



CERD Green Chronicles

TANGLED SEAS

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Ghost nets are discarded or abandoned fishing nets that drift with the current for years, trapping and killing 6.4 lakh animals every year in a process called ghost fishing. Ghost nets constitute 46% of all Marine Litter in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch alone. Tangled Seas is a conservation documentary that addresses the issue of ghost nets by showing perspectives of the different stakeholders. The film travels across India, along the east and west coasts to present the pervading problem.

Animals entangled in these ghost nets die from suffocation, starvation, amputation and exhaustion. Once they get stuck, any further movement makes it even more painful. These animals can only be rescued by divers but it demands a great amount of effort, patience and resources on their end. Hundreds of Seals, dolphins, sharks, whales and turtles die or get injured from entanglement every year.

For the film, we have collaborated with multiple organizations like In Season Fish based in Chennai, Terra Conscious from Goa and the Temple Adventures Dive Centre in Pondicherry. These experts have given us insight into the anthropogenic causes of marine litter and ghost nets. But we couldn't have made this film without including the local small-scale fisher folks. Their perspective on the issue uncovers the challenges the community faces.

There are many traditional and commercial techniques for fishing but the most widely used techniques are - Gillnets, Purse seine & Trawl nets. A gillnet is commonly used by small scale fishermen. It's a wall of net that hangs in shallow waters and is used to catch shrimp, lobster and crabs. The by-catch is very high in this fishing method. Purse seine is used in deep-sea where it is cast around a large school of fish. The bottom is then drawn to prevent the fish from escaping. There is a greater risk of an endangered species, like a whale shark or dolphin, getting caught in one of these. However, Trawl nets by far have the worst ecological impact. They are towed at the bottom or in mid-water by one or more boats. They catch everything that comes in their way. Bottom trawling nets uproot marine plants and organisms living on the seabed, most of which are thrown back into the water because they are of no economic importance to these fishermen.

Different methods are being used to remove ghost nets. Geo-tagging of ghost nets can be a way for fishermen and divers to locate nets that need to be removed. Recycling the nets for further use can help compensate fisheries and save a large number of marine wildlife. Tangled Seas encourages its followers and supporters to keep the beaches clean, advocate protection for small-scale fisheries and make the right sea-food choices to protect at-risk species, especially in their breeding season. If the problem gets the required attention and sensitization, hopefully, more resources and policies targeted at ghost nets will get implemented.

Tangled Seas is a conservation documentary that addresses the issue of ghost nets by showing perspectives of the different stakeholders. They can be reached at www.tangledseas.com