[www.bycatchsolutions.org]

August 2025

Hello Hub Friends and Supporters,

Depending on your location, I hope this finds many of you enjoying a wonderful summer season. As we enter the 3rd year of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) Bycatch Solutions Hub (the Hub), we thought it would be a good time to remind you of the various features of the Hub and to update you on our latest projects.

Happy Summer!
Anne DiMonti
Protecting Ocean Wildlife Program Manager

What can the Hub do for you?

The Hub offers information about sustainable solutions to eliminate bycatch of endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species in commercial fisheries, bridging the gap between companies that want to support bycatch reduction and organizations that are implementing solutions. This includes many action-based features found on the Hub website, including:

- Fisheries bycatch data: Depending on your need, you can search for this information by region, fishery, gear type, solution, and/or target species.
- Funding opportunities: This page matches bycatch solutions projects in need of support with interested seafood industry partners. Additionally, projects in need of support can reach out via the "Request Project Funding" link (see below for more information).
- Active projects: As the latest information becomes available, this page features updates regarding active SFP-supported bycatch projects.
- Success stories and Bycatch News: These pages regularly feature success stories and information on the latest and most successful bycatch-mitigation efforts, to keep you abreast of bycatch innovation and other important information.
- Events: Want to know more about bycatch-related events? These pages contain information regarding SFP events and workshops, as well as SFP partner events.

Bycatch Solutions Hub 2024-2025 Annual Report

We have recently published a review of Year 2 of the Hub. The report includes includes statistics, stories, and achievements and spotlights many of our projects.

Read our Bycatch Solutions Hub 2024-2025 Annual Summary Report

Looking Ahead...

If you have not visited the Hub website in a while, we encourage you to take a moment to explore the site. As you do, please keep in mind that the site will be receiving a facelift later in 2025. Many of the Hub's website resources you have come to depend on will not change, but we hope the updates will allow you to more easily navigate the site.

Projects in need of support

Do you want to support efforts to reduce bycatch? Do you know a bycatch solutions project that needs support? The Hub's Funding Opportunities page matches bycatch solutions projects in need of support with interested seafood industry partners. There are several exciting new projects listed on this page that are in need of assistance from industry leaders. These projects include, but are not limited to:

- ***Seabird-safe tuna hoo*** newly designed Procella hook incorporates a weight within the hook, providing fishers with a simple way to reduce seabird death in longline fisheries.

- ***Implementation of automatic squid jigging systems in the US Atlantic region:*** The small-mesh squid fishery has long been criticized for its environmental impact. This project aims to maximize the quantity of squid caught using low-impact mechanical squid jigging machines, while also addressing bycatch and environmental concerns.

- ***Project Expansion! Smart Buoys for the Experimental Deep-Set Buoy Gear Fishery:*** Based on past success, as noted below, this project will be expanded to include outfitting two additional vessels with Smart Buoy technology. The expansion will also include training for fishers and a satellite data plan for an additional vessel.

If you are interested in knowing more about any of these projects, please contact Anne DiMonti at anne.dimonti@sustainablefish.org.

Projects Spotlight:
Smart Buoys

A growing partnership between SFP and Blue Ocean Gear Smart Buoys has led to a number of exciting and expanding projects supported by SFP partners on both coasts of North America.

In California, Deep-Set Buoy Gear (DSBG) has been used in the swordfish fishery since 2023, offering a low-bycatch alternative to traditional commercial gear targeting swordfish such as pelagic longlines and drifting gillnets. Now, this technology is showing an additional promise for the bluefin tuna industry. DSBG reduces bycatch by setting beneath the thermocline, where non-targeted species are uncommon. Using Smart Buoys along with the DSBG project allows fishers to know exactly where their lines are, reducing retrieval time and preventing gear loss.

(L-R) Fisherman Travis Hutching with Blue Ocean Gear staff Ryan Lind and Rhyl Frith

Following this success, trials have begun, using innovative gear called Nighttime Extended Linked Deep Set Buoy Gear to target bluefin tuna with minimal bycatch to sharks and sea turtles. Smart Buoys are also being used in these trials to potentially increase the amount of locally caught sustainable bluefin tuna while preventing gear loss.

In Maine, two vessels in the Maine Lobster fishery were outfitted with 40 Smart buoys and 1 Plotterlink, which allows vessels to share gear locations with other boats, even without internet. Smart Buoy technology enabled the vessels to see up-to-date gear positions on their navigation plotter by sending data from the pots' surface location back to the boat via satellite. Additionally, the technology has been helpful in recovering gear that might have otherwise been lost. This increases awareness and avoids gear loss due to entanglements with other vessels and whales. Additionally, it offers fishers the added security of knowing where their gear is located, even if they are at home. If the gear is dragged or moved, fishers will receive a text message from the buoys, so the gear can be retrieved. Aside from GPS, the buoys can record temperature. Changes in water temperature may drive the lobster movement, and being aware of this movement can help the fishers know which days are best to fish, saving them time and fuel.

In Nova Scotia, Canada, 79 Smart Buoys were donated to local crab fishers for the 2025 season. Like the program in Maine, the buoys have been used to track and prevent gear loss and to reduce potential entanglement risk to whales. The program has shown great success. To date, two of the fishers have completed their quota and all their gear made it safely back to land, except for one piece that was seemingly dragged off by a freighter and could not be found. Canadian fisher Marc LeFort called the buoys "a good addition to our gear."

Learn More about Blue Ocean Gear

Bycatch in the News

- US Department of Commerce proposed 2026 NOAA Budget is Released
- Potential changes to the US Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)
- On-demand Fishing Gear Informational Videos
- Potential Opening of Right Whale Closed Areas to Black Sea Bass
- Non-mesh Trawl Net Commercial Rollout
- Can Technology Change the Boogeyman of Fishing?

Don't forget to visit the Hub's Bycatch News page for regular bycatch news updates and information.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Innovative Gear Workshop, September 11-12, Boston, MA

This workshop will include a tour of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center Lending Gear Library and and On-the Water Innovative Gear Demonstration.

Presented by SFP and New England Aquarium. For more information or to register, contact: anne.dimonti@sustainablefish.org

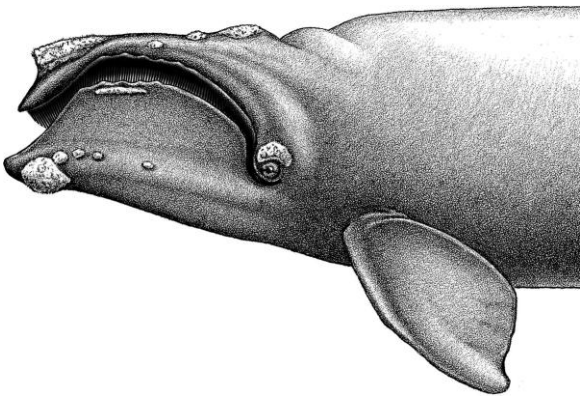

Image by Scott Landy, Center for Costal Studies, Provincetown, MA

2025 Ropeless Consortium Annual Meeting, October 20-21, New Bedford, MA.

2025 North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium Annual Meeting,October 22-23, New Bedford, MA.

The Bycatch Solutions Hub team

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