

Fishing nets on the coastline of the North Atlantic region

What is causing the issue and how can it be solved?

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Fishing nets, also called 'ghost nets', can often be found floating at sea



Under the influence of wind and currents, such nets, along with other floating marine litter, may be transported over long distances



...along the way, such nets pose a serious risk to wildlife



...and a safety of navigation hazard to ships and fishing vessels

SVALBARDPOSTEN
VELENS PRODUKTILAND

MENY LOGGINN BLI ABONNENT SØK




Photo: Governors

Trawlers in trouble - got a net in the propeller

A 20 meter long trawler with six people on board received a trawl net in the propeller in Isfjorden.

Kent Nybø

News Cornwall News Newquay

Fishing boat stranded at sea after propeller is snagged by drifting trawler nets off Newquay

The fishing boat was stranded at sea four miles north west of Newquay

SHARE f t c COMMENTS By [Olivier Vergnault](#) Senior Reporter 09:50, 11 JAN 2018

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Photo: WJ Strietman

...eventually, most floating fishing net litter will reach the shoreline

On this
Particular beach in
Iceland, 30% of all items
were pieces of net

-> 13% of beach litter in the NE Atlantic is fishing gear,
most of which are fishing nets and pieces of fishing net

Source: OSPAR, 2021



**What can be done to
solve this issue?**

To tackle the root cause, a deeper understanding of the underlying human induced practices and pathways is crucial

What?

Who?

Why?

Where?

How?

Are these questions being answered as part of beach litter monitoring efforts currently being applied throughout Europe (e.g. OSPAR)?

OSPAR ID	Unep ID	Items
29		Oyster trays (round from oyster cultures)
30		Plastic sheeting from mussel culture (Tahitians)
31		Rope (diameter more than 1 cm)
32		String and cord (diameter less than 1 cm)
115		Nets and pieces of net < 50 cm
116		Nets and pieces of net > 50 cm
33		Tangled nets/cord/rope and string
34		Fish boxes
35		Fishing line (angling)



What?

Who?

Where?

Why?

How?



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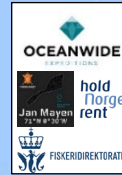
Our mission: to leverage stakeholder's knowledge to understand the root causes of marine litter, and empower them to address them



During interactive sessions we involve stakeholders and experts in the analysis to determine sources, causes and solutions to beach litter



Study areas and collaboration partners since 2017



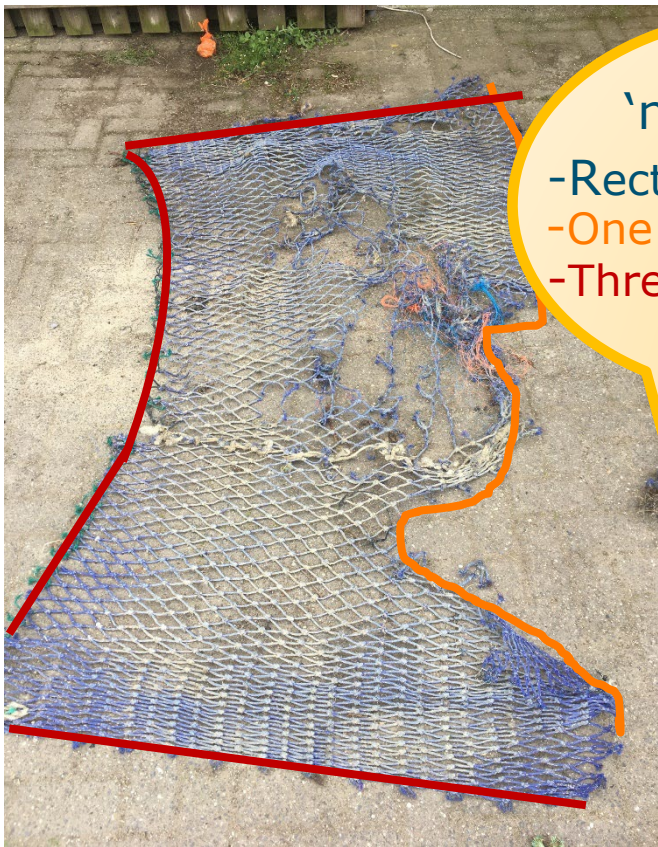
As part of the procedure, we analyse each fishing net together with local fisheries experts

Step 1: untangle each net and determine its size

Step 2: determine the mesh size and type of netting

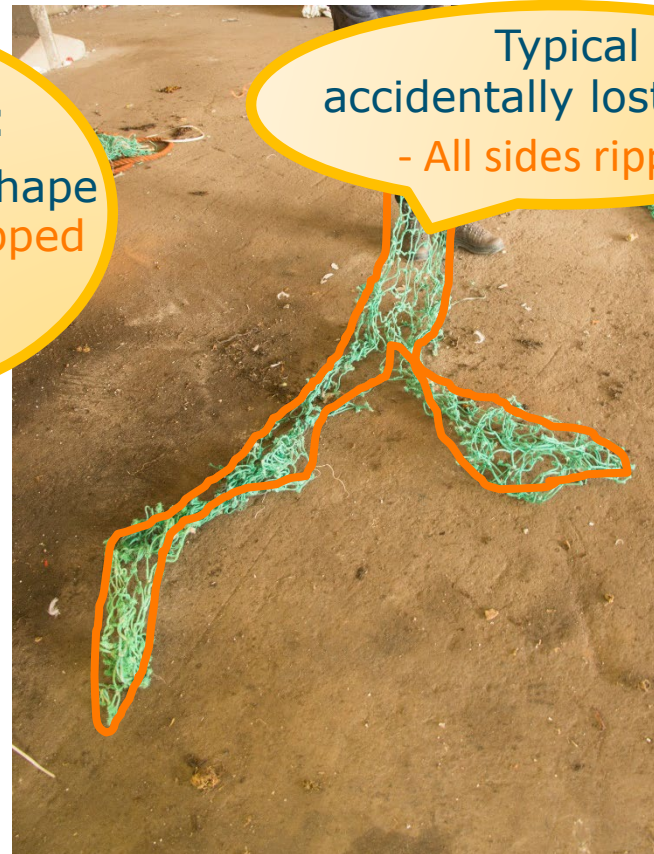
Step 3: analyse the sides of the net to determine whether these were cut or torn

How do we determine whether a net was cut or torn?



Typical
'net cutting':

- Rectangular in shape
- One side torn/ripped
- Three sides cut



Typical
accidentally lost piece:

- All sides ripped

In a dialogue setting with stakeholders, the results are discussed, creating a shared understanding of the causes and solutions

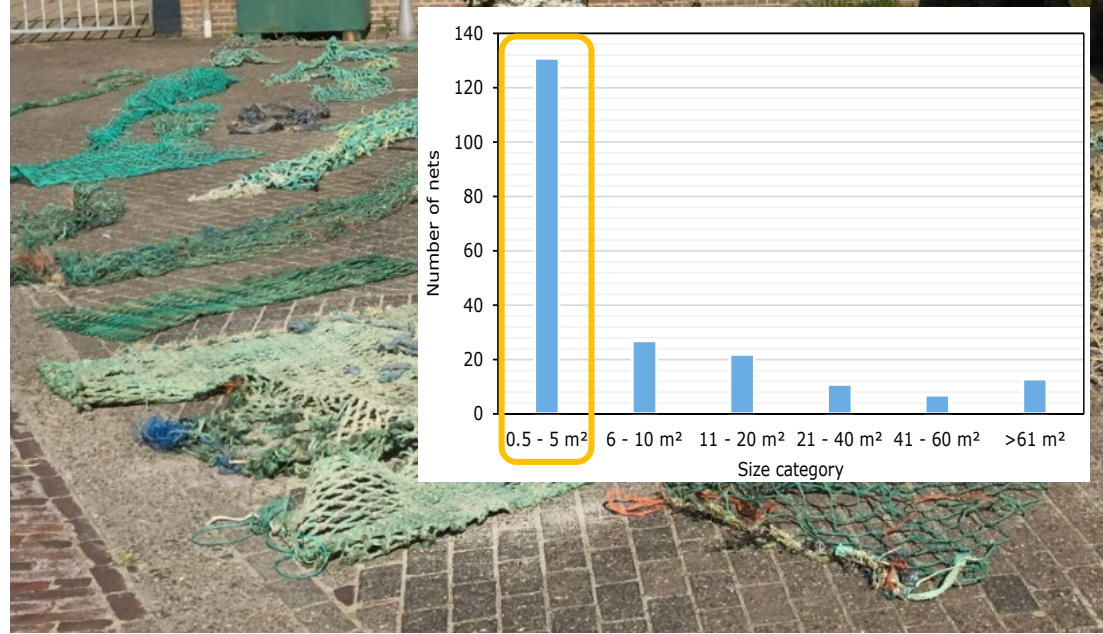


Key finding 1: all nets are pieces, rather than complete nets

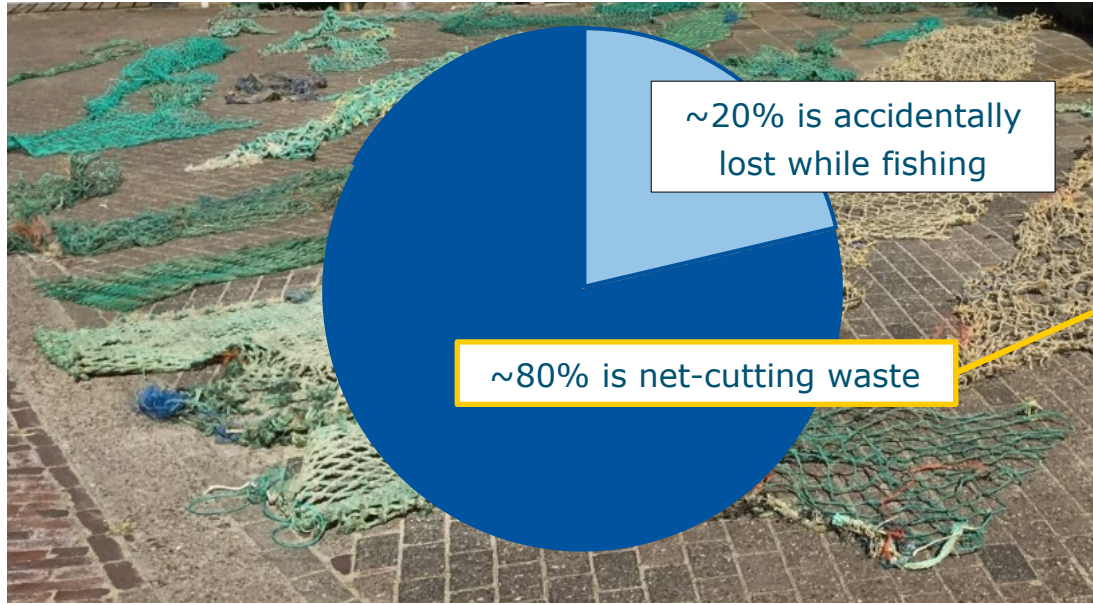
Most pieces are small



Of the larger pieces, most are less than 5m² in size

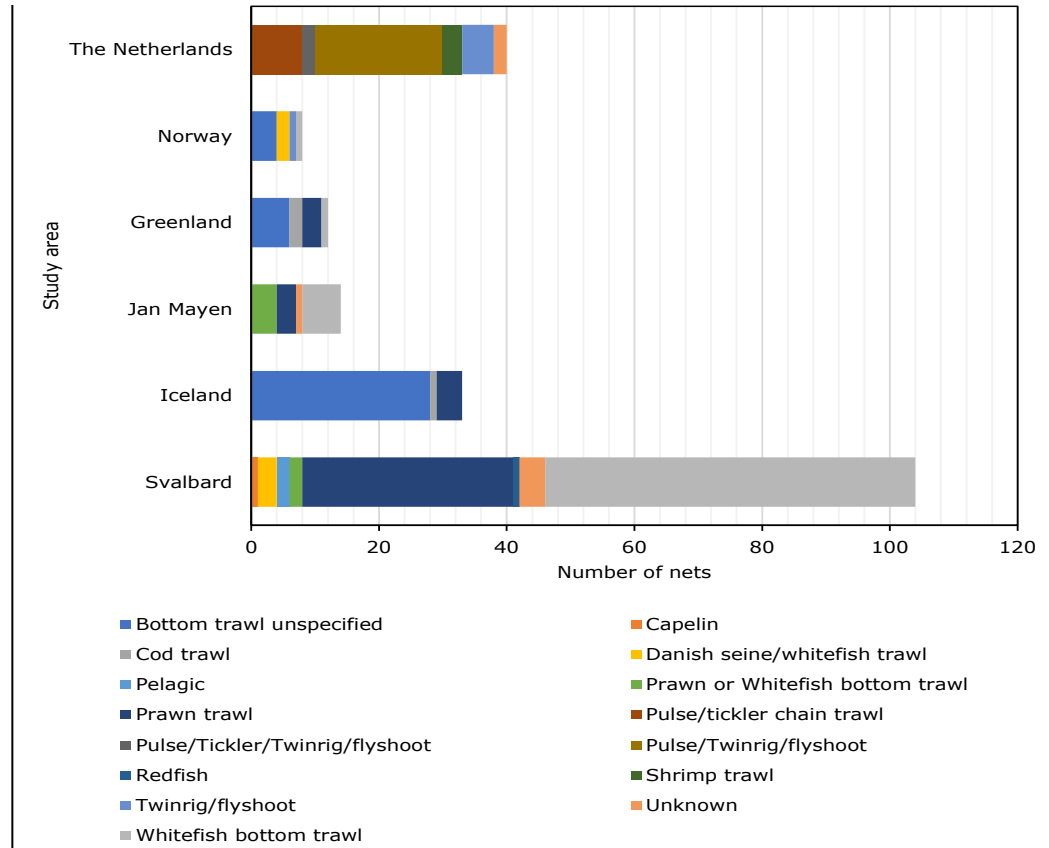


Key finding 2: most pieces >50cm are mismanaged off-cuts from bottom trawling nets, the result of repair and maintenance



-> All study areas showed similar results

Key finding 3: the sources are local bottom trawl fisheries



Key finding 4: most smaller pieces are mismanaged off-cuts from loose mesh ends and from repair cord



Net-cutting waste usually reaches the sea due to inadequate deck-cleaning operations or being unintentionally washed or swept overboard



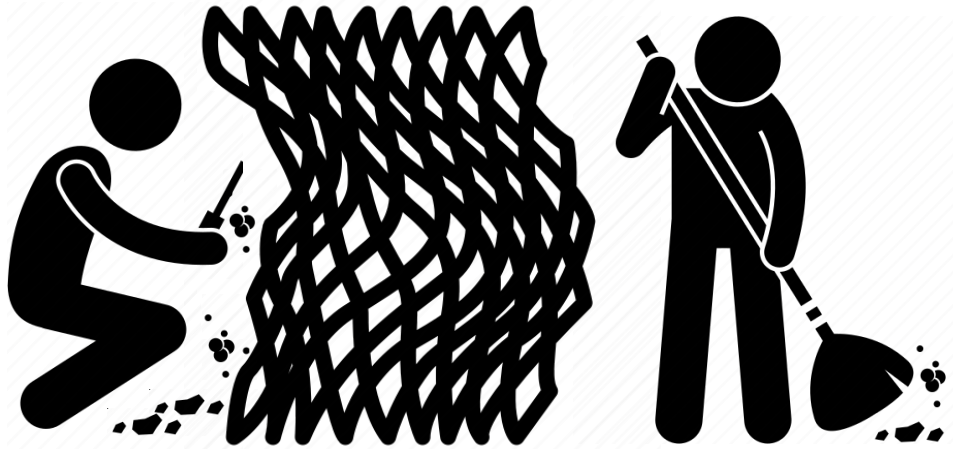
Other waste produced on deck reaches the sea in a similar way



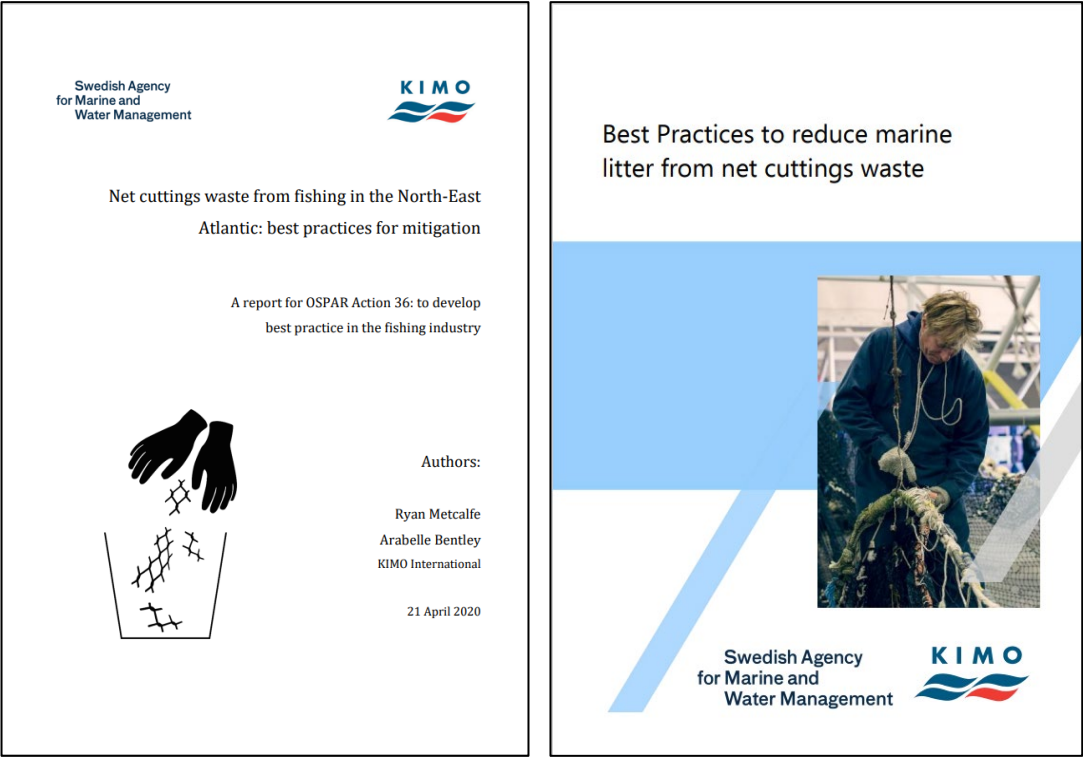
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Photo: WJ Strietman

Most fisheries related litter on beaches, can be prevented by improving waste management of operational waste on deck and on the quayside in ports



Best practices for mitigation are presented in the following two KIMO reports:



On a positive note: such practices are progressively being applied by fishermen, but further steps should be taken by the fishing industry, port authorities and governments



All findings are presented in the following report:

Strietman, W.J., 2021. *Fishing nets on the coastline of the Arctic and North-East Atlantic: a source analysis*

-> The report can be downloaded for free at <https://doi.org/10.18174/541335> or at www.wur.eu/economic-research (under Wageningen Economic Research publications).



Fishing nets on the coastline of the Arctic and North-East Atlantic: a source analysis

Findings and recommendations based on an in-depth analysis of the sources, origin, and pathways of fishing nets collected on beaches in Greenland, Iceland, Jan Mayen, Svalbard, the Netherlands, Norway, and Scotland

Strietman, W.J.

This research is a team effort – a big thank you to my colleagues and our collaboration partners!



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