



Washington  
Department of  
**FISH and  
WILDLIFE**

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May 10, 2017

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

RE: 2016 Reported Loss of Salmon Fishing Gear

Dear Mr. Tonnes:

Pursuant to the terms and conditions of the 2016 Biological Opinion which authorizes Puget Sound salmon fisheries through April 30, 2017, this letter summarizes incidents of commercial salmon fishing gear lost in marine waters during the 2016 fishing season which were reported by commercial fishers to fisheries management and enforcement agencies, as well as a summary of reports provided to the Northwest Straits Derelict Gear Hotline (NWSDG) for the 2016 calendar year.

Jason Morgan, Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF), provided a summary of all (Treaty and Non-treaty) gear loss incidents reported during the calendar year 2016 as described in the Northwest Straits database. The NWSDG received 16 reports of lost gillnets or pieces of gillnets in marine waters during 2016 (Table 1). Two of these reports, both from private citizens, were legal, active fishing gear. One report from a recreational fisher was not able to be confirmed as a net, but believed to be a net by the reporter because of snagging of recreational fishing gear, while NWSDG refers to it as a possible 'net'. Three additional reports from private citizens were also unable to be confirmed as gillnets by responding entities. For purposes of this reporting, we have accounted for these 'nets' in the data for Table 1 as they pertain to a report provided to NWSDG. Three nets were self-reported by commercial fishers, either to Resource Management staff and/or to the NWSDG. Two of the fisher reported nets were removed. The third fisher reported lost net was the result of the net being run over by a recreational boater and was not able to be located by removal crews. An additional reported net, noted in Table 1 from WDFW, was from a fisheries manager reporting of a capsized fishing vessel with crab pots and a gill net onboard.

Table 1. Summary of 2016 reports in NWSF Derelict Gear Reporting Database.

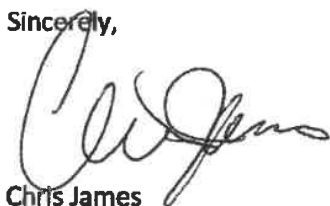
Reporting Entity	Lost/Derelict	Legal <sup>1</sup>	Total
Public	9	2	11
Fisher Reported	3	0	3
WDFW	1	0	1
WSDOT	1	0	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>16</i>

<sup>1</sup> "Legal" nets were nets reported as Lost/Derelict gear to NWSFG hotline but subsequently determined to be legal nets in an active fishery.

Of the 14 lost/derelict net reports including fisher self-reported nets in Table 1, nine nets were confirmed removed either by NWSF removal crews, Tribal Resources Management, or WDFW enforcement. One net is considered still remaining in the area; the fisher reported net which was run through by a recreational boater. Two 'nets' are considered 'unknown' removal status because no follow-up was provided to NWSF. Two other 'nets' may be remaining: 1) the snagging structure reported by a recreational fisher which is not certain to be a 'net' let alone a salmon fishing net and 2) a 'net' in a narrow channel (~0.5 Km wide) near the Everett Boat Ramp, which seems unlikely to still remain given the high boat-traffic location and no subsequent additional reports.

Another five reports, two of which were believed by the reporters to be gillnets, submitted by private citizens to the NWSFG program as lost gear in Puget Sound marine waters, were not derelict salmon nets (i.e. were crab pots, aquaculture net-pens, trawl net, shellfish nets, and marine debris/trash) based on follow-up/recovery and therefore not related to the action consulted on by co-managers and not accounted for in this correspondence. We provide this additional information as context of the uncertainty of derelict gillnet reports in the Puget Sound given the challenge of reporting entities to accurately identify the type of gear observed and in relation to the reports of lost nets provided in Table 1 which could not be confirmed by NWSF or Tribal or State enforcement/resource management as verified salmon net gear.

Sincerely,



Chris James  
Conservation Planning Biologist, NWIFC



Kendall Henry  
Puget Sound Commercial Salmon  
Fishery Manager, WDFW

cc: Susan Bishop, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Rudy Peone, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Craig Bowhay, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission  
Ron Warren, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Aaron Dufault, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife