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Ghosts Beneath the Sea: The State of Abandoned, Lost and Discarded Fishing Gear in the Canadian Maritimes (East Coast)

Halifax, NS: The [Fishing Gear Coalition of Atlantic Canada](#) is celebrating their recent publication highlighting the State of Abandoned, Lost and Discarded Fishing Gear in the Canadian Maritimes (East Coast). This comprehensive four-chapter report details national and regional efforts around abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) – commonly referred to as “ghost gear.” It also presents research on potential solutions to prevent ALDFG and mitigate its effects, which has been foundational for many of the recently funded projects through [Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s Sustainable Fisheries Solutions and Retrieval Support Contribution Program \(SFSRSCP\)](#). The report was prepared by Alexa Goodman on behalf of the Fishing Gear Coalition of Atlantic Canada (FGCAC) and was funded by [WWF-Canada](#) with generous support from Loblaw Companies Limited.

This project has shed light on the extent of gear loss in the region, which has been a long-standing question. Depending on the region, fishery and gear type, there is an average loss of 0.5% to 2% annually in Atlantic trap fisheries, which is less than the global average of 8.6%. Another notable finding points to disjointed waste management of end-of-life gear which is hindering effective disposal. The Report captured information from 26 different ALDFG projects across Canada and proposed solutions to address ALDFG, such as scheduling collection days for end-of-life gear, implementing low-impact recycling and disposal systems for rope and traps and developing an Extended Producer Responsibility program.

The report marks a pivotal point in understanding the state of ALDFG in the region and highlights the successful work of the FGCAC to date, bringing a variety of stakeholders and rights holders into the conversation. This comprehensive report has fulfilled the need to centralize baseline information on ALDFG on varying scales. It has laid the groundwork for moving forward with preventive and mitigative efforts. The FGCAC, along with some of their members, have been awarded funding through the SFSRSCP to address some of the issues and solutions presented in the report.

About Alexa Goodman: Alexa Goodman is the Co-Chair and Coordinator for the Fishing Gear Coalition of Atlantic Canada and has completed a Comprehensive Report for the Coalition overlooking the State of ALDFG in the Canadian Maritimes. They are also the Project Coordinator



for Coastal Action's Coastal and Marine Team and is an established regional ALDFG expert in Atlantic Canada with publications on the subject in *Marine Pollution Bulletin* (Goodman et al., 2020) and in *Ocean and Coastal Management* (Goodman et al., 2019). Alexa completed a Master of Marine Management at Dalhousie University in 2019, where their research focused on managing abandoned, lost, and discarded lobster fishing gear in the Bay of Fundy. Their background is in marine biology and environmental sustainability, receiving a BSc. from Dalhousie University in 2017. They have worked with Fundy North Fishermen's Association on their Ghost Gear Retrieval Project (2018) and on George's Bank with Atlantic Catch Data as a fisheries observer (2017). Alexa has also worked as a research assistant with the Marine Affairs Program and School for Resource and Environmental Studies at Dalhousie University as well as with the Nova Scotia Community College on aquaculture and marine debris related projects.