

MARELITT Toolkit Causes of DFG

Direct causes	Description
Snagging or breakage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accidental loss when nets are snagged ('hooked' on rock, coral or wrecks or broken when attempting to retrieve them) or break when attempting to retrieve them. ▪ Breakage if the weight of the catch is too heavy, which causes them to sink.
Cost of fishing gear retrieval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost may keep fishermen from retrieving their fishing gear. ▪ In the past, it was time consuming to track and to retrieve a gill net, incidentally lost or following gear conflicts. It was cheaper to return to the port and to purchase a new gill net. As such, a high number of these nets have been abandoned. ▪ Meanwhile however, the cost of quality nets has increased, while the profitability of gillnet fishing has decreased, due to the low market prices for fish. Therefore, a fisherman cannot afford any more to lose or to abandon a gill net.
Low-quality gear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fishing gear has become more durable, but also more expensive, which means that fishermen cannot afford to lose costly gear. However, lower-quality, cheaper gear which is more easily abandoned or lost, is being increasingly used in some areas and fisheries. ▪ Also, there will be limited incentives for retrieving this gear.
Spatial pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spatial pressure results in gear conflicts between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ static and towed gears, when trawlers tow through set-nets (resulting in net loss or damage); ▪ gillnet fishing fleet and merchant fleet: merchant vessels run over net markers/flags and consequently tow/move the fleets or cut the rope from marker to gillnets (such that they cannot be found anymore by the owner). ▪ recreational and commercial vessels.
Adverse weather conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ They make it more likely that FG, in particular gill nets, will be left behind, discarded or drift off due to extremely strong bottom currents. ▪ Floating or drift gillnets may be lost when marker buoys are lost in adverse weather.
Enforcement pressure	Vessels that practice illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing (e.g. use of high seas drift gillnets), may abandon gear in an effort to evade enforcement vessels. DFG is then an unwanted consequence of enforcement.
Discharge of unwanted gear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discharge of unwanted gear, including non-operational gear (resulting from reductions in the fishing fleet and quotas) and waste resulting from repair work during fishing trips. ▪ Fishing gear can be disposed in sea in order to avoid time, effort or cost on having delivering the nets to a waste management facility.
Unavailability of port reception facilities	An indirect cause is the unavailability of adequate and affordable port reception facilities, which may encourage dumping of unwanted fishing gear at sea rather than disposal onshore