



EMERALD SEA
PROTECTION SOCIETY

SOCIETY REPORT
2016 - 2019

Photo courtesy of Joel Baziuk



Photo courtesy of Clover Fedoriuk-Russell.



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Photo courtesy of Joel Baziuk.



OVERVIEW

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OVERVIEW

Introduction

Abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), or 'ghost gear,' is a part of the global marine debris crisis that is increasingly impacting marine animals, crucial habitat, human safety and our global economy.

With more than half of floating plastic pollution estimated to be ghost gear, this issue has recently taken centre stage in global marine debris discussions, and has been at the heart of the Emerald Sea Protection Society (ESPS) operations since 2016.

Despite recent advancements in research toward our understanding of the impacts of ghost gear, more detailed information in specific areas is still difficult to obtain. The west coast of British Columbia is a region that has not yet been studied in detail, making the gravity of the problem difficult to understand and tackle cohesively.

ESPS has dedicated efforts towards establishing hot spots of lost gear in order to fill in gaps in the research and coordinate recovery work. To date, recovery projects have been enormously successful and have also provided opportunities for public awareness initiatives. ESPS plans to work collaboratively with other organizations to replicate this success on a larger scale and hopes to develop solutions that can be utilized nation-wide.

The Emerald Sea Protection Society

The Emerald Sea Protection Society is a marine ecology non-profit organization working to protect marine animals and sensitive ecosystems in British Columbia from the devastating effects of abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) and other marine debris through research, collaboration, gear removal projects and educational initiatives.



Photo courtesy of ESPS.

The work accomplished by ESPS has been driven by the passion and dedication of our group. Within our organization, we have knowledge and experience that ranges from commercial diving to design, data analysis to education, and marine science to working directly with the fishing industry. The breadth of our backgrounds has allowed us to grow a grassroots movement and successfully begin tackling the ghost gear problem in British Columbia.



RESEARCH



SURVEY



RECOVER



EDUCATE

ESPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS
 Bourton Scott, Chair
 Gideon Leclair-Jones, Treasurer
 Jennifer Adamson, Secretary
 Gabriel Howells
 Joel Baziuk
 Brooke Lees
 Ally Stocks
 Patrick Geary, ESPS Intern

A Global Problem

Every year, an estimated 640,000 metric tons of fishing gear is abandoned, lost or discarded globally into our ocean. Fishing nets, rope, traps and other lost gear, trap marine life and deplete harvestable fish populations while they drift under the surface of the water for decades. These silent and uncontrolled hazards are known as 'ghost gear.'

Ghost gear is estimated to make up more than half of floating plastic pollution in our ocean, and is increasingly impacting marine animals, crucial habitat, human safety and our global economy.

An estimated
640,000
metric tons of
fishing gear is
lost in our ocean
every year.¹



Most of the gear lost in North America is due to poor weather, snags on obstructions beneath the surface or is accidentally run over by other vessel traffic. Photo courtesy of ESPS.

Suggested Reading

For an indepth look at the problem of ghost gear including research, studies and solutions, visit: www.ghostgear.org/resources, or www.globalghostgearportal.net.

¹ Macfadyen, G., Huntington, T., Cappell, R., 2009. Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies 185. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper 523., Aquaculture.

Origination of the 800,000 metric tons estimate: The United Nations Environment Program estimates that ALDFG accounts for 10% of all marine litter entering the ocean each year (UNEP, 2017). In 2017, Geyer, Jambeck and Law, estimated that 8 million metric tons of plastic waste enter the oceans each year, although this might not account for any specifically fishing related waste (Geyer, R., Jambeck, J.R., Law, K.L., 2017. Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made. *Sci. Adv.* 3. doi:10.1126/sciadv.1700782).



The Pender Island Net Recovery Project (phased 2016-18) was a collaborative seine net retrieval project involving several private, non-profit and governmental organizations. Approximately 90% of 25,000 square meters of net was recovered (above). Photo courtesy of Joel Baziuk.

Reducing the Impact

The Emerald Sea Protection Society addresses the complex problem of ghost gear and other marine debris pollution through research, underwater surveys, recovery, recycling, and education. We work collaboratively with governments, businesses, industry, non-profits and schools to minimize the impact of marine debris on the west coast of British Columbia.



Recent studies have suggested between **46% - 70%** of floating macroplastic in our ocean is **fishing related** when measured by weight.²

² UNEP, 2017. Marine pollution fact sheet. the Ocean Conference. United Nations, New York, 5-9 June 2017.



Photo courtesy of Clover Fedoriuk-Russell.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

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PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Watch the full documentary on CBC GEM by clicking [here](#)

“Ghost Nets,” an ESPS Documentary

On July 13th, 2019, CBC aired “Ghost Nets,” a documentary about the problem of ghost gear on the west coast of BC through the eyes of the Emerald Sea Protection Society. The film - the first of its kind - takes the audience on a journey behind the scenes to see what challenges are faced while coordinating recovery work of this nature.

The documentary follows ESPS co-founder Bourton Scott and the rest of the team on their journey to tackle a seine net caught on a rock spire on the spectacular coast of British Columbia, featuring stunning videography and thought-provoking interviews.



“Ghost Nets,” takes the audience to the beautiful west coast of British Columbia, and into the little known but significant issue of lost fishing gear. Photo courtesy of Monument Creatives.



Rare footage of underwater gear recovery work, captured by Monument Creatives.

The idea to capture the work of the Emerald Sea Protection Society was born from discussions between ESPS co-founder Bourton Scott and the talented team of photographers, cinematographers and creative directors that comprise Monument Creatives. As the Monument Creatives team delved into the issue, there was a genuine concern that developed, and a drive to make a difference with the power of film. The resulting documentary is a work of art, that showcases both the challenges of ghost gear recovery work and the beauty of the region that organizations like ESPS are working so hard to protect.

Motivated by public interest in the documentary, ESPS coordinated two sold out film screenings in Vancouver and Seattle, hosted by Patagonia retail store locations. Audiences were amazed at the gravity of this emerging issue and were full of questions and an enthusiasm to donate and get involved. The documentary reached a global audience, and ESPS is grateful for the incredible amount of support the organization has received as well as over \$5,500 in donations from individuals.



Over 300 people attended 2 film screenings and engaged in discussion and questions with ESPS directors afterwards. Photo courtesy of Joel Baziuk.



Recovery Projects

Since 2016, ESPS has dedicated efforts towards establishing hot spots of lost gear in order to fill in gaps in the research and coordinate recovery work in these areas. Recovery projects are developed in collaboration with other organizations whenever possible, and are planned concurrently with educational and public awareness initiatives. This section showcases a selection of projects that highlight the Society's diverse approach.

Pender Island Net Recovery

The recovery of a massive seine net near Pender Island, BC has been a challenging phased project from 2016-2018. The commercial seine net had been lost several decades ago on a rock spire and discovered by divers years later where it was significantly impacting the marine ecosystem.

Strong and erratic currents were among some of the difficulties divers experienced when extracting this giant net from the spire. The net was found at depths exceeding 100 feet with some points of the net as deep as 140-150 feet which made it extremely difficult to retrieve without more advanced deep diving equipment. Multiple boats, cranes and winches were employed along with multiple dives with commercial divers who needed to recover the net section by section.

As part of a trans-boundary project in the summer of 2016, ESPS worked with several organizations to continue the process of recovery. These groups included World Animal Protection (lead organizer), Northwest Straits Foundation (lead implementer), Global Ghost Gear Initiative, Steveston Harbour Authority, Rendezvous Dive Adventures, Archipelago Marine Research, Orca Spirit Adventures, Aquafil USA and Tsehum Harbour Authority. Approximately 75% of the net was recovered and recycled through Steveston Harbour Authority.

In 2018, ESPS worked with the crew of Providence, a 100 year old fishing packer turned supply vessel to retrieve another 10-15% of the material after initial difficulty locating the net. Additionally once the net was located, recovery was

difficult due to adverse conditions during the project duration. This phase of the project was documented by Monument Creatives and aired on CBC on July 13, 2019 as part of the “Ghost Nets” documentary.

The remaining sections of net are located in an area that is inaccessible due to ESPS equipment constraints, but the Society hopes to continue this project in future by collaborating with other organizations with additional capabilities.



This multi-year gear recovery project has resulted in approximately 90% retrieval of a seine net lost over 30 years ago. Photos courtesy of Joel Baziuk.

Tofino Cleanup Project

On March 23, 2019, ESPS worked with Surfrider Pacific Rim and the Ucluelet Aquarium on an extensive cleanup below the 1st Street dock in Tofino.

ESPS divers collected an array of items such as crab traps, oyster crates, shopping carts, tires, and more. From the land, the ESPS underwater ROV (remotely operated vehicle) unit was employed to simultaneously detect hot spots of debris and educate spectators.

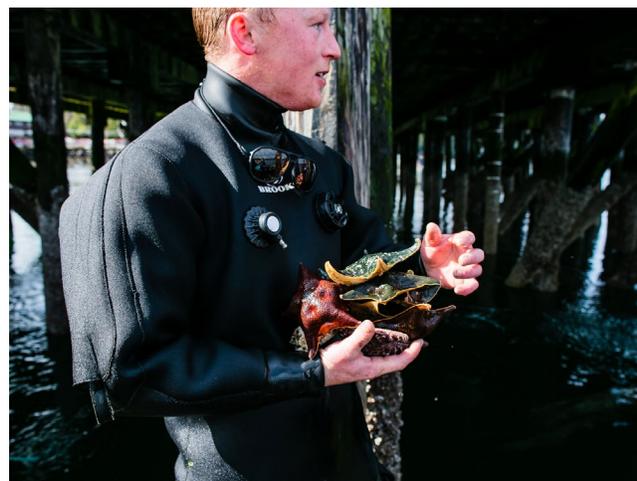
Numerous volunteers were present to assist with pulling the debris to the surface. As each item was brought onto the dock, biologists from the Ucluelet Aquarium carefully removed any attached marine species and returned them safely to the sea.

In addition, Surfrider volunteers sorted and recycled all the materials that had been brought to the surface.

A total of 1,294 kg of material was removed, and 99% of it was successfully recycled. Over 300 marine creatures were removed from these items and all were safely released back into the ocean.

List of Recovered Items:

- 20 shopping carts
- 19 tires
- 3 super sacs of styrofoam
- 1/2 super sac of glass bottles
- 3/4 super sac of rope
- 1 1/2 super sacs of plastic
- 12 buoys
- 5 oyster crates
- 3 crab traps
- 1 large ball of cable
- 1 large net



Sea life was safely removed and returned to the ocean by experts from the Ucluelet Aquarium. Photo courtesy of Clover Fedoriuk-Russell.



A total of **1,294 kg** of material was removed, and **99%** of it was successfully recycled.



Above: ESPS co-founder Gideon Jones uses a remote operated vehicle (ROV) to survey the situation under the water. Below: Gear retrieval projects also bring up other items that have been deposited under the surface of the water, such as shopping carts, appliances, cell phones and bottles. Photos courtesy of ESPS.

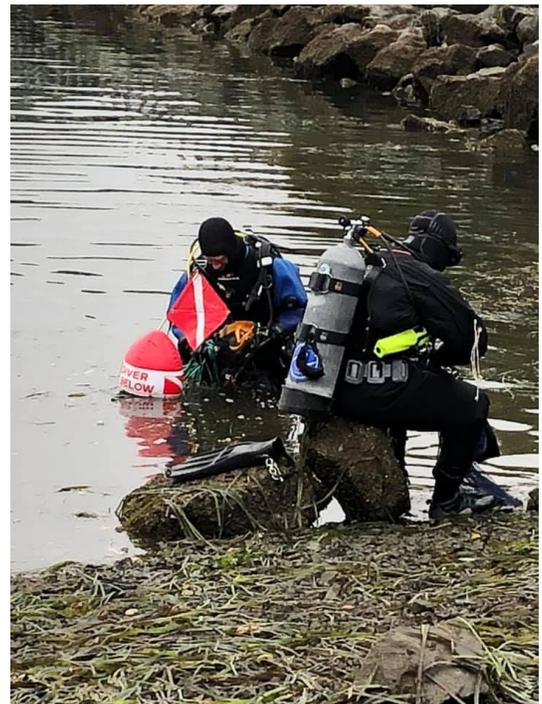
Victoria Gorge Waterway Cleanup

On September 14, 2019, ESPS participated in the annual Gorge Waterway Cleanup in Victoria, BC, organized by the Burnside Gorge Community Association.

ESPS divers worked to remove fishing gear and other debris, in an effort to restore valuable eelgrass habitat. While members of the public enthusiastically watched diving operations, ESPS directors and volunteers were on site to provide information about the project and engage in discussions about other ESPS initiatives.



Divers in action inside the Gorge Waterway. Photos courtesy of ESPS.



South Coast Recovery Work

Several ghost gear concentrations of smaller scale have been reported to ESPS from community members across BC. Recovery work in these cases have been grouped in regions that allow ESPS to plan for pooling of resources in order to execute these recoveries by region.

Some of these projects can be challenging and lengthy endeavours, such as the removal of an entire net from Nimmo Bay, BC, called in by the Nimmo Bay Resort, or the Moresby Island coastline survey and gear recovery work project. Often ESPS joins other organizations in tackling a pinpointed concentration of gear and debris, such as the work done in September 2019 with the Dead Boats Society, Salish Sea Industries and Soliton Diving to recover derelict boats and other gear in the Sooke basin.

The ESPS team is continually surveying for ghost gear, and often on weekend trips aboard the Ella McKenzie, a restored 1951 tug boat, Society directors will dive in and retrieve gear and other debris that has found its way into precious west coast ecosystems.



Using commercial diving standards, ESPS recovers lost fishing gear and other marine debris in coastal and near coastal areas. Wherever possible, materials recovered are recycled. In some instances, gear can be too large to be retrieved by the ESPS dive team and vessel, so instead the gear and/or debris location is uploaded to the Global Ghost Gear Initiative Data Portal. Photo courtesy of Clover Fedoriuk-Russell.



Research, Data and Survey Work

Detailed research reflecting concentrations of ghost gear on the west coast is still a work in progress, especially in British Columbia. Gathering this type of data is an endeavour fraught with complex challenges and requires expensive specialized equipment. However, without this data, ghost gear retrieval work in BC lacks coordination and feasibility. Using underwater survey methods and modelling, new technologies and collaborations with local and global partners, ESPS has taken the challenge and initiated this work in BC.

GGGI Ghost Gear Reporter App

ESPS is a proud member of the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI), an alliance of fishing industries, private companies, corporations, non-profits, academia and governments focused on solving the problem of ghost gear worldwide. The GGGI is also supported by the Government of Canada, who recently elevated the problem of ghost gear to one of national importance. ESPS has contributed to the GGGI through the hard work of Gideon Jones, ESPS co-founder, who developed the Ghost Gear Reporter app.

The GGGI Ghost Gear Reporter app allows individuals or organizations to report details and locations of lost gear of any kind and feed into the data portal. The app is designed to be easy and quick to use, and records: fishing gear location, details about the gear, images of the gear and any wildlife that may be caught in the gear.

This vital information helps the global effort to study and improve our understanding of the problem.

ESPS will continue to support and promote the GGGI Global Data Portal, encouraging the public to report lost fishing gear and contribute to the global database.

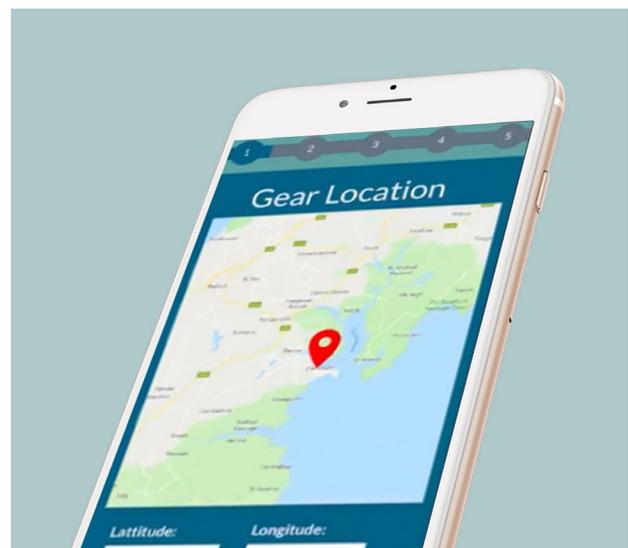


Photo courtesy of the Global Ghost Gear Initiative.

Models and Survey Work

ESPS is committed to developing a holistic understanding of where ghost gear is concentrated in BC.

Once a ghost gear location has been identified, ESPS uses modeling technology to predict the impact and the extent of the materials. Underwater surveys then test and confirm our models and allow us to collect data in the field. Through this process, we assess the impact of ghost gear on the marine ecosystem and determine safe recovery methods to be coordinated at a later date.

As a first step in gathering statistically significant broad scale survey data of gear loss and density, ESPS will be working with local fishing families to employ side scan sonar units in summer 2020.

As ESPS builds a data library of ghost gear locations on the west coast, the Society will continue to share this information to aid other organizations in similar pursuits and will work collaboratively to achieve a greater understanding of the problem in this region.

Community Connections

ESPS has developed strong connections with local communities and within the fishing industry. Many ghost gear locations have been passed on to ESPS from the knowledge of local fishers and harbour authorities, and as word has spread about the work ESPS does, individuals from many coastal BC communities have also reported areas of concern to the Society.

The collaborative nature of ESPS has not only brought together a network of individuals and organizations now dedicated to this work, but has also allowed for partnerships during project work that would otherwise not have been successful. ESPS will continue to make connections and bring groups together in an effort to tackle the issue of ghost gear cohesively and collectively.



Photo courtesy of Joel Baziuk.

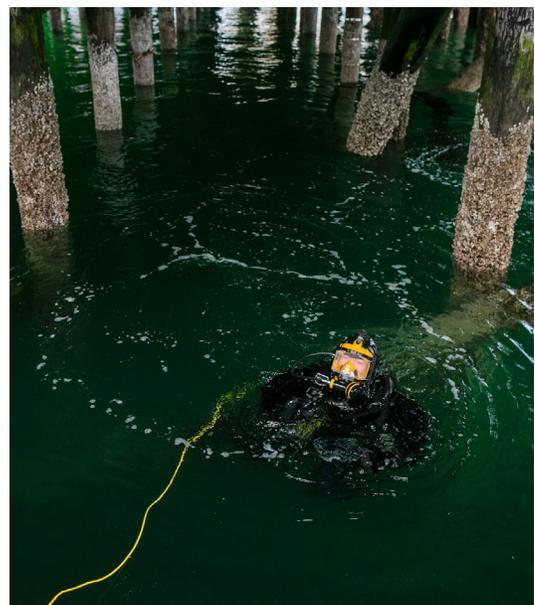


Photo courtesy of Clover Fedoriuk-Russell.



Educational Initiatives

ESPS has focused on education as a valuable preventative method regarding the complex problem of ghost gear. Once students are informed about the causes and impacts of ghost gear, they have an in-depth understanding of how their actions can affect the health of the ocean, and are keen to brainstorm innovative solutions to solve the issue. The genuine concern and enthusiasm of students have allowed for meaningful projects and rewarding experiences for both the participants and the ESPS team.

Ucluelet Marina Cleanup: Canada 150 Grant Project

With the support of \$5,000 in Canada 150 Grant funding, ESPS participated in an abandoned gear recovery project in collaboration with Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, Ucluelet Elementary School (School District 70), the District of Ucluelet, Ucluelet Aquarium, and Sonbird Refuse and Recycling.

The project took place on World Ocean's Day, June 8, 2016, from the Whiskey Dock in Ucluelet.

Initially, ESPS divers explored what was lurking beneath the surface, in an area known to have been cleaned up just 7 years earlier. The findings were surprising: shopping carts, crab traps, fish net, bottles, a cell phone, a washer/dryer and more.

An enthusiastic group of grade 7 students from Ucluelet Elementary helped sort the debris as it was brought to the surface, and safely prepared it for recycling by Sonbird Refuse and Recycling.

Staff from the Ucluelet Aquarium were on hand to rescue any marine life trapped in the debris and to ensure that any creatures were handled properly and carefully before being released back into the environment.

The ESPS underwater ROV was utilized to assist divers and to educate students about the recovery process and the inherent hazards divers can often face.

Watch a short video about the Ucluelet Marina Cleanup Project by clicking [here](#)



The project also involved a day of classroom work for the students from Ucluelet Elementary School. The presentation and classroom activities focused on the global problem of lost fishing gear and marine debris, the marine environment, and the impacts of human activity on the local ecosystem.



Photos courtesy of Joel Baziuk.

International Fishackathon

ESPS was invited to participate in the International Fishackathon in 2016. The annual event takes place at 43 locations around the world, and is coordinated by the US State department to support the innovative application of technology to combat issues relating to marine ecology and sustainability.

During the event, software developers and researchers collaborate to attempt to provide a solution to one of 9 problem statements shared by every location around the world.

Working with the Vancouver Aquarium, ESPS co-founder Gideon Jones participated as a supervisor and mentor, working with teams developing a gear reporting tool, that would allow users to upload abandoned fishing gear information to a global database.

The work created was the precursor to the Ghost Gear Reporter app that ESPS co-founder Gideon Jones developed for the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, which has become an invaluable tool for ghost gear data gathering on a global scale.

Speaking Opportunities

ESPS has been invited to speak at several events dedicated to ghost gear, to provide insight into new technologies and gear recovery perspectives. Some events include:

- Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference in Vancouver, BC in 2016
- Seaweb Seafood Sustainability Conference, Seattle, WA, 2017
- Global Ghost Gear Initiative Annual Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 2017
- Sixth International Marine Debris Conference in San Diego, CA, 2018
- Global Ghost Gear Initiative Annual Meeting in Panama City, Panama, 2019
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Dive Workshop, Panama City, Panama, 2019



Photos courtesy of Joel Baziuk.



Community Events

A large aspect of work has been, and will continue to be, educating the general public about the complex issue of lost fishing gear. This important work helps to dispell misconceptions which often villify fishers as the root cause of the problem, when in reality most gear loss is from inclement weather, conflict with other gear or snags beneath the surface. ESPS is continuously working to ensure this sentiment is promoted.

World Oceans Day

World Oceans Day is a day of action and awareness for ESPS. For the last three consecutive years, a recovery project including an educational component has been coordinated on World Oceans Day, fostering public awareness on the issue of lost and abandoned fishing gear.

On June 9th, 2019, ESPS participated in the World Oceans Day Event at Fisherman's Wharf in Victoria. The event was a huge success, with hundreds of people in attendance and numerous participant organizations providing active engagement.

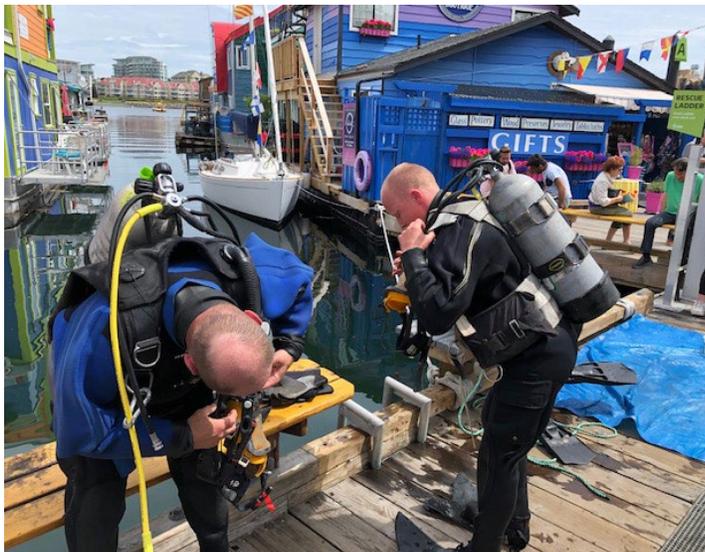


Photo courtesy of ESPS.

See media coverage of the event by clicking [here](#)

ESPS coordinated efforts to provide multiple activities throughout the day. Two scheduled dives held in the afternoon showcased ESPS divers, who descended below Fisherman’s Wharf and returned to the surface with everything from tires, a walking cane, a wallet, bottles, a giant crab trap, a large blue barrel and giant balls of fishing line. The public were invited to work with the ESPS crew to safely and properly remove any living organisms from the debris, which were successfully released back into the ocean.

A large display booth entertained and educated many event visitors about ESPS initiatives. Families engaged with games and activities while learning about the issue of lost and abandoned fishing gear. Game prizes were generously provided by Patagonia and Planet Love Life.



Photos courtesy of ESPS.

Richmond Maritime Festival

In 2017 and 2018, ESPS engaged with the public at the Richmond Maritime Festival, an annual event that welcomes over 40,000 people each year.

Interested visitors toured the Ella McKenzie and learned about the challenges of ghost gear recovery work on the west coast, with many signing up to learn more about ESPS activities.



Photo courtesy of Brooke Lees.

“Our Coastal Connection” Exhibit Opening

ESPS welcomed visitors to the “Our Coastal Connection” exhibit open house on June 3, 2017, at the Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site, where visitors were encouraged to ask questions and check out diving and technical equipment.

The “Our Coastal Connection” exhibit looks at our strong connection to our local rivers and west coast environments, and how this has sparked the imagination of many local organizations working to celebrate and protect our waters for the future. ESPS and other local groups are profiled within the displays, which showcase their collective achievements in areas of conservation, education, awareness, recycling and entrepreneurship. Due to its popularity, the exhibit has been renewed until May 2020, and is enjoyed by approximately 120,000 people annually.



Photos courtesy of Joel Baziuk.





Awareness Initiatives

Ghost gear is a global problem that is not greatly understood by the general public. By its nature, ghost gear is an invisible issue that is not seen from most beaches or boats. These hazards lurk deep under the surface of the water, and it takes careful consideration to bring this issue to light for the public in order to promote understanding and dispell misconceptions.

Media Coverage

ESPS has been fortunate to have received considerable media coverage at both the local and national level. The Society is grateful for the continued support from outlets such as CBC, Westerly News and others.

- CBC News: 'Ghost nets': How lost and abandoned fishing gear is destroying marine wildlife, July 12, 2019.
- North by Northwest CBC Radio: July 13, 2019 (1:22:13-1:35:47).
- Westerly News: Divers recover over 1,200 kg of debris at Tofino's First Street Dock, March 28, 2019.
- Gold Stream Gazette: 7th annual World Oceans Day makes a splash at Fishermans Wharf, June 9, 2019.
- Westerly News: Ucluelet students clean harbour for World Oceans Day, June 8, 2017.

Inspiring Change in Legislation

Throughout 2018, ESPS engaged in discussions about the cleanup of derelict fishing gear with MP Gord Johns of Nanaimo. This input from ESPS and other environmental organizations helped shape MP Gord Johns' Parliamentary Motion M151, which calls for a national framework for the elimination of plastic pollution. This bill was passed unanimously in Parliament on December 22, 2018 by a vote of 288 to 0.

In September 2019, ESPS was invited to discussions about the challenges associated with ghost gear retrieval by Sheila Malcolmson, Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment. The input provided during this meeting assisted in the development of the Province of British Columbia's Clean BC Plastics Action Plan.

Social Media Outreach

The Society utilizes social media to promote ocean stewardship initiatives and to inform the community about ongoing ESPS recovery and educational initiatives. One campaign called “Random Acts of Ocean Kindness,” initiated by ESPS director Jennifer Adamson promotes great work by individuals in the community on the ESPS Facebook page. Currently ESPS utilizes Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



@emeraldsea_ps



emeraldseasociety



emerald sea protection society

In the coming months, ESPS hopes to expand its capacity and reach to many more enthusiastic supporters. Currently, ESPS connects with:

- 626 Instagram followers
- 507 facebook followers
- 252 twitter followers



ESPS shares action shots and project status via social media and the ESPS website, such as this group photo taken in Tofino, BC after a gear retrieval dive. Photo courtesy of ESPS.



Photo courtesy of Clover Fedoriuk-Russell.

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PARTNERSHIPS

Building A Community

Since 2016, ESPS has been fortunate to work with a wide range of private and public sector organizations, global charities and local governments. Building relationships based on trust and mutual respect has allowed ESPS to build a strong network of organizations committed to innovative solutions and the removal of the threat of ghost gear.

Over the last four years, some of the groups ESPS has collaborated with include: the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, Northwest Straits Foundation, Steveston Harbour Authority, Rendezvous Dive Adventures, Archipelago Marine Research, Orca Spirit Adventures, World Animal Protection, Aquafil USA, Tsehum Harbour Authority, the Vancouver Aquarium, the City of Richmond, the Vancouver Maritime Museum, BC School District 70, the District of Ucluelet, Ucluelet Aquarium, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, Sonbird Refuse and Recycling, Eagle Wing Tours, Monument Creatives, Burnside Gorge Community Association, Skipper Otto's Community Supported Fishery and Surfrider Pacific Rim.

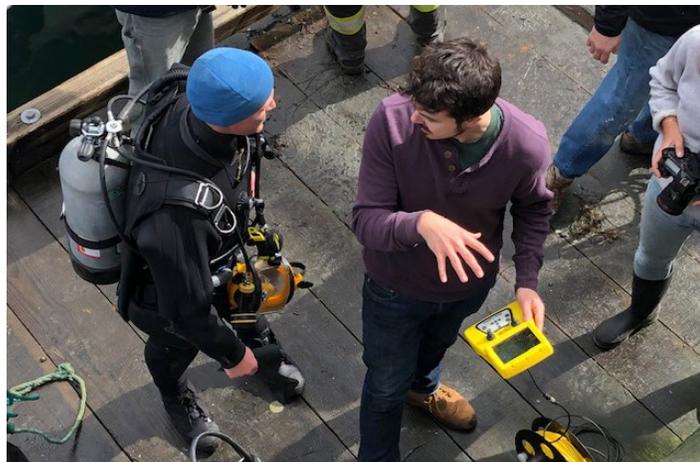


Photo courtesy of ESPS.

Collaborative Project Work

Project development focuses on the Society's collaborative approach. ESPS strongly believes that projects involving many stakeholders benefits the work with unique expertise, diverse perspectives, and innovative solutions.

ESPS is currently working on a collaborative project to survey the southern coast of BC, which involves local fishers, Harbour Authorities and community members. Approximately \$10,000 in funding has been secured through the Patagonia Canada Environmental Grant program, with project work commencing in summer 2020. This work will focus on building a network of local fishing families, and training them to gather valuable data necessary for the continuation of ghost gear retrieval work in BC. The data will enable priority areas where future gear recovery projects can be implemented that will involve the community and focus on public awareness.

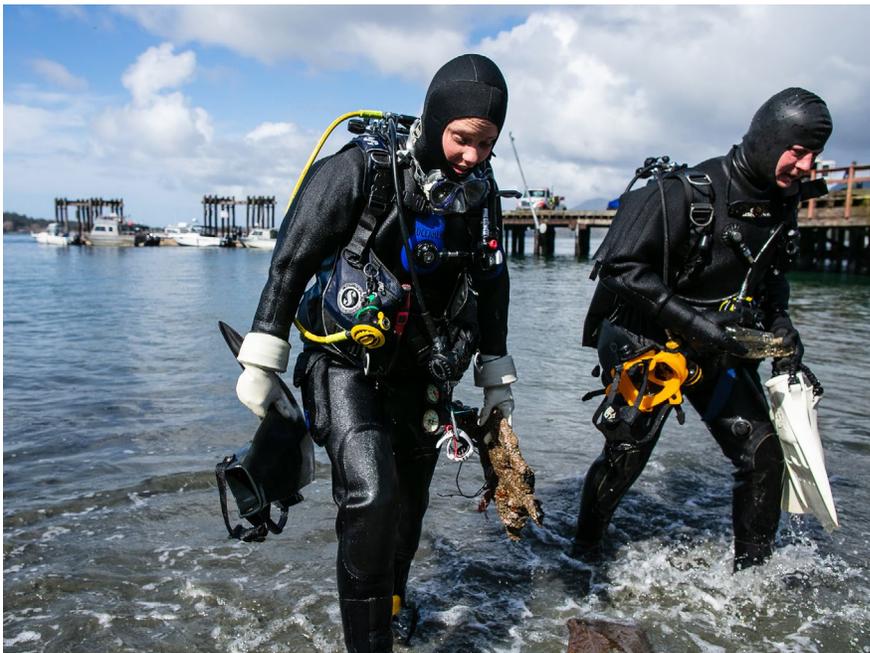


Photo credit Clover Fedoriuk-Russell.



Photo courtesy of Clover Fedoriuk-Russell.



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MOVING FORWARD

New Horizons

The Emerald Sea Protection Society is gearing up for new projects in 2020. Following a strategic planning session in February, the team will be embarking on ground-breaking work in the area of data collection. This grant funded work on the southern Salish Sea will involve high performance, hull-mounted side scan sonar units that produce images of the seabed. The data collected will be crucial to the understanding of the extent of the ghost gear problem, and will build a network of participating fishers working in collaboration with the ESPS team.

ESPS will also be investing considerable efforts working with the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, which operates working groups that tackle aspects of ghost gear globally. Three ESPS directors currently sit on the 'build evidence' and 'replicate solutions' working groups, contributing expertise and developing solutions that can be utilized worldwide.



Photo courtesy of Clover Fedoriuk-Russell.

Collaborative Expansion

As attention on the issue of ghost gear grows, ESPS is hopeful that this will translate into funding that the Society can apply for in order to continue and expand. Recovery work of this nature can be complex, dangerous and require specialty equipment.

ESPS is currently equipped with:

- Two certified commercial divers with industrial equipment capable of 100' depths.
- One scientific diver.
- Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) to capture underwater footage.
- 36' tug boat, work skiff, work vehicle.

Through collaboration with partner organizations, specialty equipment and expertise has been utilized to the extent of the capacity of the ESPS team and other groups involved. However, a more robust funding stream intended for large projects involving multiple organizations working together will have a significant impact on ghost gear recovery and prevention in our region.



Photo courtesy of ESPS.



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emerald sea protection society