

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 08/22/2022

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Collaborative Ghost Gear Retrieval in Nova Scotia Project 2022-2023

Mahone Bay, NS: Coastal Action is collaborating with fishers across Southwest Nova Scotia for another year of ghost gear retrieval this fall, supported by Fisheries and Oceans Canada's [Ghost Gear Fund](#).

Abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) – commonly referred to as ghost gear – contributes to over 50% of marine debris, causing negative environmental and economic impacts including habitat degradation, indiscriminate fishing, entanglements, decreased catches, at-sea safety hazards, and vessel damage. ALDFG is generated by unfavorable environmental conditions (due to storms and bottom type), poor gear conditions, and illegal dumping. Losses can be accidental, and fishers are not always at fault, as the marine environment is shared with other industries.

Coastal Action's ghost gear project will expand the organization's previous work (2020-2022) in scope and effort by collaborating with partners to retrieve ghost gear from at-sea and shoreline environments across Nova Scotia from August to November 2022. Coastal Action staff, captains, and partners will complete 60 at-sea retrieval trips and 5 shoreline cleanups across the province. This will be accomplished through fishing industry collaboration, testing retrieval equipment, capacity building, promoting responsible end-of-life opportunities, and exploring recycling options for rope in Atlantic Canada. Activities will include retrieving ALDFG from priority areas and hot spots, as well as developing ongoing education and communication campaigns for the fishing industry and the general public.

Our 2020 data, published in [Marine Pollution Bulletin](#), has shown that lost traps continue to fish lobsters and other groundfish, making ongoing ghost gear retrieval necessary in protecting the marine environment. This collaboration highlights that stewardship approaches and industry participation are key for successful retrieval, research, and education. The project will build on our success by continuing to improve ALDFG retrieval and management efforts in the region, as well as provide the opportunity for the industry to be a part of the solution.

About Coastal Action:

Coastal Action, established in December 1993, is a charitable organization that addresses environmental concerns throughout the South Shore region of Nova Scotia, Canada. Our goal is to promote the restoration, enhancement, and conservation of our environment through research, education, action, and community engagement. Coastal Action is tackling many environmental issues that fall under the following themes: Species at Risk and Biodiversity, Watersheds and Water Quality, Climate Change, Environmental Education, and Coastal and Marine.