

Longlining

Fishing Methods Fact Card

What is longlining?

Longlining attracts fish with a central fishing line that ranges from one to more than 50 miles (80 km) long. This central line is strung with smaller lines of baited hooks, which dangle at spaced intervals. After leaving the line to “soak” for a time to attract fish, longliners return to haul in their catch.

What do longliners catch?

Pelagic longliners hang their hooks near the sea surface to catch open ocean fish, such as tuna and swordfish.

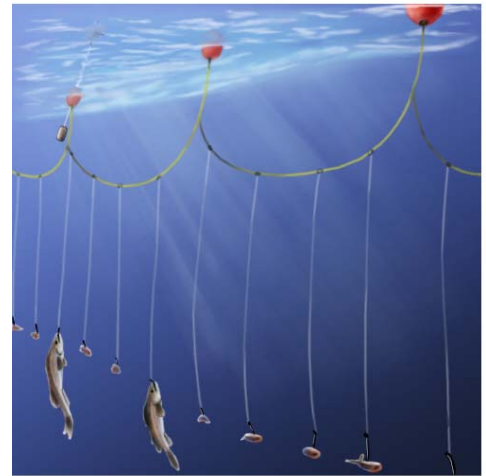
Demersal- or “bottom”-longliners float their hooks just off the seafloor to catch fish that live on or near the bottom, such as cod or halibut.

What are the issues?

The baited hooks of **pelagic*** longlines attract a variety of open ocean swimmers, such as endangered sea turtles, sharks and other fish, resulting in wasteful **bycatch***. Also, as the line is deployed into the water, seabirds dive for the bait, are ensnared on the hooks and drown.

By sinking their longlines deeper, U.S. fishermen avoid the migratory paths of sea turtles. Other innovations to reduce bycatch include the use of “circle” hooks to ease the release and survivability of unwanted species and the deployment of longlines through a chute to reduce seabird interactions.

To learn more about how fish are caught and farmed and to get a guide to seafood choices that are good for the environment, visit www.seafoodwatch.org.
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***Pelagic**

Refers to fish and animals that live in the open sea, away from the coast or seafloor.

***Bycatch**

Unwanted fish and animals caught accidentally in fishing gear and discarded overboard, dead or dying.

Purse Seining

Fishing Methods Fact Card

What is purse seining?

A purse seine is a large wall of netting that encircles a school of fish. Fishermen pull the bottom of the netting closed (like a drawstring purse), herding the fish into the center. Purse seiners either haul the net aboard or bring it alongside the boat to scoop out the fish with smaller nets.

What do purse seiners catch?

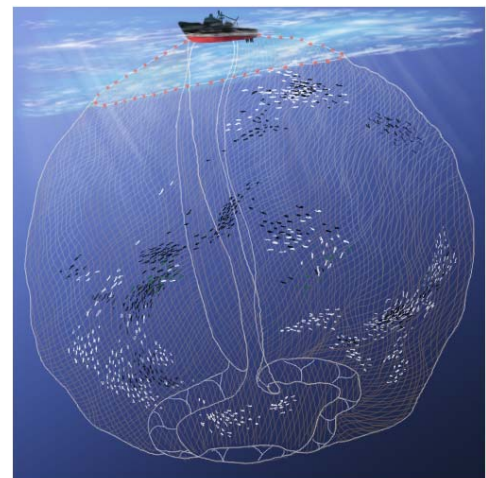
Fishermen use this method to catch schooling fish, such as sardines, or fish that gather to spawn, like squid. The most popular fish caught by purse seines are tuna used for canning.

What are the issues?

Purse seining for tuna results in large amounts of **bycatch***. For example, to locate schools of tuna, fishermen look for schools of dolphins (tunas often travel below dolphins) or set out floating objects (logs or rafts) to attract fish in the open ocean. The net encircles the school of tuna, but also catches the dolphins and a variety of other species, including sharks, sea turtles and juvenile fish.

In response to public outcry over the deaths of hundreds of thousands of dolphins, innovations have been developed to release dolphins alive—but dolphin populations have yet to recover. Scientists believe this may be due to the stress of the chase and frequent capture.

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