



Washington
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**NORTHWEST INDIAN
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June 14, 2018

**Dan Tonnes
National Marine Fisheries Service
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115**

**Katherine Fitzgerald
Endangered Species Biologist, USFWS
Washington Fish and Wildlife Office
510 Desmond Dr. SE, Suite 102
Lacey, WA 98503**

RE: 2017 Reported Loss of Salmon Fishing Gear

Dear Mr. Tonnes and Ms. Fitzgerald,

Pursuant to the terms and conditions of both NOAA's 2017 Biological Opinion (F/WCR-2017-6766) which authorizes Puget Sound salmon fisheries through April 30, 2018 and the USFWS's 2017-2036 Puget Sound Treaty and Non-Treaty Salmon Fisheries Biological Opinion (01EWF00-2016-F-1181), this letter summarizes incidents of commercial salmon fishing gear lost in marine waters during the 2017 fishing season which were reported by commercial fishers to fisheries management and enforcement agencies, as well as a summary of reports provided by private citizens to the Northwest Straits Derelict Gear Hotline (NWSDG) for the 2017 calendar year.

Jason Morgan, Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF), provided a summary of all (Treaty and Non-treaty) gear loss incidents reported during calendar year 2017 as described in the Northwest Straits database. The NWSDG received 12 reports of lost nets or, more commonly, pieces of nets in marine/estuarine waters potentially associated with Puget Sound co-managers salmon net fisheries during 2017 (Table 1). After investigation, one of the reports was determined to not be lost or derelict salmon fishing gear (Table 1). For purposes of this reporting, we have accounted for this incident in the data for Table 1 (Non-Derelict) as it pertains to a report provided to NWSDG.

Table 1. Summary of 2017 reports in NWSF Derelict Gear Reporting Database.

Reporting Entity	Lost/Derelict	Non-Derelict ¹	Total
Public	9	0	9
Fisher Reported	0	0	0
Tribal/State Resource	2	1	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>12</i>

¹ Non-derelict reports were reported to NWSF but subsequently determined to not be derelict fishing gear.

Of the 11 lost/derelict reports in Table 1, 10 nets were confirmed removed either by NWSF removal crews, private citizens, or WDFW enforcement. The one net considered possibly still remaining in the area, reported inside Drayton Harbor by a private citizen, could not be located by recovery crews despite repeated efforts. Due to the lack of commercial fishing activity in the last 10+ years in Drayton Harbor and its geography, there is uncertainty by co-managers that this reported net was related to salmon fishing activity.

While the other 10 reported nets or pieces of nets were all removed, the co-managers cannot confirm that they were all associated with domestic Puget Sound salmon fisheries based on the time and locations of the nets. Six of the removed nets (four in South Puget Sound and two in North Puget Sound) were reported and removed during times in or near areas where salmon fisheries occurred. Three of the removed nets all reported by private citizens were in the San Juan Islands area near the Canadian border during times and in areas where no domestic salmon net fisheries were active (March-April) and no salmon net fisheries had occurred in the previous four months. One net, removed from a beach in the central Puget Sound area, was made of multiple types of mesh and was reported at a time when no salmon net fisheries had occurred in the previous five months. While nets reported in areas with no recently active salmon net fisheries could have come from domestic vessels fishing during the previous year, as they were considered newly lost nets, it is also possible that they came from other sources. Regardless of the source of these nets, we reiterate that these 10 reported nets were confirmed removed by NWSF, WDFW enforcement, or the private citizens who reported them.

Sincerely,

Chris James
Conservation Planning Biologist, NWIFC

Kendall Henry
Puget Sound Commercial Salmon
Fishery Manager, WDFW

**Cc: Susan Bishop, NOAA
Rudy Peone, BIA
Anna Schmidt, BIA
Craig Bowhay, NWIFC
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