

Could ya hold the line, please?

BY MAYA TOTMAN

Director, Exotic and Wild Bird Rescue of the Florida Keys

On Sunday, Exotic and Wild Bird Rescue (EWBR) got a call from Chris O'Connor, who was visiting some friends at Sigsbee. They were walking and noticed a laughing gull entangled with monofilament line. EWBR went and rescued the bird.

After following where that fishing line came from, EWBR discovered that all kinds of fishing line, rope, and rubber was in the water under the rocks. It all probably came from boaters fishing and cutting the lines or changing their fishing lines and then throwing them into the ocean.

Developed in the 1930s, monofilament fishing line is made from a single, continuous strand of nylon. Discarded monofilament is believed to last 600 years in the marine environment.



EWBR collects a lot of fishing line on its rescues. The line is dangerous to everyone - marine mammals and the seabirds - please discard of it properly. Anglers can use the recycling stations to deposit nylon fishing line spools, nylon rope and nylon cast nets. Tackle shops, marinas and other businesses have joined the effort by placing collection bins on their premises. Our volunteers will empty the stations periodically and take clean monofilament



and line spools to our facility. From there the material will be shipped to Pure Fishing, a tackle company that recycles monofilament to make fish habitats.

Known as Berkley Fish Habs, the habitats are 4-foot slatted cubes that provide cover for

game fish in lakes and ponds lacking natural underwater structures.

We must protect the Keys' marine life and our seabirds. If you see an orphaned or injured bird, please do not feed it anything at all. Call EWBR at 872-1982.

Chris O'Connor was walking on the beach while visiting friends at Sigsbee and noticed a laughing gull entangled with monofilament line. EWBR was called and the bird was rescued. Discarded monofilament is believed to last 600 years in the marine environment. The line should be properly disposed.

Photos taken by Gary Yuhasz