

## Project profile

### The Carpentaria Ghost Net Programme

*“The Ghost Net Project is for people from (Indigenous) communities all around the Gulf of Carpentaria to find ways to work together to get rid of marine debris in their sea country.”*

*Djawa Yunupingu, Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation*

In the decade preceding 2004, north Australian Indigenous Sea Rangers noted that an increasing number of turtles were becoming entangled in ghost nets (derelict fishing nets) where they forage for food and/or nest. This was of particular concern to them as this region is home to 6 species of marine turtle all of which are culturally & economically significant as well as of ecological importance. The project got underway in 2005 with funding from the Australian government. Its primary goals are:

- To clean up the coastline in northern Australia of existing nets to stop them re-entering the ocean,

- To collect useful information about these nets to assist negotiations by various parties in stopping fishing nets becoming Ghost Nets,
- To build the resilience of Indigenous Rangers to continue work on ghost nets ranger work beyond the life of this project, and
- To rescue any animals found trapped.

In the past three years the programme has involved 18 ranger groups working along the coastline from the Torres Straits to northern Arnhem Land, a distance of thousands of kilometres. The rangers have measured, identified, catalogued & removed over 4,000 net samples ranging in size from a mere scrap to a monster net weighing over 6 tonnes. Most importantly, they have rescued hundreds of turtles. In February this year, on a 42 kilometre nesting beach near Weipa, there were 63 turtles entangled in the nets. Fortunately there were two Napranum Shire rangers, Peter and Angie, living on the beach who managed to rescue 50% of them. Half of these turtles were olive ridleys.



For more information, see [www.ghostnets.com.au](http://www.ghostnets.com.au)

*Contributor: Riki Gunn*