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*For Immediate Release*

**People For Puget Sound  
PRESS RELEASE**

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**Dangerous abandoned fishing gear removed from the waters of Elliott Bay**

SEATTLE - Hundreds of tons of fishing gear including nets, lines, crab traps, and other equipment has been lost or abandoned in Puget Sound.

A major effort is underway by People For Puget Sound and the Northwest Straits Commission to remove the gear from the waters of Puget Sound, as it is deadly to fish, shellfish, marine birds and mammals.

"People For Puget Sound is working to restore shoreline habitat, and part of that effort includes removing abandoned gear that is killing marine life," said Robin Clark, manager of People For Puget Sound's habitat program.

The most recent project, completed last month, removed 36 abandoned gillnets from Blakely Rocks, Elliott Bay, Shilshole Bay, and Jefferson Head. Additionally, 58 abandoned crab pots were removed from Shilshole Bay and Port Madison. A side-scan sonar survey during the operation identified 187 more abandoned crab pots in Shilshole Bay and Port Madison.

A variety of animals were recovered, both living and dead, from the gillnets and crab pots, including seabirds, rockfish, lingcod, flatfish and crabs.

"We've found and removed abandoned nets that have littered Puget Sound since the 1970s," said Tom Cowan of the Northwest Straits Commission. "It's very satisfying to finally stop them from needlessly killing valuable marine resources."

People For Puget Sound and the Northwest Straits Commission were able to initiate this gear removal project with support from Restore America's Estuaries and NOAA's Community-Based Restoration program.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has developed a toll-free hotline to report abandoned fishing gear. Citizens can call 1-800-477-6224 to report abandoned gear. Divers should report gear locations, but NOT attempt removal, which could risk entanglement.

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