

## Announcements

### International Smart Gear Competition

World Wildlife Fund is calling on fishermen, gear technologists, engineers, students, inventors and anyone with a creative flair to submit their ideas for fishing gear designs that will reduce bycatch – the accidental catch and related deaths of marine mammals, birds, sea turtles and non-target fish species in fishing gears such as nets and longlines – to the Second International Smart Gear Competition. The competition will award a \$25,000 grand prize and two \$5,000 runner-up prizes to the designs judged to be the most practical, cost-effective methods for reducing bycatch. To enter the contest, go to [www.smartgear.org](http://www.smartgear.org) for more details, rules and entry instructions. All entries are due by **March 15, 2006**. Entries must be submitted in English.

Conventional fishing gear often does not allow users to selectively target their catch. As a result, non-target fish species, marine mammals, birds, sea turtles and non-target fish species are caught and sometimes killed. More than 20 million metric tons

– approximately 25 percent of what is caught in the course of fishing each year – is thrown over the sides of fishing boats dead or dying. Bycatch is the leading threat to many species of endangered marine mammals, sea turtles and sea birds around the world.

Last year, WWF awarded three new practical solutions: a system for keeping longlines away from sea turtles by a former high-school biology teacher and commercial fisherman; changes to the chemical properties of fishing ropes and nets by a North American team; and modified trawls to reduce bycatch of undersized shrimp and fish by a team of Indian scientists familiar with the challenges of changing fishing practices and technologies in a developing country. The winner of the WWF International Smart Gear Competition will be decided by a diverse set of judges, including fishermen, researchers, engineers and fisheries managers from all over the world.