



Marine Debris Report – March 2006

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Hawaii South Point Cleanups Having Great Impact

The NOAA Marine Debris Program has funded a series of four marine debris cleanups coordinated by the Hawaii Wildlife Fund along the Waiohinu - Ka Lae (South Point) coastline on the Big Island of Hawai'i. These cleanups have been very successful to date, with only one cancellation due to inclement weather. The combined totals of the three cleanup events have produced some impressive numbers: 189 volunteers and 79,793 pieces of debris removed (with an average of 79.6% being plastics) weighing over 24 tons. Recyclables will be recycled by the County of Hawai'i and fishing nets will be put into a Matson Navigation Co. container and shipped to Oahu where it will be picked up by Hawai'i Metal Recycling Co. and transported to their facility to be chopped into smaller pieces suitable for burning at the City and County of Honolulu's H-POWER facility.

A fourth and final clean-up is scheduled for March 25th.

Humpback Whale Entangled in Marine Debris in Hawaii

NOAA announced last week that another humpback whale was successfully disentangled by the Hawaiian Islands Whale Disentanglement Network, a group of trained professional disentanglement experts. This is the second successful disentanglement of five confirmed life threatening entanglements reported to NOAA Fisheries Service Hotline this season. The whale was entangled in over 100 lbs of 1" diameter line wrapped several times around the animal's tail stock (where the tail shaft meets the fluke) that provided considerable drag and caused the lines to cut

into the animal's body.

The adult female humpback was first reported to the NOAA Fisheries Hotline on January 29 by the Hawaii Marine Mammal Consortium, a whale research organization. The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, Hawaii's Department of Land and Natural Resources, NOAA's Pacific Islands Regional Office, and the United States Coast Guard have been looking for this whale since then. Unfortunately, the animal was not resighted and the rescue effort was put on hold.

"There is an alarming trend of marine mammals entangled in marine debris," said David Schofield, Marine Mammal Response Network Coordinator, NOAA Fisheries Service. "Although we have successfully disentangled these two whales, our focus should be on stopping the source of these entanglements - marine debris."

NOAA Fisheries Service, along with partners from federal, state and county agencies, not-for-profit organizations, industry, businesses, and community members have removed almost 550 tons of marine debris from the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The project began in 1996 in an effort to reduce entanglement rates of critically endangered Hawaiian monk seals. The NOAA Marine Debris Program is currently funding five ongoing marine debris projects in Hawaii. The latest project brings the cleanup effort to the main Hawaiian Islands and involves using aerial surveys to spot and document marine debris from the nearshore waters of the Big Island and Kauai.

Trash Free Potomac Initiative- Getting the Word Out

A Summit centering on the goal of attaining a "trash-free Potomac" by 2013 took place on March 16, 2006 in Washington, DC. The Trash Summit was sponsored in part by the NOAA Marine Debris Program and will be facilitated by the Alice Ferguson Foundation, a non-profit organization focused on addressing marine debris in the Potomac and Anacostia Watershed areas. Representatives from Congress and local organizations were in attendance to commit to achieving the goal of a trash-free Potomac, which includes the Anacostia Watershed area. Deputy Assistant Secretary Tim Keeney spoke at the event to relay NOAA's involvement in the Anacostia watershed, and to specifically highlight marine debris issues and the Anacostia Trash Free Strategy. The day-long meeting was held at the World Bank in downtown Washington, D.C.

The Potomac Watershed Trash Summit and the Trash Free Potomac Initiative was highlighted on the local DC NPR station WAMU Radio 88.5 on Tuesday, March 28th. The story, narrated by Lisa Nurnberger, included interviews and coverage of elected officials at the March 16th Trash Summit, the Anacostia Watershed Watts Branch Cleanup on March 18, and a visit to an illegal dump site in the National Capitol Parks East. To listen to the audio clip, which features NOS AA Jack Dunnigan as well as many others, visit <http://archives.wamu.org/mp3/mc/06/03/m1060324.mp3>.

For more information on the Trash Free Potomac Initiative, visit http://www.trashfreepotomac.org/trash_initiative/trash_index.php

NOAA Marine Debris Projects to be Highlighted in VADM Press Conference in Hawaii

A helicopter based aerial survey project that is currently underway over the Main Hawaiian Islands is just one of

the five projects that will be highlighted in a press conference held in Honolulu on February 22, 2006. NOAA's Under Secretary, Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher is scheduled to speak at the conference, with the backdrop being the successful Port Reception Facility on Pier 38. The significance of this aerial survey project is great, as it is the first-ever effort to address marine debris in the Main Hawaiian Islands. Seema Balwani, of NOAA's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, Coral Reef Ecosystem Division, comments, "While the issue of marine debris in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands has been addressed for over ten years, little is known about the abundance or impacts of derelict fishing gear on the nearshore ecosystems of the main Hawaiian islands. The time has come for us to increase the scope of our marine debris project and focus efforts on our local shorelines and reefs."

Volunteers Gather to Remove Marine Debris from Boca Pass

For two days, divers armed with knives, scissors and tin snips combed the 85-foot-deep waters of Boca Grande Pass in Englewood, FL, cutting and pulling up trash and debris from the renowned fishing hotspot. The effort, which took place March 27-28, marked the channel's fifth annual cleanup, which encompassed dozens of divers and 115 participants, including boat captains and deck hands.

Together, they pulled up 3,377 pounds of trash from the pass' bottom, giving the program a five-year total of 25,692 pounds of debris. The volunteers retrieved 10 anchors, six fishing poles, piles of 80- and 100-pound-test fishing line and a beach chair. "You name it, we've found it down there," said Bob Wasno, diver and member of the University of Florida's Florida Sea Grant Program.

The material filled about half a Dumpster, but was less than what divers had collected in previous years. In 2004, for example, marine debris totaled 7,004 pounds. Members of the Boca Grande Enhancement Fund said the annual cleanups were part of the reason divers recovered less material.

The Florida Sea Grant program (NOAA), along with the Boca Grande Enhancement Fund, the South Florida Water Management District and Keep Lee County Beautiful Inc. sponsored the event. In all, 30 government and civic organizations participated in the cleanup. Participants also included the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Mote Marine Laboratory, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program.

Marine Debris in the News

Links to Media Coverage of Hawaii Marine Debris Press Conference

To view some of the many articles and reports from the Marine Debris Press Conference, check out the following links:

<http://www.noanews.noaa.gov/stories2006/s2582.htm>

NOAA TAKES TO THE AIR TO SURVEY & LOCATE MARINE DEBRIS IN MAIN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

<http://www.kgmb.com/kgmb/display.cfm?storyID=7313&sid=1183>

Crews Clear Island Waters Of Debris
Norman Lee - nlee@kgmb9.com

<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2006/Feb/23/In/FP602230364.html>

Project seeks out marine debris
By Jan TenBruggencate
Advertiser Science Writer

<http://starbulletin.com/2006/02/23/news/story04.html>

Derelict nets surveyed
A new NOAA initiative pinpoints marine debris in 63 Big Isle locales
By Diana Leone
dleone@starbulletin.com

<http://www.khnl.com/Global/story.asp?S=4540291>

NOAA Launches Ocean Clean-Up Effort –

Read about South Carolina’s approach to marine debris and how NOAA is helping to address the problem

<http://www.charleston.net/stories/?newsID=74110§ion=localnews>

NOAA MDP in Hawaii Fishing News

NOAA’s Marine Debris Program was highlighted in the March 1st issue of Hawaii Fishing News. The article highlights such projects as the Port Reception Facility, the Main Hawaiian Island Cleanup, the South Point Clean-ups and NOAA’s partnership with industry in the Trash to Energy projects.

More links to Entangled Humpback Whale

To read more about the disentanglement of the Hawaiian Humpback whale referenced above, visit the following links:

<http://www.thehawaiiichannel.com/news/7794430/detail.html>

<http://www.khnl.com/Global/story.asp?S=4600267>

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