

Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation (CCFI) and partners finishing the year with approximately 50,000 lbs of fishing gear retrieved to date.

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St. John's, N.L. - Thanks to the funding provided by Fisheries and Oceans Canada Ghost Gear Fund following the wake of Hurricane Fiona, the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation (CCFI) announces the retrieval of over 50,000 pounds of lost fishing gear, spanning from Burgeo to Port aux Basques on the southwest coast, and Trout River to Cow Head in the Gros Morne region. This achievement results from a *Ghost Gear and Marine Debris Identification and Retrieval* project, an initiative that maximized innovative technology while forging collaborative essential community partnerships. Working alongside CCFI, key partners including the Atlantic Healthy Oceans Initiative (AHOI), Qikiqtaaluk Corporation (QC), Sparkes Subsea, and Clean Harbours Initiative (CHI), joined forces with coastal communities to identify and recover lost fishing gear.

Side scan sonar technology aboard QC's research vessel, the *Ludy Pudluk*, pinpointed areas on the southwest coast for ghost gear retrieval. Building on this valuable information, Sparkes Subsea, CHI, and AHOI have coordinated focused retrieval efforts in Burgeo, Rose Blanche-Harbour le Cou, La Poile, Port aux Basques, and Gros Morne, on the shoreline as well as along the coast.

"Through collaboration with our dedicated partners – AHOI, QC, Sparkes Subsea, and CHI – CCFI is harnessing cutting-edge side scan and ROV technology with the support of coastal communities. Together, we're working towards sustaining fisheries, one lost net or trap at a time," said Keith Hutching, Managing Director of CCFI. The project's successes included retrieving lost lobster traps, crab pots, rope, and nets.

Notably, during cleanup efforts in Port aux Basques, CHI recovered eight reusable lost lobster pots that will be returned to the fish harvester who owns them. To ensure minimal environmental impact, all other fishing gear will be upcycled or responsibly disposed of, highlighting the project's commitment to reducing its footprint on coastal areas and communities. This is made possible through CCFI's partnerships with the Fishing Gear Coalition of Atlantic Canada (FGCAC) and Recycle on the Rock, which aims to upcycle and dispose of end-of-life and ghost fishing gear responsibly.

Sydney Sullivan, Plastics and Marine Conservation Coordinator with AHOI emphasized the importance of giving gear a second life, stating, "Circularity is our goal as we give ghost gear a second life instead of sending all of the material to the landfill. We're happy to collaborate with partners in Newfoundland and across Atlantic Canada to foster cleaner and more resilient coastal communities."

In an effort to address the issue of end-of-life fishing gear and its contribution to ghost gear, CCFI, in partnership with ACAP Humber Arm and AHOI, conducted end-of-life fishing gear collections in Gros Morne, Burgeo, and Port aux Basques. These collections collected over 10,000 pounds of end-of-life fishing gear.

As retrieval efforts continue on the southwest coast, the project exemplifies innovation, collaboration, and environmental stewardship while supporting the resilience of coastal communities and ensuring sustainable fisheries that are vital to our communities and regions.

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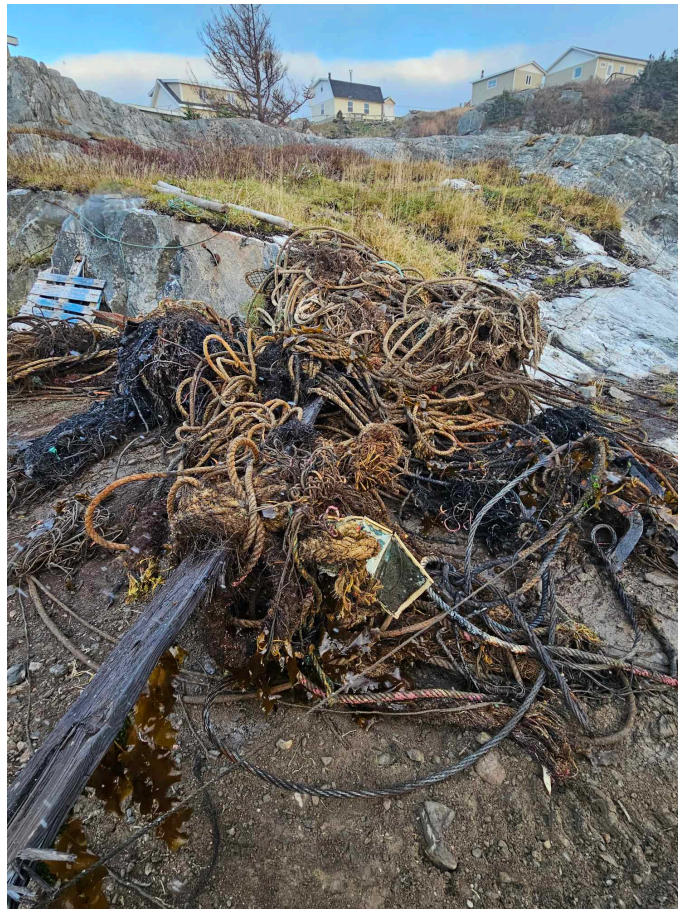
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A large entanglement of ghost gear identified using AHOI's ROV in Fox Roost on the southwest coast.



The same entanglement of ghost gear, including a lobster trap, dragger cable, and rope, removed by Sparkes Subsea from Fox Roost on the southwest coast of NL.



AHOI crew members sorting end-of-life fishing gear for upcycling and responsible disposal.



The crew aboard the Ludy Pudluck with the side scan sonar before departing for the southwest coast. Pictured (left to right): Katie Cousens, Narcissus Walsh, Philip Walsh, and Kirk Regular.

About the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation (CCFI):

[The Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation](#) (CCFI) is a non-profit Separate Incorporated Entity (SIE) of Memorial University with a vision for a seafood industry that integrates the latest technology and innovation to ensure sustainability and profitability with a mission to enable leading edge research, innovation, and technology in the Canadian seafood industry. We believe in values of being:

Engaged: CCFI engages with industry, research, government, and other key partners in fisheries innovation.

Informed: CCFI identifies best practices, programming, and opportunities for technology adaptation from fisheries R&D from around the world, and shares this with our industry and research partners.

Responsive: CCFI responds to R&D needs in the fish harvesting, processing, and aquaculture sectors, developing and leading projects big and small, and transitioning quickly to meet emerging opportunities or challenges.

Inclusive: CCFI demonstrates leadership in equity and diversity, and fosters understanding and a shared approach with Indigenous peoples and communities.

Sustainable: CCFI supports sustainable fisheries and enables industry adaptation to climate change.

About Atlantic Healthy Oceans Initiative (AHOI):

[Atlantic Healthy Oceans Initiative](#) is a registered non-profit organization in the Gros Morne region of N.L. Its mission is to build awareness of our changing ocean and facilitate actions to protect it and the people that depend on it most. Looking after the marine biodiversity of our ocean and the coastal communities' way of life *together* is essential to protecting our environment, building successful stewardship and a sustainable blue economy for generations to come.

About Qikiqtaaluk Corporation (QC):

[Qikiqtaaluk Corporation](#) is a wholly owned Inuit birthright development corporation created by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association in 1983, QC's purpose is to provide employment and financial opportunities for Inuit in the region. QC has a remarkable track record in Inuit training, capacity building and employment successes.