

Release of Indian black turtle from ghost net

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Discarded fishing gear which continue to catch target and non-target species are called ghost nets. It has been estimated that each year, around 640,000 tons of ghost nets are generated globally, accounting for around 10 percent of the world's marine debris (Macfadyen *et al.*, 2009, *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 523*). In India, the use of gillnets of very thin polyamide monofilament yarn of 0.12 to 0.16 mm diameter with a lifespan of 3 to 6 months is common both in the marine as well as inland water bodies. The seriousness of ghost fishing problem in the coming years is evident as these nets are not repaired and tonnes of monofilament nets are abandoned in the sea and reservoirs (Thomas *et al.* 2005, *Gillnets in the Marine Fisheries of India, Monograph*, ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Kochi, 45 p). Ghost fishing gear thus represents a major challenge to our attempts to manage the aquatic ecosystems sustainably and humanely. A juvenile Indian black turtle (*Melanochelys trijuga coronata*) was seen entangled in a discarded polyamide



Turtle rescued from the net

monofilament net of 45mm mesh size and a yarn thickness of 0.13 mm net in a creek near Someshwara Beach, Mangaluru. The creek which is near the fish landing area on the beach is used as a site for discarding waste by local fishermen. The turtle was released and local fishers were made aware of the importance of the species and the problems caused by the discarded nets in water bodies. The Indian black turtle is included in the “Near threatened” category of the IUCN Red list.