



PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA
Marine National Monument

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**NOAA Removes 12 Tons of Marine Debris from Papahānaumokuākea
Marine National Monument**

On May 20, 2016, NOAA hosted an educational marine debris sorting event for school children from grades three through six to sort plastic bottles, bottle caps, toothbrushes and other non-hazardous debris that was collected during this year's marine debris removal expedition to Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM) in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

From April 12 – May 13, 2016, a team of 10 NOAA scientists from the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) Coral Reef Ecosystem Program (CREP) conducted shoreline marine debris surveys and removal at five different islands/atolls in PMNM. This year's mission was two-part, starting with a 15-day land-based operation at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, and concluding with a 17-day ship-based operation aboard NOAA Ship *Hi'ialakai*.

A total of 24,123 lbs. of marine debris, primarily derelict fishing gear and plastics, were removed from the shorelines of Midway Atoll, Kure Atoll, Pearl and Hermes Atoll, Lisianski Island, and French Frigate Shoals. The marine debris brought back to Honolulu this year was sorted, tallied, and showcased in an educational outreach event for local elementary school students at the NOAA Inouye Regional Center on Ford Island in Pearl Harbor.

The 12 tons of marine debris includes 1,843 derelict fishing nets or net fragments (weighing 18,755 lbs.), 1,468 plastic beverage bottles, 4,457 bottle caps, 570 shoes and flip-flop sandals, 535 cigarette lighters, 485 toothbrushes and other personal care products, and 8,452 hard plastic fragments.

Marine debris is a human-induced global problem with adverse effects on coral reef ecosystems and marine wildlife, but large-scale removals are only a temporary solution. Through outreach and education, the NOAA Marine Debris team and its partners hope to educate Hawaii's youth on the negative impacts of consuming single-use plastics and inspire them to change their behavior and become the leading example for future generations.

After today's event, the plastics will be recycled for use in art displays and manufactured goods. All derelict fishing nets will be sent to [Hawaii's Nets to Energy Program](#), a partnership with Covanta Energy and Schnitzer Steel, to be used as fuel to generate electricity, powering homes on O'ahu.

For more information, see the 2016 NOAA Marine Debris NWHI Interactive Storymap: <http://noaa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=5be43012cc2a4e7499a9dd38404db041#>

Images available here:

<https://drive.google.com/a/noaa.gov/folderview?id=0B1XhTSSo5eqzaHlyOWFDNnNRRWs&usp=sharing>



More Information

Since 1996, NOAA's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center Coral Reef Ecosystem Program's Marine Debris Project has led marine debris survey and removal efforts in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The NOAA Marine Debris Program has supported the marine debris removal mission since the program's inception in 2006. This year marks the program's 10th anniversary and 10th year funding the effort.

Throughout the years, this project has continued with support from NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration Marine Debris Program, NOAA's Damage Assessment Remediation and Restoration Program, the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Over the past 20 years, agency staff and partners have removed a total of 848 metric tons (935 standard tons or 1.9 million lbs.) of derelict fishing gear and plastics from the shorelines and shallow coral reef environments of what is now Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

Find out more:

- NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
http://www.pifsc.noaa.gov/cred/marine_debris.php
- NOAA Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program
<http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/>
- NOAA Office of Response and Restoration Marine Debris Program
<http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/>
- State of Hawai'i
<http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/marine-debris/>
- NOAA Office of Marine and Aviation Operations
<http://www.omaop.noaa.gov/learn/marine-operations/ships/hiialakai>

Papahānaumokuākea is cooperatively managed to ensure ecological integrity and achieve strong, long-term protection and perpetuation of Northwestern Hawaiian Island ecosystems, Native Hawaiian culture, and heritage resources for current and future generations. Three co-trustees - the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, and State of Hawai'i - joined by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, protect this special place. Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument was inscribed as the first mixed (natural and cultural) UNESCO World Heritage Site in the United States in July 2010. For more information, please visit www.papahanaumokuakea.gov.

