



Ghost Net Clearing in Phuket

27 February 2020

The International Seakeepers Society, Asia and Raffles Yacht Group supported an underwater clearance of ghost nets in Bangtao Beach in Phuket, Thailand. This expedition was initiated by Marine Biologist Dr Lalita Putchim (Nan) of the Phuket Marine Biological Centre who spotted the ghosts nets during one of her routine research dives.

A Ghost net is a commercial fishing net that have been lost, abandoned, or discarded at sea. Generally, they are found at the bottom of the sea, these nets are often discarded as they are unusable or worn-out.

Thanks to the organizing team of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources and to all divers from government agencies and volunteers for their hard work in successfully retrieving a whole trammel fishing net measuring approximately 30 meters in length and which still looked new. Whilst doing so the team rescued and released some marine life which were inevitably trapped in the nets. Taking full advantage of the dive the dedicated divers also removed other underwater debris from the reef during this operation.

Some of this fishing gear is made from synthetic materials such as plastic which does not decompose and hence contributes to ocean pollution. Fishing nets and lines measuring hundreds of kilometers are recovered every year during search operations. If it is not removed soon enough, ghost nets in the water cause serious physical damage to corals and other reef organisms.

All fishing nets are designed to catch fish or trap them, they can get snagged to a barrier or rocky reef and continue catching fish and other forms of marine life. Ghost gear and ghost fishing are the biggest killers of marine life, besides commercial fishing, in our oceans and it is estimated that they account for 10 percent of the fish loss, in addition to trapping and killing millions of marine animals including turtles, dolphins, whales, crustaceans, and birds.

In addition, ghost nets affect the sustainability of well-managed fisheries by damaging boats and killing species with economic value. They also impact the beauty of shorelines, resulting in expensive cleanup costs and financial loss for the tourism and diving industry.

Expedition Gallery

For more information contact:

Gail Tay Director of Operations & Programmes
International Seakeepers Society, Asia

Gail.tay@seakeepers.org