

Marine Debris



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

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Economic Impact of Marine Debris to Fisheries

Awareness of marine debris has increased dramatically over the last few years, especially in Hawai'i, where the nation's first marine debris action plan was launched. One of the projects under this plan is a partnership project, begun in 2007, to study and quantify the rates of interaction of marine debris with Hawai'i's longline fishery and the consequent economic impact on the fishery. Economic research (e.g., being able to show impacts to resources in terms of dollar amounts) is an area of growing interest and importance in numerous conservation areas. This project is one of only a handful measuring these impacts and is an excellent example of cooperation between industry and government.

In the North Pacific Ocean, derelict fishing gear (mainly lost or discarded nets from fishing fleets based outside of Hawai'i) is often found drifting within areas heavily fished by Hawai'i's longline fleet. Derelict fishing gear (DFG) impacts the longline



Derelict fishing gear, such as nets, is often hauled in by Hawai'i longline fishers. Photos courtesy of NOAA PIRO Observer Program.



fishery through active gear entanglement, vessel interactions, and catch interaction. The debris poses a safety hazard for crew (e.g., disentanglement of vessel fouled propeller) and impacts the fishery economically by immobilizing or slowing fishing operations. The main objectives of this partnership project are to better understand the overall impacts of DFG and to quantify the economic impact of marine debris on the

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.



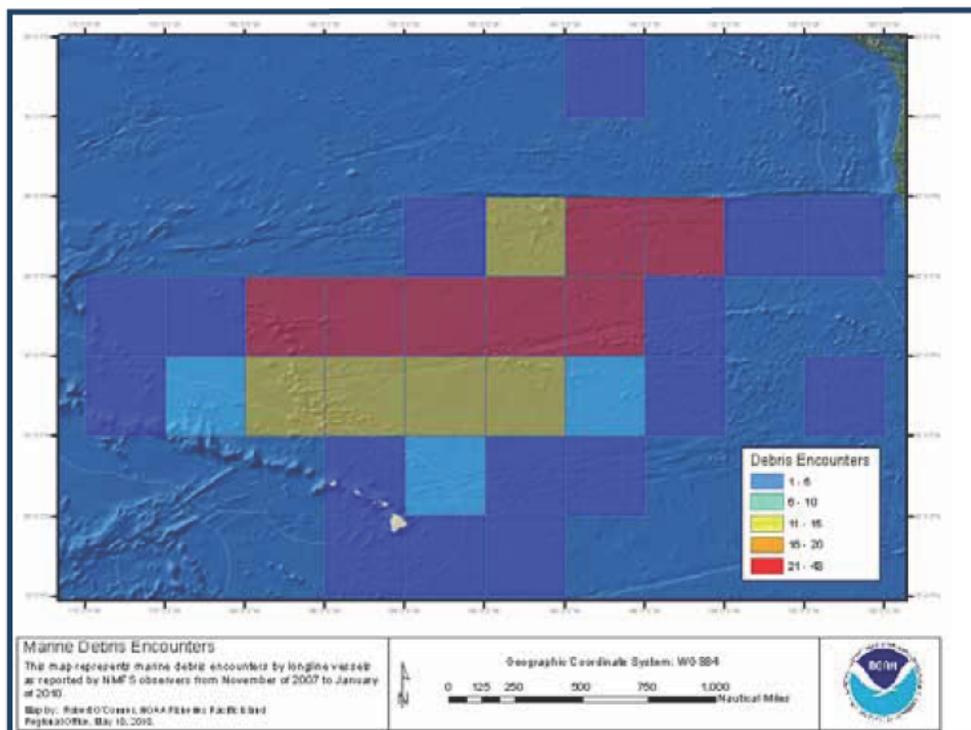
Hawai'i-based longline fishing industry.

Collecting data on the impacts to our nation's fisheries is an important step in better understanding the impact of marine debris to living marine resources and navigation safety.

For more information visit

<http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/projects/observer.html>

Entanglement of active fishing gear in derelict gear is one of the main types of encounters for Hawai'i-based longline fishers. *Photo courtesy of NOAA PIRO Observer Program.*



Geographical locations of marine debris encounters in the North Pacific Ocean. *Map courtesy of NOAA PIFSC.*

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.