

Marine Debris



NOAA Marine Debris Program | Office of Response and Restoration | NOAA National Ocean Service

NOAA Marine Debris Program Hawai'i

The NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) supports national and international efforts to research, prevent, and reduce the impacts of marine debris. The MDP serves as a centralized capability within NOAA, coordinating and supporting activities within NOAA and with other federal agencies, as well as using partnerships to support projects carried out by state and local agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations, academia, and industry. The MDP has headquarters in Silver Spring, MD and has regional staff members positioned around the country to support regional coordination efforts, track progress of projects, review performance measures, and conduct regional marine debris outreach to local audiences. The Program has two dedicated staff in Hawai'i.



Volunteers on the southeast coast of the Big Island of Hawai'i help remove marine debris. *Photo courtesy of NOAA Restoration Center.*

Hawai'i Marine Debris Action Plan

In January 2010, Hawai'i marine debris partners rolled out the Hawai'i Marine Debris Action Plan (HI-MDAP) – the first of its kind in the nation! The HI-MDAP is a comprehensive statewide action plan incorporating a results-oriented framework. This results framework focuses on both reducing ecosystem threats and encouraging adaptive management through measurement of intermediate results. Four strategic areas have been outlined: Introduction of Solid Waste and Fishing Gear at Sea and Coastal Areas Decreased, Land-based Debris in Waterways Reduced, Number of Abandoned and Derelict Vessels Decreased, and Backlog of Marine Debris Reduced. <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/projects/himdap.html>

Fifth International Marine Debris Conference

Marine debris and its impacts reach far beyond Hawaii's shores. Marine debris a global problem and its solution will rely on the participation of people and countries around the world. In March 2011, Hawai'i was host to the Fifth International Marine Debris Conference. With the theme "Waves of Change: Global lessons to inspire local action," the conference brought together 440 participants representing 38 countries. Conference participants refined and endorsed by acclamation the Honolulu Commitment, which outlines 12 actions to reduce marine

Marine debris is

any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes.



debris. Participants and a group of rapporteurs also worked to revise the Honolulu Strategy, a strategic framework to prevent, reduce, and manage marine debris. Through this conference, the Honolulu Commitment, and the Honolulu Strategy, the global marine debris community is making strides in addressing marine debris at a variety of geographic scales. <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/projects/intlmdconf.html>

Economic Impacts to Hawaii's Longliners

In 2007, a partnership project began in Hawai'i between various NOAA offices to study and quantify rates of interaction with and the subsequent economic impact of marine debris within Hawaii's longline fishery. This is being achieved through analysis of data collected in cooperation with the NOAA Observer Program via a new comprehensive Marine Debris Encounter Report. In the North Pacific Ocean, derelict fishing gear (mainly lost or discarded nets) is often found drifting within heavily fished areas. Derelict fishing gear (DFG) impacts the longline fishery through active gear entanglement, vessel interactions, and catch interaction. The debris poses both a safety hazard for crew to disentangle the vessel, imposes an economic impact through immobilized or slowed fishing operations, and may induce behavioral responses within the fishery. The main objectives of this partnership project are to gain a better understanding of the overall impacts of DFG and to quantify the economic impact of marine debris to the Hawai'i-based longline fishing industry. <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/projects/observer.html>



Derelict fishing gear in the open ocean is a hazard to navigation. *Photo courtesy of NOAA PIRO Observer Program.*



Hawai'i Nets-to-Energy Program

Marine debris of all types and from numerous sources accumulates in and around the islands of Hawai'i due to oceanic currents and winds in the North Pacific. Much of the debris is made up of fishing nets, a type of gear not used by Hawaii's fisheries, that have been lost, abandoned, or discarded. Fishermen, communities, and trained divers remove these derelict nets from the environment. Instead of adding the nets to already congested landfills, in 2002, Hawaii's multi-partner marine debris group devised a unique program to use this marine debris to create usable electricity. The Hawai'i Nets-To-Energy program is possible only through the partnership and support of Hawaii's multi-organizational marine debris group. Since 2002, over 800 tons of derelict nets have been used to create electricity—enough to power nearly 350 Hawai'i homes for a year each! <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/projects/netstoenergy.html>

Marine debris is

a problem we can solve together. Reduce, reuse, recycle, and participate in local beach or stream cleanups. If we each do a little, together we can make a big difference.

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