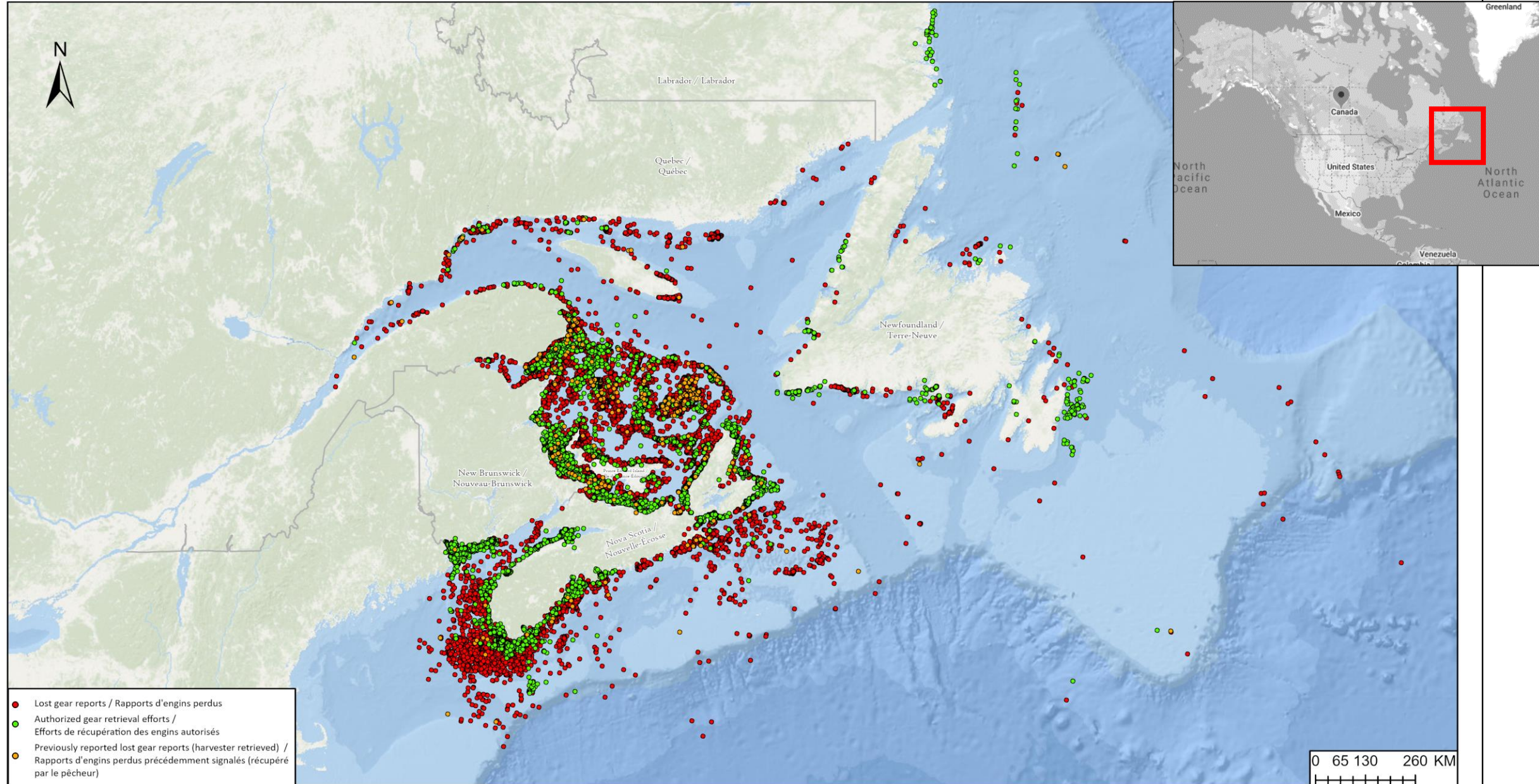
THE FISHING GEAR REPORTING SYSTEM

- Launched July 2021, the Fishing Gear Reporting System is a free Government of Canada tool that will help Canadian harvesters meet their mandatory commercial lost gear reporting requirements.
- Increased reporting of lost gear helps DFO to identify accurate gear loss hotspots maps and trends, guiding more effective retrieval efforts and identification of high-priority areas.
- More effective retrieval will result in larger amounts of ALDFG recovered, which can be returned to its original owner if tagged and in good condition.
- Offline reporting is now available. Offline reporting allows users to access the site, input and save data without an internet connection.



The screenshot shows the 'Fishing Gear Reporting System' interface. It is divided into two main sections: 'User login' and 'User registration form'. The 'User login' section includes fields for 'Email or username*' and 'Password*', a green 'Log in' button, and a link for 'Reset your password'. The 'User registration form' includes fields for 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Phone Number', 'Email*', and 'Password*', with a 'Confirm password*' field below. A small disclaimer states: 'The email address is not made public. It will only be used if you need to be contacted about your account or for opted-in notifications.'

Locations of Lost and Retrieved Fishing Gear on the Atlantic Coast: 2020-01-01 to 2024-12-31
 Lieux des engins de pêche perdus et récupérés sur la côte Atlantique : 2020-01-01 à 2024-12-31





THE GHOST GEAR FUND

- Intended to support Canada's commitment to prevent and mitigate marine litter, improve fisheries sustainability while building capacity to address ghost gear.
- \$58.3M over first 4 years (Fiscal Years 2020-2024) to support projects under 4 pillars:
 - **Third party led retrieval of abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG)**
 - **Gear acquisition and piloting of currently available innovative gear technology to prevent gear loss**
 - **Responsible Disposal**
 - **International leadership**
- 143 projects were funded by the Ghost Gear Program, 9 international and 134 domestic.
- \$1.8M in support of Small Craft Harbour projects to establish storage and processing capacity with Harbour Authorities.



GEAR RETRIEVAL STATISTICS

- **Since 2020, stakeholders have retrieved:**

A total of **2,475** tonnes retrieved including gear, and aquaculture debris
excludes rope and buoys

40,940 units of gear retrieved *excludes rope*

- 29,228 units of traps/pots
- 9,466 units of other gear (includes: buoys, nets, trawls, longline, seine, troll, and other)
- 2,246 units of aquaculture

928 km of rope retrieved

Completing **3,496** at-sea, shoreline, and aquaculture trips

- **Return of gear**

- Gear successfully returned to owner: **3,086**
- Total number of gear matched to harvester: **4,925**



RESPONSIBLE DISPOSAL

Activities include:

- Installing collection bins at wharves.
- Responsibly disposing or facilitating the recycling of retrieved gear.
- Purchasing equipment for the transportation and the processing of gear.
- Researching and reporting on status of old gear and recycling options.
- Building relationships between the fishing industry and recycling partners.

Small Craft Harbours Responsibilities:

- Cleaning and sorting retrieved gear.
- Providing secured storage for identifiable gear.
- Coordinating return of reusable gear to harvesters.





INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Canada is recognized internationally as a leader in addressing ghost gear due to actions taken to date.

Canada advocates for strengthening ghost gear measures at international forums including:

- United Nations (UN) Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution
- International Maritime Organization (IMO) Sub
- committee on Pollution Prevention and Response Correspondence
- Group on marine plastic litter
- Arctic Council Protection of Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)
- UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Our Ocean Conference
- Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs)

Additionally, through the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), Canada together with the United States and Mexico have embarked on a trilateral multi year project to address ghost gear in North America.



2nd INTERNATIONAL FISHING GEAR INNOVATION SUMMIT

- On February 25-26, 2025, the 2nd International Fishing Gear Summit brought together global experts, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous harvesters, in Moncton, New Brunswick, to address fishing gear loss and whale interactions through innovative solutions that support sustainable and prosperous fisheries and communities.
- Over 200 people representing over 9 countries attended the Summit to participate in presentations, panel discussions, a poster hall, networking activities

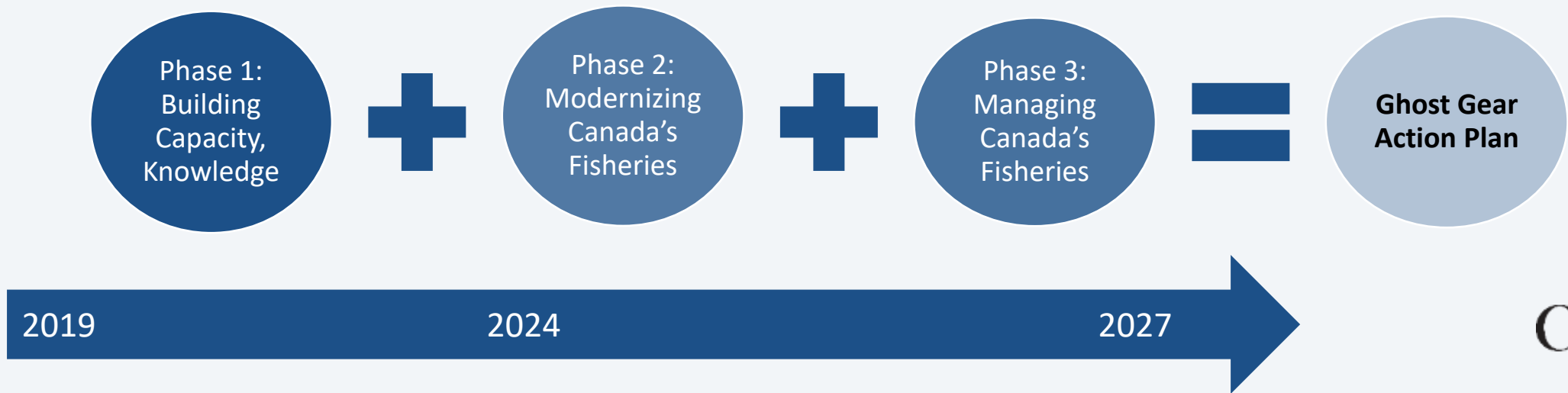




GHOST GEAR ACTION PLAN

The purpose of the Action Plan is to establish a guiding framework that outlines concrete actions to support Canada in addressing ghost gear.

Guided by feedback from engagement and consultation sessions the Ghost Gear Program will undertake the actions and activities outlined in Phases 1, 2 and 3 to support the preparation of the Ghost Gear Action Plan by 2027.





Thank You

For more information please visit: Canada.ca/ghostgear

Or email: DFO.GGProgram-ProgrammeEF.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

