

Reel-in and Recycle Project

Carrie Hugo

Have you ever had the unfortunate experience to see a bird entangled in fishing line? Have you ever walked the shore of a local lake or river and found tangles of this line in the water, or in the vegetation- often with a hook or a lead weight still attached? Monofilament fishing line is particularly hazardous to wildlife because it is long-lasting, nearly invisible (especially in water) and very strong and durable. Entanglement in fishing line kills thousands of animals each year, but water loving birds and mammals are particularly vulnerable.



Monofilament recycling bins are one solution to this problem. The Reel-in and Recycle program was created by the U.S Boating Association in order to address the threat of monofilament line in our nations waters. Berkley Fishing is a major sponsor of the program and they recycle the monofilament sent in by volunteers. What's even better.....they turn the fishing line into artificial fish habitat! According to the US Boating association there are a total of 1930 bins around the United States. And thus far these bins have collected over 3650 pounds of fishing line. That's a lot of fishing line!

The Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter raised funds at our banquet in 2014 to install monofilament recycling bins at several local boat launches and day use areas. The first one to go up (thanks to the hard work of Peggy Albertson and George Saylor) is now at the Honeysuckle Boat Launch in Hayden. The next sites to receive these bins will be Killarney Lake along the lower Coeur d'Alene River, Blue Creek Bay, just east of Coeur d'Alene, and the Mineral Ridge Boat Launch.



Along with constructing the bins we also made interpretive signs that tell anglers and others why fishing line is so dangerous to wildlife. Thank you to Larry and Kazue Krumplemen for his wonderful but tragic photo of an entangled osprey on Fernan Lake and the one taken recently (October 2016) on Hayden Lake of a flying Osprey dangling fish line. These interpretive signs will catch the attention and hopefully the hearts of the public so that they will now recognize fishing line as the threat that it is.

How can you help?? Please consider adopting a bin. We will need folks to check the bins and remove the fishing line so that it can be mailed in to Berkley. If you are interested in helping with this effort please let George, Peggy, or Carrie know.

Also we had a few launches that would not allow the bins but are perfect high-use sites. These launches are managed by Kootenai County and include Fernan, Spirit Lake, and Hauser Lake. If you have a moment, consider calling the County Waterways Office to express your support of this program and hopefully they will change their minds! Nick Snyder can be reached at (208) 446-1275.

Thank you for your donations that helped fund this program! We hope it is only the beginning of monofilament recycling in North Idaho. If even a few birds are saved from this tragic and preventable threat, the effort will have been well worth it!!