

**ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF HAWAII
OPERATION WILDLIFE
OCEAN TRASH IN HAWAII**

<u>Breakdown of Trash</u>		
Paper towels: 2-4 weeks	Orange Peel: 2-5 weeks	Cigarette butt: 5+ years
Plastic bag: 10-20 years	Styrofoam cup: 50 years	Leather: 50 years
Rubber shoe sole: 80 years		Aluminum can: 80-200 years
Disposable Diaper: 450 years		Monofilament fishing line: 600 years
Plastic water bottle: 450 years		Glass bottle: 1 million years

Effects of this Trash:

- **Affects the beauty of our Environment**

From the South Point on the Island of Hawaii to Hanalei on Kauai, and even in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands National Monument further north, our beaches are littered with plastic material, cans, bottles, cigarette butts and lighters, discarded fishing gear, even rubber slippers. On one day in September 2007, over 3,000 people picked up almost 46,000 pounds of trash along the beaches of the inhabited islands.

- **Habitat Destruction**

A reef is the most biologically diverse ecosystem in the ocean and key to the region's good health. Marine debris, particularly abandoned fishing nets, can break or smother, due to a lack of sunlight, the coral reefs. Continued wave action multiplies the damage until a diver removes the trash – sometimes too late!

- **Wildlife Entanglement**

Many ocean creatures are caught in discarded fishing gear, again in particular the nets. Often such entanglements result in death to the endangered sea turtles, dolphins, seabirds, monk seals and whales.

- **Threat to the Wildlife**

Marine animals eat the floating debris by mistake, which fills their stomachs with plastic pieces, cigarette butts and other items. Eventually they starve to death. The plastic 6-pack rings get caught around the necks of seabirds. Latex balloons that have popped over the ocean are also mistaken as food. Fishing lines wrap around flippers, fins, teeth, even whole whale bodies, causing injury and/or preventing eating.

- **Alien Species Transport**

Small creatures that could be harmful attach themselves to the trash and float to the Hawaiian Islands' fragile ecosystem, doing great harm to both native plants and animals.

NOAA pamphlet "Marine Debris in Hawaii"
Wildlife 2024-25

Assistance League of Hawaii Operation