

A GHOSTLY ISSUE: MANAGING ABANDONED, LOST AND DISCARDED LOBSTER FISHING GEAR IN THE BAY OF FUNDY IN EASTERN CANADA



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This paper investigates the factors contributing to the build up of lost and abandoned fishing gear from the commercial fishing sector in the Bay of Fundy Eastern Canada. The authors illustrate what factors contribute to the problem, as well as potential policy and managerial approaches to addressing key inefficiencies.

APPROACH:

Data for this article was collected through in-person semi-structured interviews with 32 fishers and 5 fishing management companies.

MAIN FINDINGS:

- There is significant room for public policy adjustments in order to motivate better equipment retrieval practices. These include:
 - Modifying regulations that implicitly prohibit the retrieval of gear. For example, it is illegal to carry lobster fishing equipment outside of the lobster fishing season.
 - Accordingly, reduce the amount of paperwork associated with gear retrieval as it adds extra burden to fishers who are dissuaded by the extra work.
- There is also room for industry management practices to change to encourage fishing gear retrieval.
 - Managers admit to lacking sufficient to address gear loss internally. More collaboration with fishers and including them in the process of company policy making regarding lost equipment may help remedy these knowledge gaps.
- Results demonstrate that most fishers do not have a convenient and affordable disposal method, and some have adopted the belief that partly dismantling traps creates habitat or that gear just 'goes away'. Accordingly, more needs to be done to encourage fishers to participate in more sustainable equipment disposable practices.