

An underwater photograph of a seal swimming through a dense kelp forest. The seal is positioned in the upper center of the frame, looking towards the camera. The water is a deep blue-green, and the kelp leaves are a vibrant yellow-green, creating a textured background. The lighting is soft, highlighting the seal's fur and the surrounding marine life.

# Northwest Straits Initiative's Derelict Fishing Gear Program Past, Present & Future

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*Photo: Florian Graner*





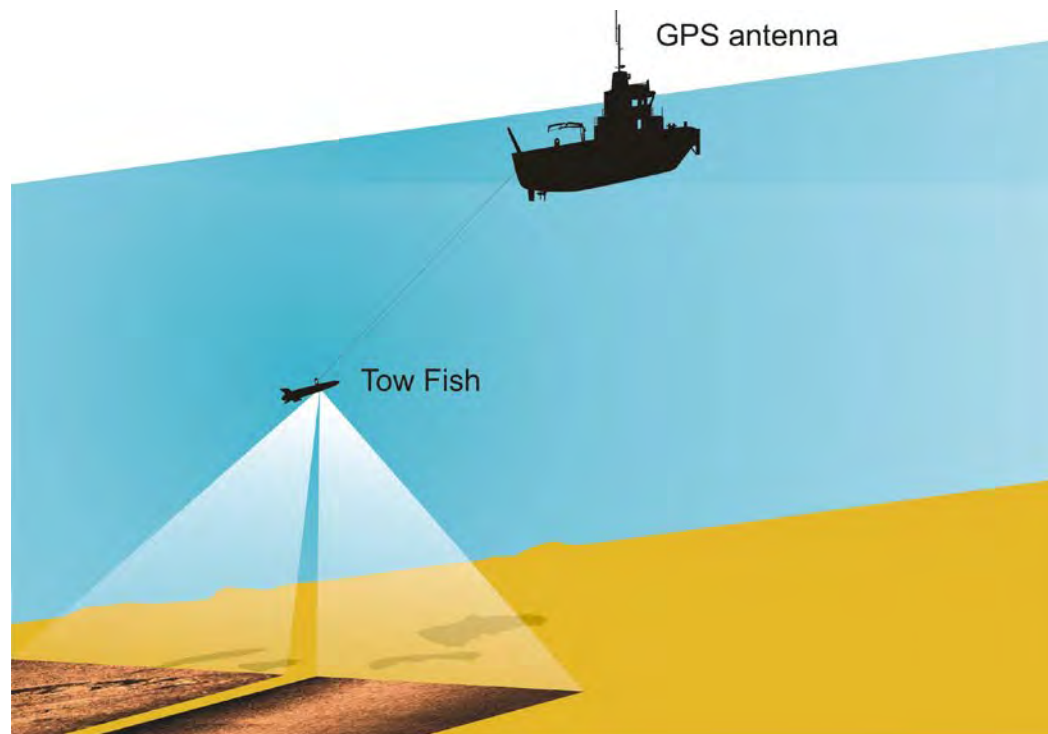
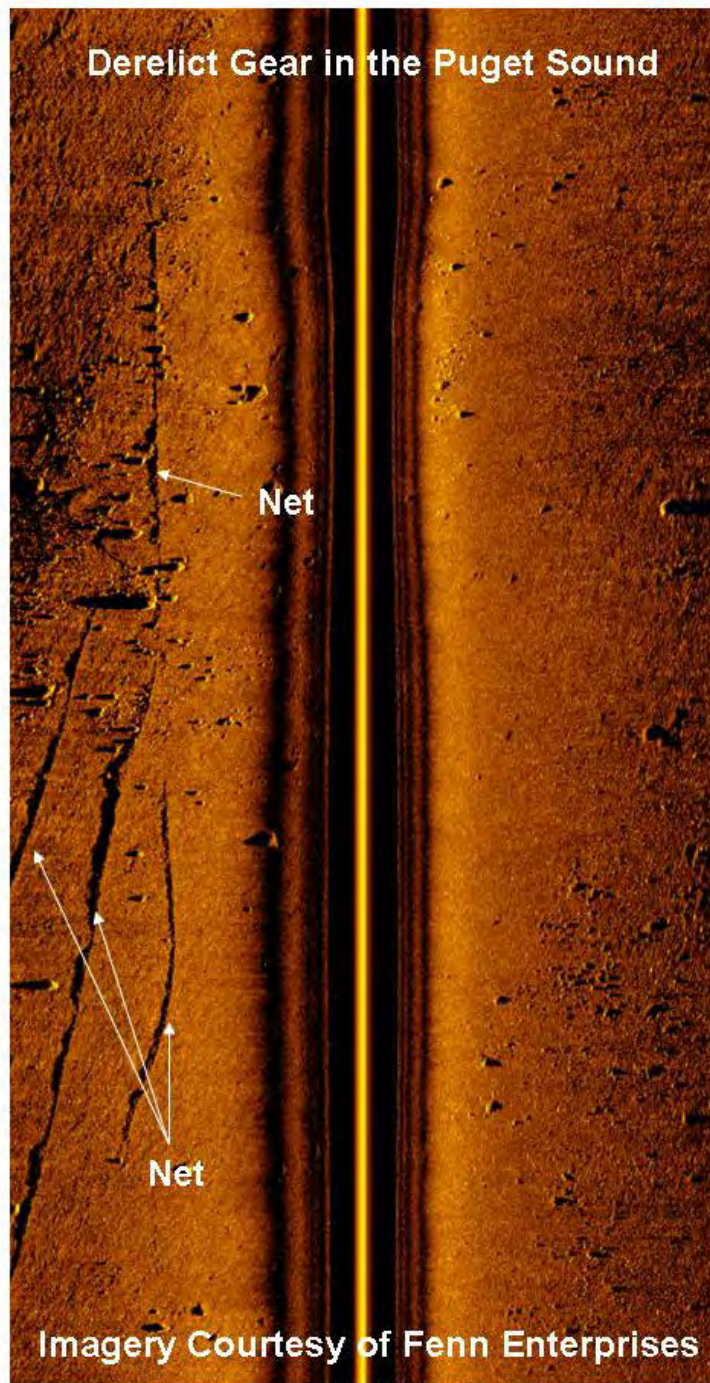






# Side-Scan Sonar Surveys

Derelict Gear in the Puget Sound



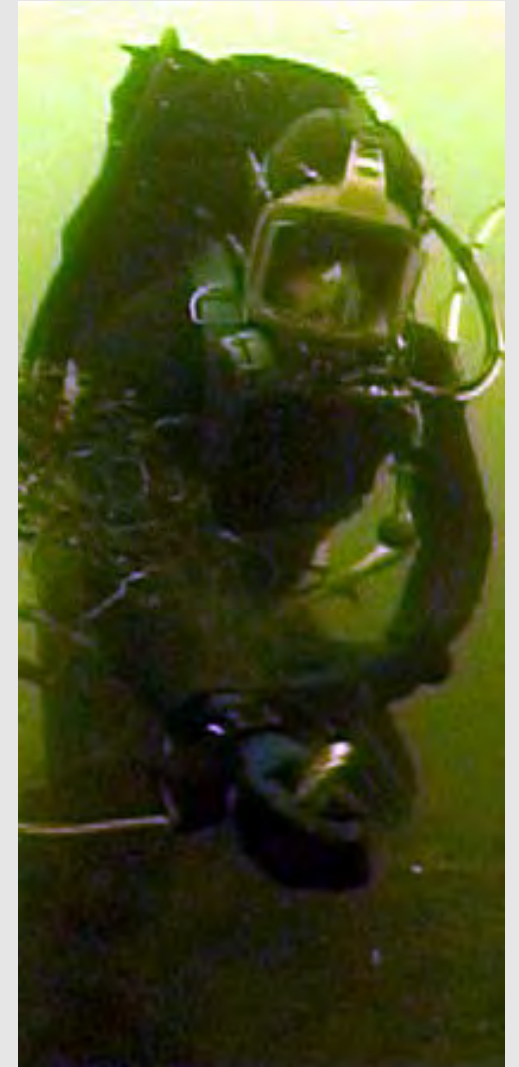
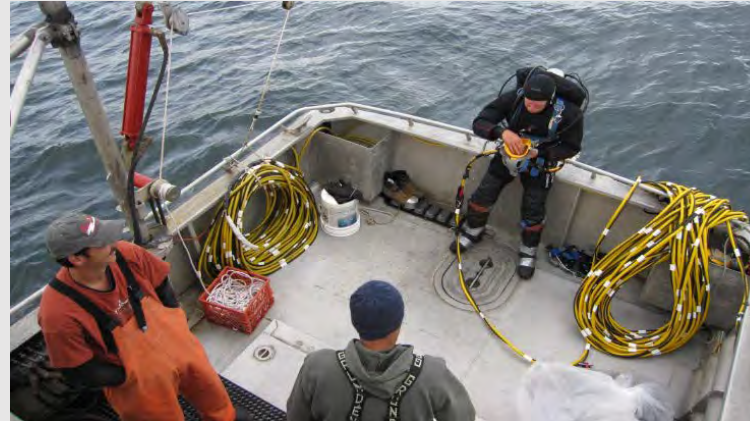
Derelict Gear in the Puget Sound





# Gear Removal

- Follow state approved guidelines
- Submit removal plan
- State collection permit
- USFWS collection permit
- Federal exemption
- All gear removed by hand
- Data collection



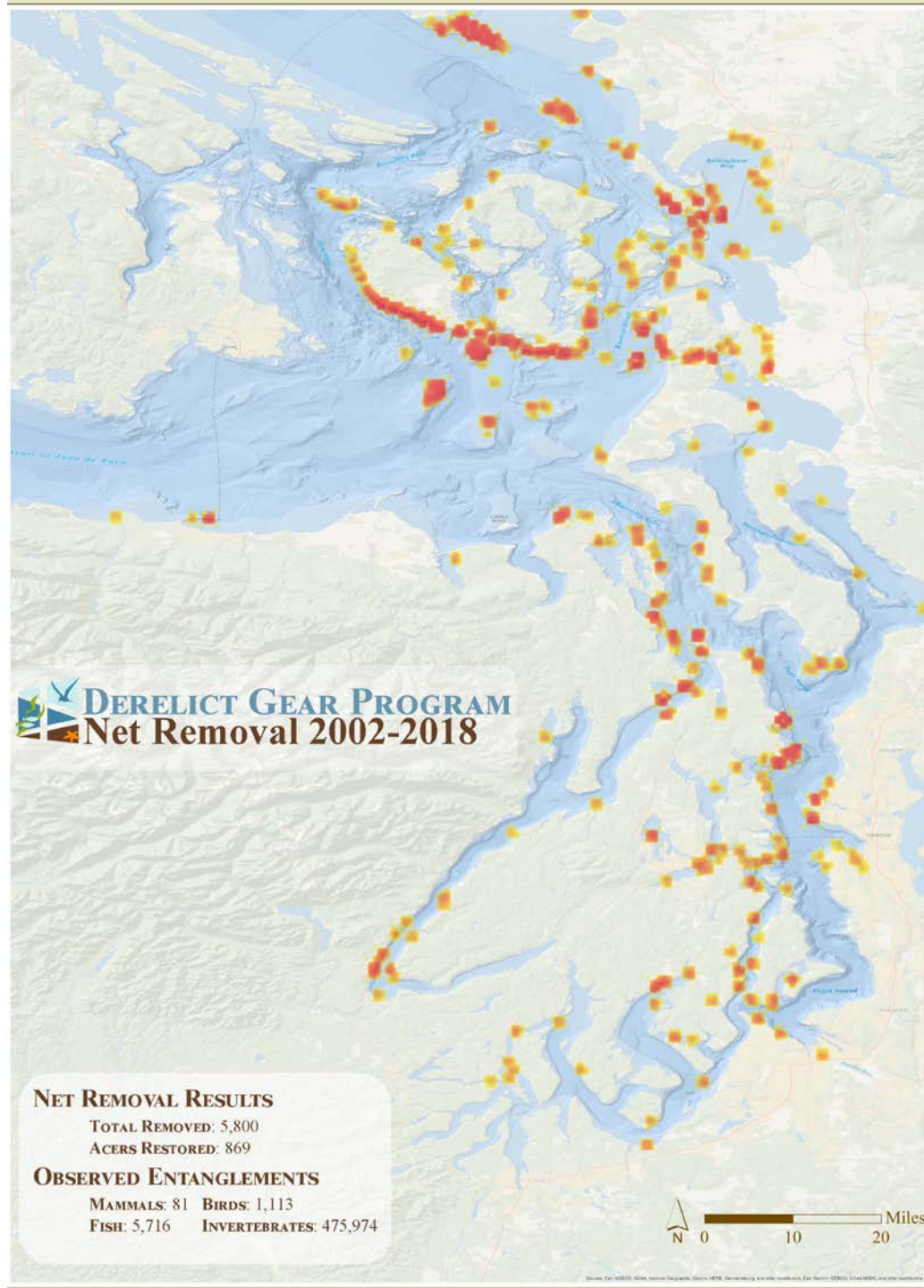




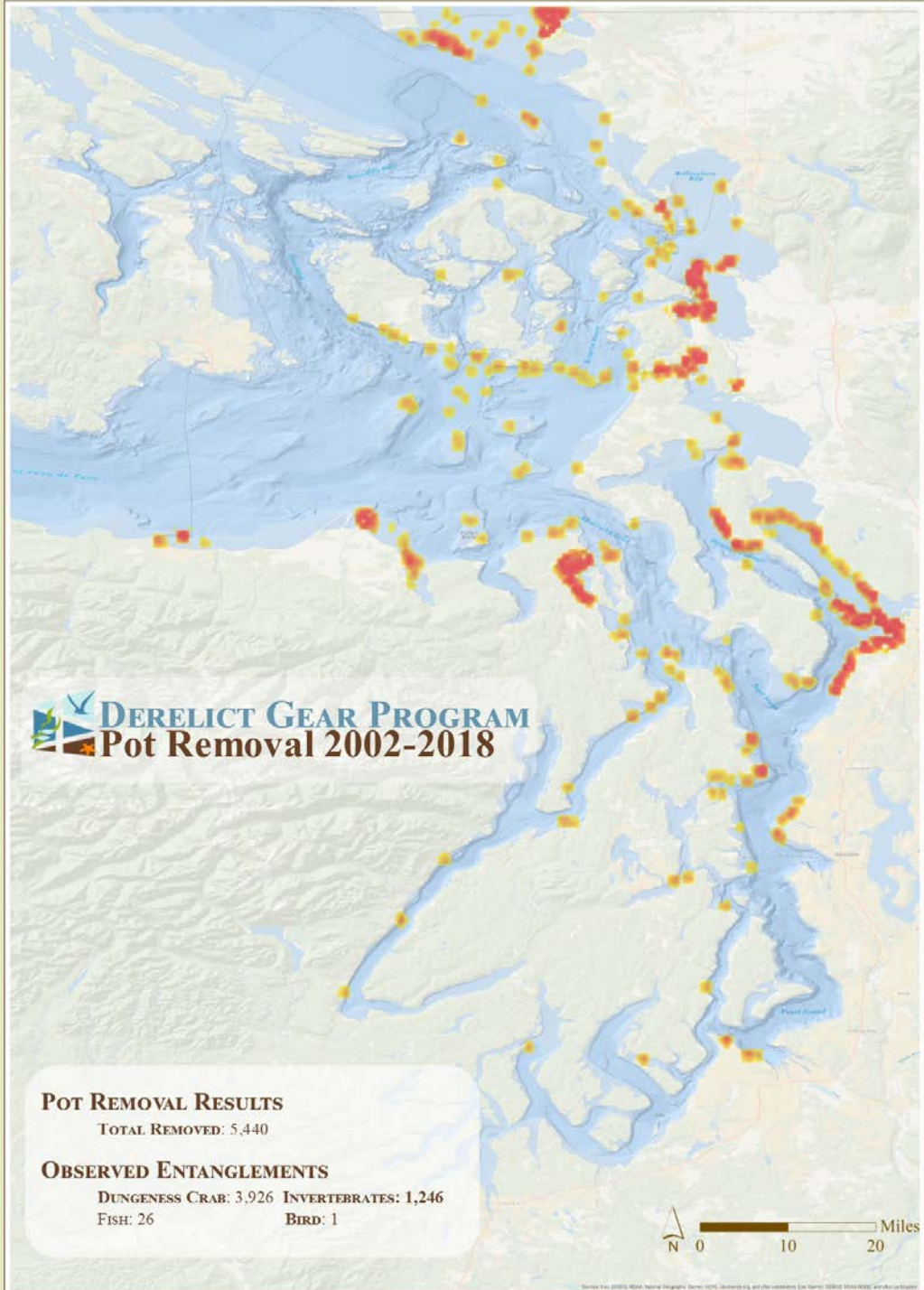








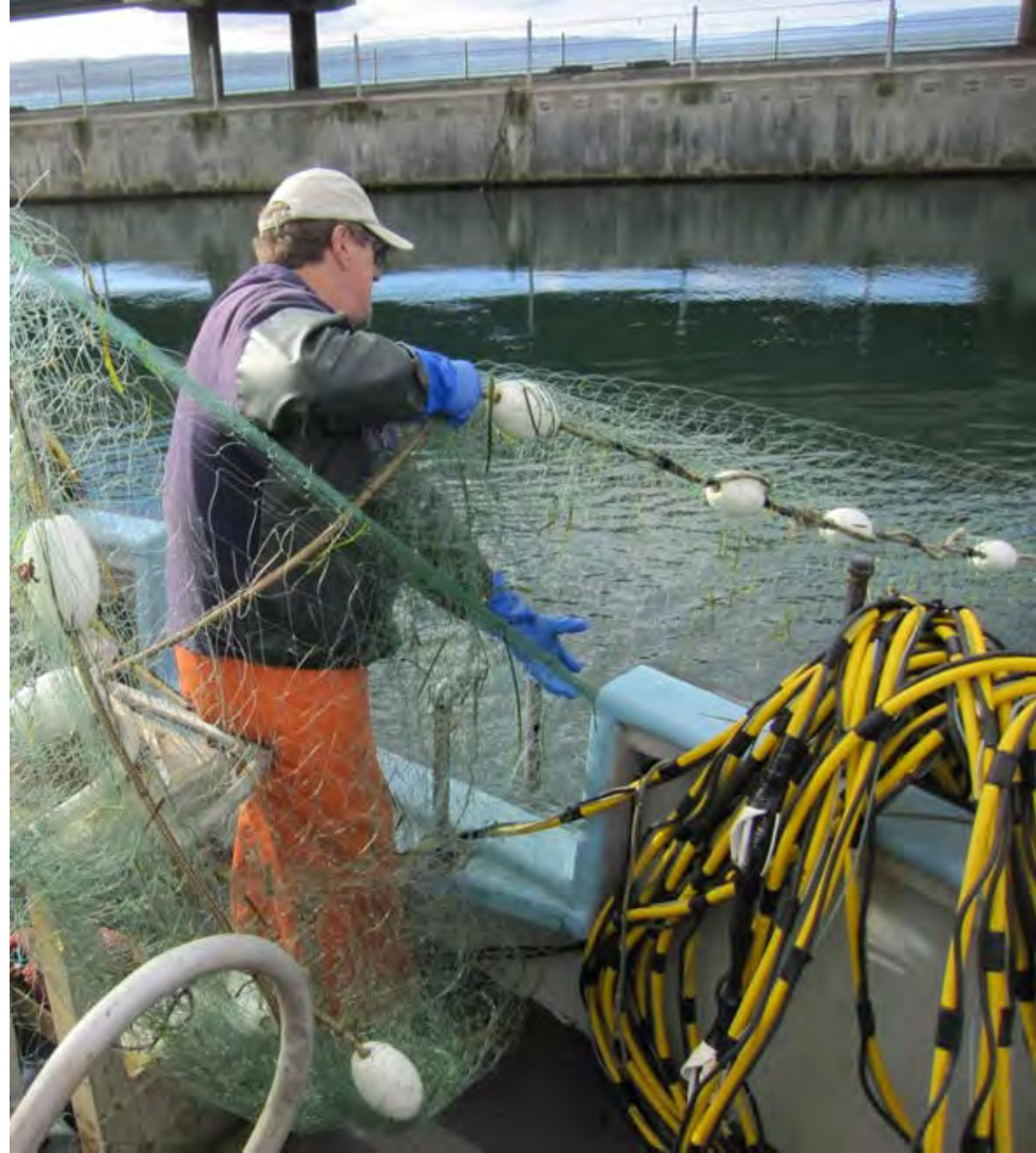






# Reporting, Response, and Retrieval Program

- Reporting system in place
- State fishers required to report within 24 hours
- Tribal fishers required to report under NOAA harvest rules
- Respond to all reports
- Coordinate with fishers and agencies for removal





# Derelict Crab Pots

- Estimated 12,000 lost annually
- Pots can fish up to 2.2 years
- 180,000 harvestable crabs lost per year
- User error most common cause





# Common User Errors

- Lightweight pots
- Length of line
- Buoys
- Floating line
- Checking tides and currents
- Crabbing in high traffic areas





# Developing an Effective Outreach Campaign

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- Utilize knowledgeable resources available
- Work with target audience to:
  - Understand barriers
  - Understand motivators
  - Develop messaging
  - Know where to promote messaging







# Ghost pots of Puget Sound

12,000 crab pots are lost in Puget Sound each year. A single lost crab pot without escape cord can kill up to 30 crabs until deterioration. That adds up to 180,000 harvestable crabs lost each year. To avoid this, follow best fishing practices when you go crabbing:

- **AVOID MARINE TRANSIT** and ferry lanes
- **USE MULTIPLE BUOYS** in high current areas
- **MARK YOUR GEAR** with clearly visible buoys
- **WEIGHT YOUR LINE** to sink below the surface and avoid being cut by passing boats
- **WEIGHT YOUR POTS** so they do not move in high currents or tidal changes
- **USE THE CORRECT LENGTH OF LINE.** Use 1/3 more line than water depth.
- **SECURE LID AND ESCAPE PANELS WITH BIODEGRADABLE COTTON ESCAPE CORD.** This allows crabs to escape from lost pots after the cord degrades.
- **ADD BUNGEE CORD TO TOP DOOR ESCAPE PANELS.** This increases chances of escapement once escape cord has disintegrated.

[www.derelictgear.org](http://www.derelictgear.org)



partners in marine conservation



## Northwest Straits Foundation

removes lost and abandoned fishing gear from Puget Sound. Since 2001, the Foundation has worked cooperatively through the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative with fishermen, tribes, and agencies to document the impacts of derelict gear, remove damaging gear, and raise awareness about the harm caused by derelict gear in Puget Sound.

**Progress to date** As of May 2015, we have removed 5,500 derelict nets, 3,800 derelict crab pots and restored 790 acres of critical marine habitat in Puget Sound. Over 442,000 animals representing 260 species were found entangled in this gear, including marine mammals, birds, and commercially valuable fish and shellfish.

**Research** plays a big role in how the Northwest Straits Foundation tackles the problem of derelict fishing gear. Results of the Foundation's recently completed crab pot escapement study suggest that crab pot design, especially panel opening design, affect crab escapement rates and success. Designs with panel doors that drop open, instead of those that need to be pushed open, increase escapement rates. The good news is you can greatly increase your crab pot's effectiveness with a cheap fix, by adding a bungee cord to the top to pull the door open after the escape cord disintegrates. **Learn how you can volunteer with your local Marine Resources Committee (MRC) or make a gift to support our work at our website.**



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## CATCH MORE CRAB!

*Seven helpful  
tips to prevent your  
crab pot from becoming  
one of the **12,000 pots lost in  
Puget Sound** each year:*

- **Avoid high traffic**, marine transit and ferry lanes.
- **Check tides and currents.** Avoid crabbing during strong tidal changes and currents.
- **Make buoys more visible.** Add a second buoy or a stick and flag.
- **Use a weighted line** to sink below the surface and avoid being cut by passing boats.
- **Weight your crab pots** so they do not move with currents or tidal changes.
- **Use longer line.** Use 1/3 more line than the water depth to allow for changes in tides and currents.
- **Secure lid and escape panels with cotton (biodegradable) escape cord.** Crabs can escape from lost pots after the cord degrades.



for more information visit  
[derelictgear.org](http://derelictgear.org)

## KEEP YOUR POTS CATCH MORE CRAB!

### 12,000 Crab Pots are Lost

in Puget Sound each year. A single lost crab pot can kill up to 50 crabs until it deteriorates – that's 180,000 harvestable crabs that could otherwise make it to the dinner table!

### The Northwest Straits Initiative

Since 2002, we have removed more than 5,700 derelict nets, 4,800 derelict crab pots and restored 830 acres of critical marine habitat.

### Who We Are

A nationally-recognized conservation initiative, the Northwest Straits Initiative brings together scientists and community volunteers in northwest Washington, coordinated by a non-profit Northwest Straits Foundation, a state government partner Northwest Straits Commission, and seven county-based Marine Resources Committees.

### Enter to win!

To be entered into a prize drawing for new crabbing gear, please complete the brief survey found at the following link: <https://goo.gl/iwvhXB>

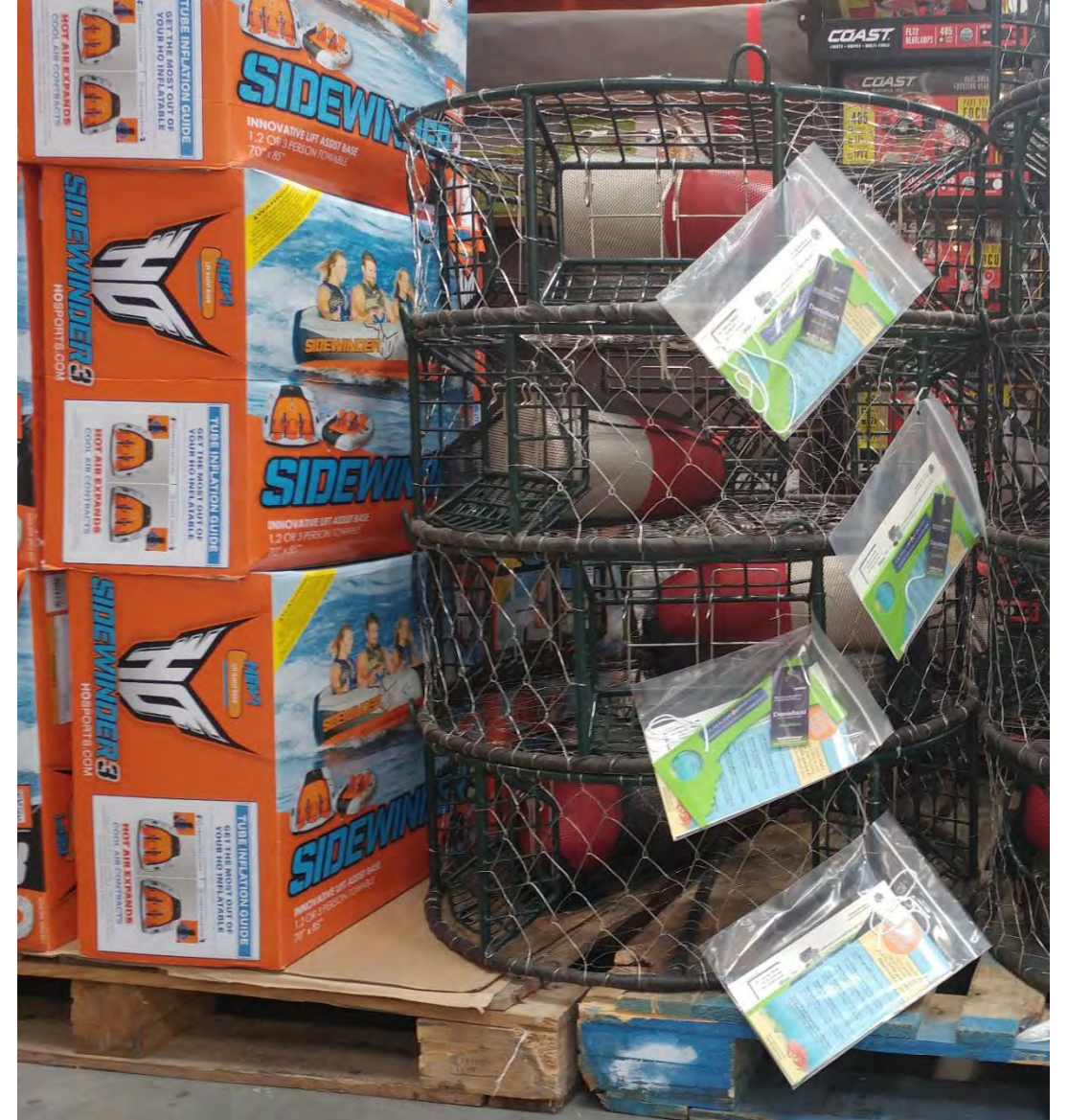
To learn more about lost crab pots in Puget Sound visit [www.derelictgear.org](http://www.derelictgear.org)



 **Northwest  
Straits**  
INITIATIVE  
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**Crabber outreach videos shared as part of  
this presentation can be viewed online at:**

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=L\\_TD8QhxJW4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=L_TD8QhxJW4)**



# Results

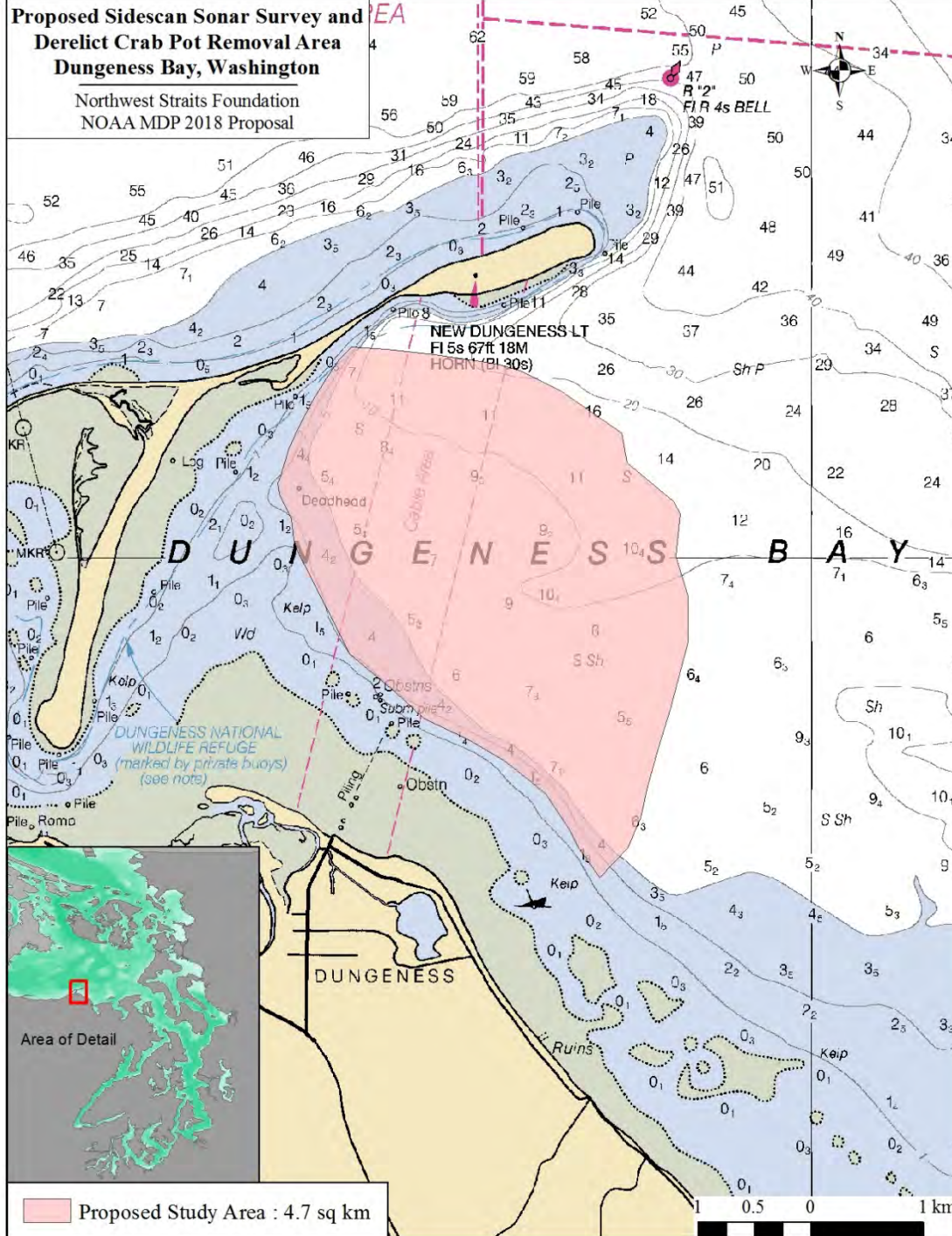
- Reached over 300,000 people annually since 2016
- Are we changing behavior?
- 70% of people surveyed say yes





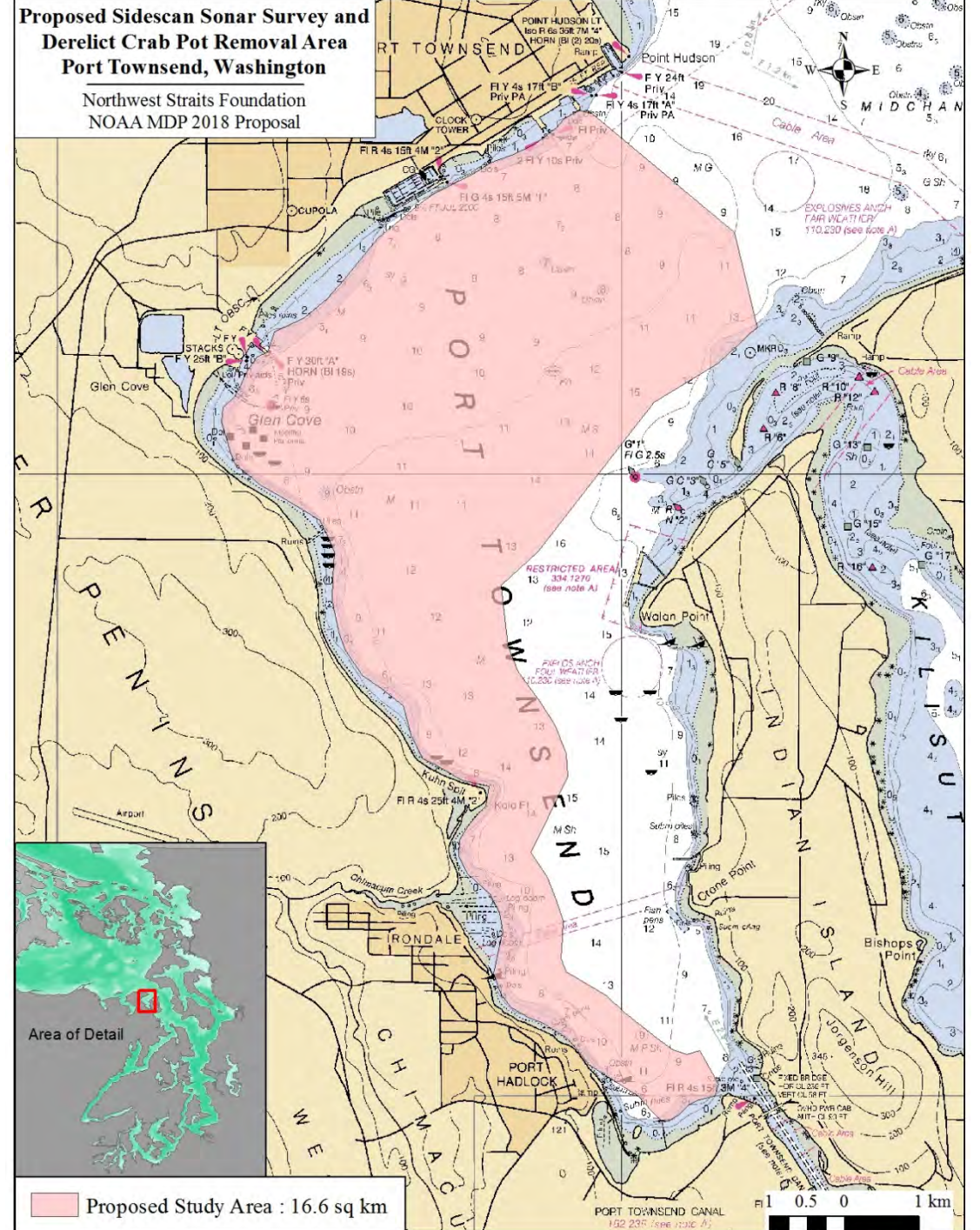
# **Proposed Sidescan Sonar Survey and Derelict Crab Pot Removal Area Dungeness Bay, Washington**

Northwest Straits Foundation  
NOAA MDP 2018 Proposal



# **Proposed Sidescan Sonar Survey and Derelict Crab Pot Removal Area Port Townsend, Washington**

Northwest Straits Foundation  
NOAA MDP 2018 Proposal





# Thank You to our Funders

NOAA

WDFW

Puget Sound Treaty Tribes

USFWS

Dept. of Ecology

WDNR

NFWF

Karakin Foundation

Vincent J Coates Foundation

Puget Sound Anglers

Charlotte Martin Foundation

Everett Community Foundation





Thank

You!



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*Photo: Florian Graner*