

Line Up for Recycling

Objective

The students will be able to describe the sources of discarded monofilament fishing line and its hazards to wildlife.

Students will plan a clean-up campaign in their area. As an option, students can carry out the campaign. During the campaign, students will document the procedure, record the amount of line collected and write a “planning book” to become a resource for others to use.

Materials

- ❑ visit “How to start a monofilament recycling program” at www.fishinglinerecycling.org/implementing.htm
- ❑ reel of fishing line and 10 to 12 lengths of line cut to 30.5 cm (12 in.) each

Background

Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program (MRRP) is an innovative recycling project dedicated to reducing the environmental damage caused by discarded monofilament fishing line. Monofilament line is another name for single-strand, high-density, nylon fishing line that is used on fishing reels and in the manufacturing of fishing nets.

Wildlife is adversely affected by monofilament line in two ways: Entanglement and ingestion. Humans are also affected by monofilament line, which can wrap around boat propellers and SCUBA divers. Monofilament fishing line can last up to 600 years in the environment. Some facts about monofilament fishing line:

- From 2000 to 2004 over 37 dolphins have been stranded with monofilament entanglements or fishing hook ingestions.
- Between 2000 and 2004, 166 sea turtles were entangled in fishing line in Florida.
- One turtle rescued had ingested approximately 590 feet of monofilament.
- From 1991-2005 of the 655 manatees rescued for injuries, approximately 7% of all manatees.
- Researchers have documented over 60 fish species that have swallowed or become entangled in marine debris.
- From 1999 to 2000, more than 265 seabirds of various species were rescued due to hook and line entanglements. Of those 265 seabirds, 92 died.
- When surveyed, boat motor repair services in Northeast Florida indicated that approximately 25% - 30% of all repairs were associated with monofilament entanglement on the propeller or the shaft.

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Action

1. Ask students to raise their hands if they have ever been fishing. Show students the fishing line reel and distribute the cut pieces for students to touch. Ask students to try and break the line or pull it apart. Explain that this single-strand, high-density, nylon fishing line is used around the country (and the world) by commercial and recreational fishermen. Ask students if they think this small, lightweight line could pose problems to ocean animals. Use the background information to illustrate specific instances.
2. Ask students if they have seen discarded fishing line around their neighborhood, town or favorite fishing area. Introduce the Web pages from the Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program (either on overhead transparencies or by making handouts.) Explain that this is a successful ongoing recycling program.
3. Have the class break into groups to investigate the many aspects and steps involved in organizing and running their own monofilament line recycling program. Issues to think about include advertising, organizing clean-ups and coordinating volunteer help. Students can find information, downloads, and support materials at fishinglinerecycling.org/startup.htm.
4. After students have finished their research, the class should discuss and analyze the pros and cons of starting their own program. Is a program needed in their area? Who should do the work? How much might it cost? If students would like to continue, ask them to create an action plan with a timeline and a list of task to be performed. As an alternative, students could invite someone who runs a monofilament line recycling program to speak to the class, and ask how they might help that program.
5. During the campaign, ask students to document their actions, record the amount of line collected and create a “planning book” as a resource for others to use.

