

Thousands of abandoned fishing nets to be made into carpet tiles

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Credit: Interface, Inc.

Nine thousand kilos of discarded fishing nets have been collected for recycling into carpet tiles, drastically transforming littered beaches along the Danajon Bank, Philippines.

Every year tonnes of abandoned or lost fishing nets entangle and needlessly kill fish and other marine life, while polluting beaches and villages. The success of this year-long pilot between conservationists at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), global carpet tile manufacturer Interface, Inc, together with local partners that include Project Seahorse Foundation (PSF), heralds a new approach to saving our seas by keeping discarded nets out of them.

The innovative project, called Net-Works™, has so far involved 892 local fishers and their families combing nearby beaches to collect fishing

nets, which they then exchange for payment at local community banks created for the project. For every two and a half kilos of nets collected, villagers receive enough money to buy a kilo of rice - providing an extra meal for a family of 5 in a place where many families struggle to eat 3 times a day. Additionally, the community banks provide basic financial support so families can save extra money to improve their financial security.

The recycled nets will be incorporated into Interface's brand new carpet tile collection called Net Effect™, which is being announced today.

ZSL's Head of [Global Conservation](#) Programmes, Dr. Heather Koldewey says: "Abandoned or lost [fishing nets](#) are a growing problem responsible for causing enormous damage to wildlife and delicate coral reefs. The success of Net-Works means we've cleaned up a major source of pollution on the coastline and enabled local communities to make an income directly from their [conservation activities](#). This is a rather unusual but exciting collaboration between conservation and industry."



The Danajon Bank is one of the most degraded coral reefs in the world due to decades of [overfishing](#) and pollution, but local families living in

extreme poverty have previously had no other option but to work for hours to catch just a kilo of fish. As fish catches have been declining, so have people's incomes, making financial situations more and more precarious and driving illegal and destructive fishing practices.

ZSL's Dr. Nick Hill, Net-Works project manager, says: "Turning old nets into new carpets is such a simple idea, but it's helping to make an incredible difference to the lives of local people and wildlife in the area.

"We are now aiming to roll Net-Works out to neighbouring areas, with the ultimate goal of creating self-sufficient projects around the world," Dr Hill added.

More information: www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/marine/net-works/

Provided by Zoological Society of London

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