

18 November 2010

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**MONEY SHOAL DELIVERS COSTLY SURPRISE**

Spanish mackerel fishing vessel *Wildcard* has suspended its fishing operations to retrieve a large foreign fishing net which was killing fish and endangering turtles at Money Shoal, 75 km north east of Croker Island.

"We decided to retrieve the net and tow it to Croker Island for disposal. We managed to remove around 60% of the estimated 3km long net – the remainder is stuck fast on a reef and we've recorded its coordinates so it can be removed at a later stage," said *FV Wildcard* owner/operator Mr Bruce Davey.

"Commercial fishers are regularly removing these foreign ghost nets from the ocean," said Northern Territory Seafood Council Chief Executive Officer, Ms Katherine Sarneckis.

"Commercial fishing operations have been known to grind to a halt for days at sea when a ghost net tangles fishing vessels propellers but more importantly they are a dangerous floating hazard to marine life – which is why fishers remove them," Ms Sarneckis went on to say.

"We put an underwater camera down and recorded a number of fish species caught in the net," Mr Davey said.

"It was clear the net needed to be removed to prevent further damage, even at the cost of lost fishing time," Mr Davey went on to say.

Bruce and Juanita Davey from *FV Wildcard* came across the net whilst commercially fishing for Spanish mackerel on Monday and decided it could not be left to cause a danger to sea life and shipping.

The Northern Territory Police on Croker Island have been assisting Mr Davey in getting the net ashore where it will be inspected for introduced marine pests and burnt.

"Ghost nets, lost or discarded nets usually from foreign fishing vessels, can endanger turtles and other marine life as well as cause a danger to navigation," said OceanWatch Australia's NT SeaNet Officer, Ms Lyn Lambeth.

"Commercial fishing vessels are very aware of marine debris issues and this is not the first time a business has forgone fishing time and profit to retrieve large ghost nets," Ms Lambeth said.

Vessels are required to report dangers to navigation to the NT Marine Safety Branch or, for Commonwealth waters, to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. This information then goes to the Australian Hydrographic Service so charts can be updated with the information.

"This is a marine safety issue as much as a pollution or danger to wildlife issue," said Ms Riki Gunn, Project Coordinator of GhostNets Australia.

"Unfortunately there is currently no clear path for the subsequent removal of these nets from the ocean. We need to sit down and establish a chain of response to deal with these nets," Ms Gunn said.

**For further information please contact Katherine Sarneckis on 0409 580 158**



**Photo: Ghost nets pose a dangerous hazard to Territory marine life**