

Steps taken to address marine litter (Straits Times, 30 June 2023)

We refer to the letter "[Stricter laws on use of fishing nets needed](#)" by Mr Xavier Lee Dian Han (June 19).

There is growing attention on abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) due to its impact on the environment and marine life. Globally, studies have shown an increasing impact from such marine litter, in part due to the expansion of commercial fishing activities and fishing grounds.

Singapore has taken steps to address ALDFG through ground-up initiatives to regularly monitor our shorelines and reef environments to document and remove marine debris.

Fishing nets are used by licensed fishing vessels and fishermen but this is a very small industry in Singapore. There are only 17 licensees who conduct small-scale, inshore fishing.

To mitigate the risk of bycatch, Singapore Food Agency (SFA) is reviewing the use of nets by the licensed fishing vessels and fishermen. We will continue to study whether further measures are needed, such as the requirement to label and report lost fishing gear for all local commercial fishing vessels.

The fishing nets could also originate from recreational fishing or even waters overseas. To help protect our marine biodiversity from ALDFG, National Parks Board (NParks) encourages members of the public to adopt sustainable fishing practices, such as catch-and-release fishing.

NParks also works closely with local fishing communities to promote responsible fishing, for instance, to avoid fishing in areas with rich marine biodiversity, such as intertidal flats and coral reefs.

Signage is also placed at fishing spots to educate fishers and encourage best practices. The use of nets and wire mesh traps for fishing is also restricted in public parks, national parks and nature reserves under the Parks and Trees Act and its regulations.

Tan Han Kiat
Senior Director, Licensing Division
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Ryan Lee
Group Director, National Biodiversity Centre
National Parks Board

Replies

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