

Fishing Nets in Modern Times



A C T I V I T Y S H E E T

Gill Net: Gill nets are the most common commercial fishing gear used on many lakes around the world. Like a trawl net or seine, a gill net has floats along the top and weights on the bottom, which cause it to stand like a six to twelve foot-high fence along the lake bottom. Gill nets are so named because all the fish too big to swim through the netting get caught by their gills when they try to back out. Gill nets sometimes stretch for five miles or more.

To learn about gill net fishing in New Jersey, go to www.fishingnj.org/techgn.htm

Project Global (Global Bycatch Assessment of Long-lived Species) features details gill net Fishing. www.bycatch.env.duke.edu/gear/gillnets

Pound Net: Pound nets (pronounced and sometimes spelled "pond nets") are usually used to catch smelt and whitefish. A pound net has a 600-foot or longer main net and two side nets connected to an open pot. A pound net is supported by supported by long poles anchored to the bottom of the water. The tops of these poles stick out above the water. The main net hangs from floats on the surface down to the bottom of the water. Fish on either side of the main net are directed along the net into a narrow opening between the ends of the two side nets. The fish then swim toward the pot and are caught there. The fishermen lift the fish out of the pot. Pound nets are limited to water shallower than 90 feet, so they are usually found along the shore or near reefs. Most pound nets are set and left in one place for the entire fishing season.

The Department of Natural Resources in Maryland features interesting information and photographs of pound nets.

www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/commercial/poundnet.html

The Britannica Online Encyclopedia includes detailed information about pound nets.

www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/commercial/poundnet.html

Drop Nets and Trap Nets: Drop nets (also called fyke nets) and trap nets are small by comparison with other commercial fishing gear and are easily set and moved from one location to another in search of better fishing grounds. Like pound nets, drop nets and trap nets have a long lead net that leads fish into an small area called the heart, then through a tunnel into a pot, where the fish remain until they are removed by commercial fishermen. Drop nets are shorter than trap nets, and their traps and pots are shaped differently. Drop nets are usually marked with buoys and trap nets are marked with flags. Drop nets are about 300 feet long and are set in shallow water. Trap nets range from 600 to 1200 feet in length and are commonly set in water up to 90 feet deep.

University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, a source of research and technology focused on sustainability in the Great Lakes. www.seagrant.wisc.edu/greatlakesfish/nets.html

EXPLORE
THROUGH
THE ART
DOOR



JAMES A.
MICHENER
ART
MUSEUM