



# PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA Marine National Monument

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## ***Hawai‘i Nets to Energy Program Provides Power from Marine Debris Collected in Papahānaumokuākea***

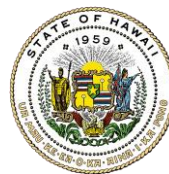
(Campbell Industrial Park, O‘ahu) In perhaps what is one of the clearest illustrations of the problem of marine debris, more than 740 tons of it has been removed from the waters and shorelines of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) over the past 14 years. None of the debris, largely derelict fishing gear from distant fisheries, was dumped there. The NWHI’s location in the middle of the North Pacific Ocean unfortunately makes its reefs a comb for collecting marine debris from all around the Pacific Rim. Derelict fishing gear fouls and damages sensitive coral reefs and presents an entanglement hazard for endangered and threatened species like the Hawaiian monk seal.

While the *Hawai‘i Nets to Energy Program* can’t curb the annual accumulation of an estimated 52 tons of marine debris in the NWHI, it provides an innovative approach to debris disposal. Debris is first collected during annual removal cruises conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and, since 2005, the U.S. Coast Guard. The debris is transported by ship back to O‘ahu where it is picked up by Schnitzer Steel Hawai‘i Corporation and trucked to its scrap metal recycling facility at Campbell Industrial Park. Nets, fishing line, and rope are cut into small pieces, which are then transported to the City and County of Honolulu’s HPower energy-from-waste facility run by Covanta Energy. There the shredded material is mixed with other municipal solid waste and combusted to create electricity. Since the start of the *Hawai‘i Nets to Energy Program* in 2002, it’s estimated that this debris has created enough electricity to power more than 600 homes on O‘ahu for a year. Schnitzer Steel and Covanta Energy/HPower are two of nearly two dozen private and public partners in the *Hawai‘i Nets to Energy Program* (full list below).

Commander Martin Smith of the U.S. Coast Guard said, “The Coast Guard Fourteenth District has supported Marine Debris removal from Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument for the past six years. Buoy tenders, providing a heavy lift capability along with qualified divers, have committed to one trip each year to assist in the removal marine debris.” The 225-foot-long buoy tender *WALNUT*, was preparing to deploy for this year’s participation but was diverted to the Gulf of Mexico to support the response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Coast Guard efforts have resulted in the collection of over 75 metric tons of materials since 2002.

“The NOAA Marine Debris Program is proud to be a partner in this proactive alternative to marine debris disposal. This program exemplifies what is possible when government, industry, and the private sector come together,” said David Holst, acting director of the NOAA Marine Debris Program.

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Marine debris is one of the primary threats facing Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Others include invasive species and global climate change. “These threats are all global ones,” said David Swatland, NOAA Deputy Superintendent for Papahānaumokuākea. The establishment of the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve in 2000 was a bold and pivotal action toward recognizing and addressing these threats, but it is clear, Swatland said, “. . .that similar challenges are faced by coastal communities all over the world. Marine debris is just a symptom of how we manage our resources. Until we change our behaviors, these issues will continue to threaten our ecosystems.”

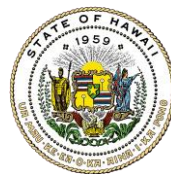
Hawai‘i’s *Nets to Energy Program* and other public-private partnerships will be featured during the Fifth International Marine Debris Conference being held in Honolulu, March 20-25, 2011.

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](http://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov)

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## *Hawai ‘i Nets to Energy Partners*

- Alliance Trucking
- Chris Woolaway and Associates, Inc.
- City and County of Honolulu, Department of Environmental Services
- City and County of Honolulu, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Covanta Energy
- Hawai‘i Longline Association
- Hawai‘i Wildlife Fund
- Matson Navigation Co.
- Net Patrol (Kaua‘i)
- NOAA Fisheries Restoration Center
- NOAA Marine Debris Program
- NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center





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- NOAA Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument
- Pacific Ocean Producers Fishing and Marine
- Schnitzer Steel Hawai‘i Corporation
- State of Hawai‘i, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism
- State of Hawai‘i, Department of Land and Natural Resources
- Surfrider Foundation, Kaua‘i Chapter
- United Fishing Agency
- US Coast Guard, District 14
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council

