

**Fishing Harms Everyone: Observe Respect for Fish Day on August 1**  
From [IDA In Defense of Animals](#)  
July 2022

Our third annual Respect for Fish Day is Monday, August 1, 2022. We founded this special day in 2020 to create a more compassionate world for fish, whose concerns are almost universally ignored despite the fact that fish feel pain and experience emotions. This year's theme is ghost gear - abandoned or lost fishing gear that injures and kills fish and other unsuspecting animals such as sea turtles and water birds. We need your help to raise awareness about the hazards of ghost gear in our communities. Read on to take part!

Ghost gear is made of extremely durable plastics that never truly decompose. Fishing nets, pots, traps, lines, ropes, and lures left behind by commercial and recreational fishers float through water indiscriminately injuring and killing animals indefinitely, sometimes for hundreds of years.



*This duckling was severely injured by a fishing hook impaled inside her body.*

Fish, birds, turtles, sea lions, seals, manatees, and even threatened and endangered animals such as North Atlantic right whales and olive ridley turtles are killed or seriously injured by ghost gear from commercial fisheries every year. When fishing gear finally breaks down enough to no longer be an entanglement

threat for animals, it converts into microplastics, which pollute habitats and are ingested by animals, including the humans who eat them. By 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish.

Commercial fishing wreaks havoc on a massive scale in ocean habitats, while recreational fishing generates ghost gear along beaches, lakes, and waterways. Hobby fishing hurts and kills animals, even “catch and release,” which exhausts fish to death. Fishing derbies and contests magnify these concerns by encouraging children to kill fish and by normalizing animal suffering.



*Animals lose life and limb to ghost gear left behind by fishers.*

Fishing harms fish and other animals including turtles, seals, and ducks who get tangled or trapped in ghost gear. Fishing lines and nets get embedded into animals’ bodies causing pain and difficulty moving. Injured animals may suffocate, drown, starve, lose limbs, or die.

For Respect for Fish Day, we’re encouraging everyone to pick up ghost gear and to enjoy activities in nature without harming fish. You can organize a beach clean-up, invite friends to pick up ghost gear around a lake, or simply gather ghost gear you find along a local river or waterway.



*Collecting the hazardous garbage left by fishers helps all animals.*