

# Fishing Among Turtles

## Best Practices for Fishing Around Sea Turtles

Have you ever accidentally hooked a sea turtle and didn't know what to do? The Fishing Around Sea Turtles program supports recreational fisheries through "turtle friendly" fishing gear, such as barbless circle hooks, and provides best-practice guidelines to assist hooked or entangled turtles. The program also includes practical fishing tips suggested by fishermen that may reduce the potential for interactions.



This fisherman helps by cutting line close to the hook.

### It's OK To Help

It's OK to help a turtle in distress, not only by making a phone call but also by physically helping to reduce further injury. Trailing gear is the biggest threat, and removing as much line as possible will prevent entanglement that can cause loss of flippers, strangulation, or death. In this way, Hawai'i fishermen can help in the continued recovery of sea turtles.

Before assisting, make sure it is safe for both you and the turtle.

Then follow these steps:

**REEL-IN** the turtle carefully;

**HOLD** it by its shell or flippers;

**CUT** the line as close to the hook as possible; and

**RELEASE** with no (or as little) gear/line attached.

### Fishermen Strategies To Reduce Interactions

A turtle on the hook means tackle is likely lost or damaged, bait is wasted, and a fishing opportunity is missed. Some strategies fishermen might use to reduce fishing interactions may include these: 1) check bait often; 2) use live bait; and 3) clean your catch away from turtles. Live bait is attractive to big fish, but not to turtles, which tend to prefer (stinky) dead fish, eel, tako, or ika (squid). Turtles can also get accustomed to being fed, making them more likely to take a baited hook. Therefore, take care to not inadvertently feed turtles when cleaning your catch—especially in harbors and piers where fishing effort can be high. Always adhere to Hawai'i State Fishing Regulations, and please report illegal activities, including illegal gillnets, to (808) 643-DLNR (3567)! By reporting, you are helping turtles, fish and fishermen.

The Fishing Around Sea Turtles program relies on suggestions and advice from fishermen and local experts. The program was developed through a multi-agency partnership that includes NOAA Fisheries Service, NOAA Barbless Circle Hook program (BCH), NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), DLNR Division of Conservation & Resources Enforcement (DOCARE), DLNR Marine Wildlife Program, USFWS Pacific Islands Fish & Wildlife Office, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, and Hawaii Fishermen's Alliance for Conservation & Tradition (HFACT).

Mahalo to all participating fishermen who do their best to prevent interactions and reduce injury. Your experience is valuable. To share feedback, request a tackle box decal, or discuss other sea turtles concerns, please contact Irene Kelly, <Irene.Kelly@noaa.gov>. To report an injured or dead turtle, please call (808) 725-5730.



Use barbless circle hooks (BCH), crimp the barb to reduce injuries. Many fishermen are catching fish on BCH! The 2015 Tokunaga Ulua Challenge was won on BCH, a 93-lb ulua.

# IT'S OK TO HELP



## Know what to do if you accidentally catch a sea turtle while fishing

### FISHING AROUND SEA TURTLES

#### ACCIDENTAL TURTLE CATCH

#### It's OK to Help!



#### SAFETY FIRST If safe to help

REEL-IN turtle with care  
HOLD by shell / flippers  
CUT line close to hook  
RELEASE with no line attached



#### Remember to:

- ✓ Check bait after every nibble
- ✓ Use barbless circle hooks to reduce injuries
- ✓ Clean your catch away from turtles

#### For Injured or Dead Turtles Call:

(808) 725-5730

For more information, visit [www.fpir.noaa.gov/PRD/prd\\_index.html](http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/PRD/prd_index.html)

**"Fishing Around Sea Turtles" reflective decals are free.** Pick one up at fishing events and tournaments. Keep the information handy and apply the decal to your cooler or tackle box. Share this important information with friends and family.

For more tips to prevent or reduce the potential for interactions, search online for "Fishing Around Sea Turtles" or go to:  
[www.fpir.noaa.gov/PRD/prd\\_index.htm](http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/PRD/prd_index.htm)

**FISH RESPONSIBLY, USE BARBLESS CIRCLE HOOKS!**

To request a decal by mail,  
email: [Irene.Kelly@noaa.gov](mailto:Irene.Kelly@noaa.gov) or call (808) 725-5141



**HAWAII FISHING NEWS**

*"The Voice of Hawaii's Fisherman"*™

**LAKE WILSON  
GETS A FACE LIFT**

**CATCHING  
LURE COLORS**

**CHRISTMAS ISLAND  
ADVENTURE**

**THE VOICE OF HAWAII'S FISHERMAN**™

SINCE 1977

JUNE 2016 VOLUME 41, NUMBER 5

\$ 6.00

Pacific Islands Fisheries  
Science Center Library

Received on: 5/27/2016

