



*inspiring people to protect
Bay Area birds since 1917*

For Immediate Release

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Audubon & local agencies install recycling bins to protect wildlife from discarded fishing line

Monofilament fishing line may be only 1/100 of an inch thick – but it can still be deadly to water birds and marine mammals that get tangled in it.

That’s why Golden Gate Audubon Society is partnering with Bay Area waterfront property owners, including regional parks, municipal marinas, port authorities, and local governments to install recycling bins for monofilament fishing line.

So far, Golden Gate Audubon has provided recycling bins for installation at popular San Francisco Bay fishing spots in the cities of Alameda, Oakland, and San Leandro. Partner agencies include the East Bay Regional Park District, City of Alameda, and San Leandro Marina.

“We want to make it easy for fishermen to do the right thing and recycle their used fishing line,” said Cindy Margulis, Executive Director of Golden Gate Audubon Society.

“Recycling used and excess monofilament will save the lives of pelicans, ducks, cormorants, sea lions and other precious Bay wildlife.”

Monofilament is fishing line made from a single very thin line of plastic, which becomes a marine contaminant if left out in the water. Discarded monofilament too often ends up entangling water birds and marine mammals, causing them a great deal of suffering and often a ghastly death. International Bird Rescue, the leading water bird rehab organization in California, documented that 47 percent of the pelicans it treats suffer serious injuries related to monofilament fishing line. A visit to nearly any S.F. Bay fishing spot will reveal loose strands

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and wads of discarded monofilament littering the shore and piers, and lurking in the water as an invisible deadly hazard for wildlife.

Golden Gate Audubon received grant funding this spring from the Alameda County Wildlife Commission to expand monofilament recycling in the County. With just this one small grant, Golden Gate Audubon will double the number of monofilament recycling sites in the entire county

GGAS volunteers assembled the bins from PVC pipe. Sites for the bins include two fishing piers at the East Bay Regional Park District's Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland, the Port of Oakland's Middle Harbor Shoreline Park and Shoreview Park in West Oakland, Ballena Bay marina area in Alameda, and three fishing spots within the San Leandro Marina operated by the City of San Leandro.

The used monofilament will be collected from the recycling bins and sent to a special recycling program that transforms the plastic into artificial reefs to help restore fish populations in degraded freshwater environments. The plastic structures "attract fish and encourage plant growth almost immediately, providing the natural cover essential to the growth of a healthy fish population," according to the Berkley Fishing Conservation Institute.

"Decades of hard work have improved our Bay to sustain fish, birds, and marine mammal populations," Margulis said. "Now we're asking fishermen to do their part – recycle their used or excess monofilament – to ensure the Bay remains a safe home for all our wildlife."

*Do you know a Bay fishing spot that would commit to a monofilament recycling effort?
Contact Golden Gate Audubon at ggas@goldengateaudubon.org.*

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