

RETRIEVING GHOSTNET AT MINIMAL COST

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Fishing net discarded in the North Pacific drifts to Hawaii's Northwest Islands, "bulldozes" reefs and strangles Hawaiian Monk Seals and other wildlife. Currently NOAA and the Coast Guard cut the net free and bring it to Oahu at a cost of \$25,000 per ton. The Hawaii Longliners Association is voluntarily breaking this destructive and expensive cycle by retrieving ghostnet from the high seas. They deposit the net at Honolulu Harbor where it is taken to Oahu's garbage-to-energy plant and converted to electrical energy -- all at no cost to the taxpayer. This paper features in-depth interviews with Longliners to identify both "politically correct" and personal motives for performing this strenuous service. The interviews also ask what would motivate the Longliners to pick up ghostnet some distance from their planned courses. The paper's goal is to point the way to expanding the ghostnet retrieval program at minimal cost and alleviating the very expensive Northwest Islands problem. The mariners' first-hand accounts are especially valuable as funding may become available to replicate Hawaii's program nationwide.