Talking Trash by Carey Morishige

Hawai'i Marine Debris Updates

Debris on Kanapou Beach, Kaho'olawe, Sept. 2005. – State Division of Aquatic Resources

■ In Hawai'i, marine debris affects the beauty of our environment, is a safety hazard, causes damage to boats and threatens many of our marine species. From a beach covered in trash to a ghost net continually trapping marine life, marine debris is a problem that we cannot ignore.

The **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**, state and county agencies, private businesses, non-profit organizations and community groups have been working on this issue in Hawai'i for a number of years. Of the many projects underway are several funded by NOAA's Marine Debris Program:

- Honolulu port reception feasibility study and derelict net recycling program;
- Marine debris location and removal in the main Hawaiian islands;
- Marine debris removal in monk seal habitat in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands;
- Marine debris removal from Waiohinu-Ka Lae Coast, Hawai'i island; and
- Marine debris outreach and education.

Recycle Nets Here–An Update on the Port Reception Project

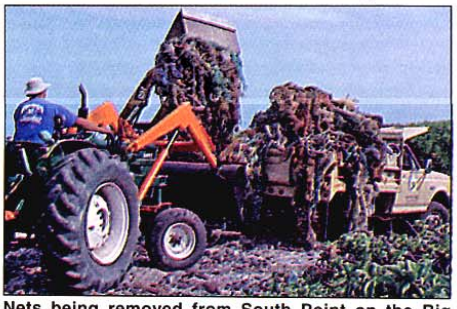
Over the years, Hawai'i-based longliners have brought derelict fishing nets that they encounter at sea back to port to eliminate the risk of future ocean encounters and to assist in environmental cleanup efforts. With nowhere to put them, these nets were disposed of in an already stressed county landfill.

Now, these derelict fishing nets will be converted to electricity in a new program. Launched on January 13, 2006, the Honolulu Derelict Net Recycling Program offers these fishermen, as well as the public, a dedicated bin for recycling fishing net debris. This project is being led by a private-public partnership of 11 businesses, industry groups and government agencies.

Derelict fishing nets brought back by a Hawai'i longliner being put into new bin. –UH Sea Grant

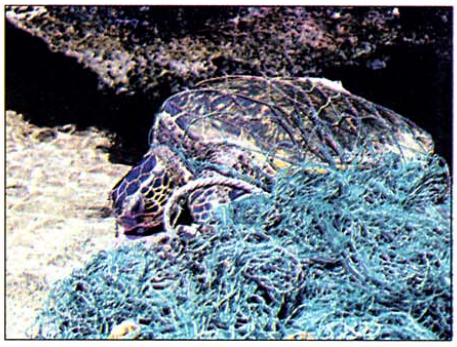
The bin is located at Pier 38 in Honolulu Harbor. It is kept locked at all times to prevent other types of waste from being disposed in it. If you have fishing net debris (must be nets only–no floats or other trash) and would like to recycle it, go down to Pier 38 during normal working hours and call one of the two numbers listed on the bin (Pacific Ocean Producers or United Fishing Agency). Someone will come out to assist you in discarding your net.

Where's the Trash?–An Update on the Main Hawaiian Islands Project



Nets being removed from South Point on the Big Island in 2003. This is one of the areas that will be surveyed in this project. – State Division of Aquatic Resources

If you have ever participated in a marine debris cleanup (like the annual "Get the Drift and Bag It!") you know how large the problem of marine debris is here in the main Hawaiian islands. Last month, NOAA began a comprehensive marine debris project focusing on the main Hawaiian islands of Kaua'i and Hawai'i. This project is the first of its kind on our main islands. Data gathered will be used to develop baseline information on the distribution, abundance and estimated impacts of marine debris. As part of this project, helicopter-based aerial surveys of the coastlines of both islands were conducted in late February.



Green Sea Turtle entangled in derelict fishing net. –NOAA Fisheries Service

This data is being analyzed and will be used to create maps showing the distribution and abundance of all debris located. With this information, as well as input from state and county agencies, high-priority areas will be identified for removal efforts. The result will help coastal managers and communities identify and prioritize cleanup areas and sites for future monitoring.

From Trash to Energy

Schnitzer Steel Hawaii Corp. uses their equipment to chop the net into small pieces suitable for incineration at Honolulu's H-Power facility. –State Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism

The debris removed in all NOAA-funded marine debris projects, whether land-based trash (for example, bottles) or derelict fishing gear (for example, nets), is proactively disposed of and recycled to the furthest extent possible. A component that has been recently added to all projects is the recycling of derelict fishing nets into electricity. This is possible through ongoing partnerships with Schnitzer Steel Hawai'i Corporation, Covanta Energy, H-Power, Matson Navigation Company, and the city and county of Honolulu.

According to the Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, 1 ton of derelict nets provides enough electricity to power one O'ahu household for five months! . . . **Carey**

Take net debris to Pier 38 during normal working hours and call one of the two numbers on the bin:

Pacific Ocean Producers.. (808) 537-2905
United Fishing Agency ..... (808) 536-2148