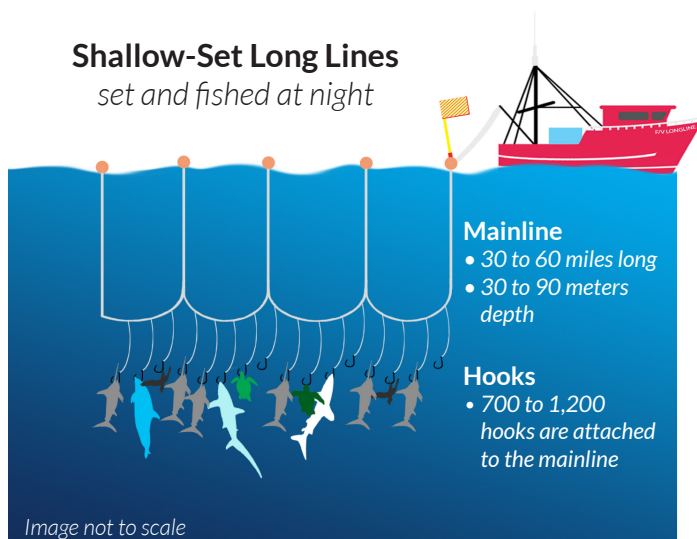


Collateral Capture Bycatch in the Hawaii Shallow-Set Longline Fishery

The Hawaii Shallow-Set Longline (HI SSLL) fishery uses pelagic (midwater) gear to target swordfish. Unfortunately, of all the animals ensnared by these suspended, baited hooks, nearly half are injured, dying, or dead non-target species and are consequently tossed overboard.

Shallow-set longline gear consists of a continuous mainline supported by floats that typically stretches 30 to 60 miles in length. Anywhere from 700 to 1,200 hooks are attached. The lines are set at dusk between 30 and 90 meters depth and left to soak until dawn.

Shallow-Set Long Lines
set and fished at night



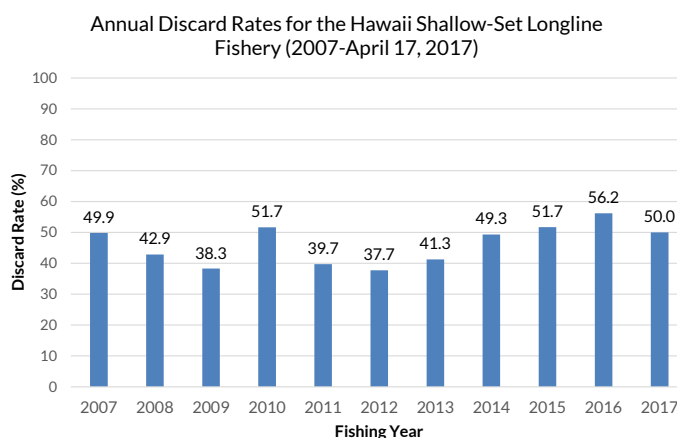
As the lines are pulled out of the water they reveal a multitude of other animals carelessly captured including seabirds, sea turtles, dolphins, and many non-target fish. This gear also entraps and harms marine mammals including humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins, short-finned pilot whales, false killer whales, and Risso's dolphins. Because of these documented entanglements, the HI SSLL fishery is classified as a Category II fishery under the Marine Mammal Protection Act – a federal designation given to fisheries that are known to cause incidental death or serious injury to marine mammals.

The Hawaii Shallow-Set Longline fishery entangled many threatened and endangered species from 2007 to 2017. These include Pacific leatherbacks, Pacific loggerheads, and green sea turtles, humpback and fin whales, Guadalupe fur seals, and oceanic whitetip sharks. A scientific study estimates that even one Pacific leatherback mortality from waters off the U.S. West Coast over the course of five years is sufficient to hinder recovery of this critically endangered animal.¹ Putting further pressure on these endangered species by introducing pelagic longlines off the U.S. West Coast would be reckless.

Cover Photo: Documented bycatch ensnared by shallow-set longlines off Hawaii includes leatherback sea turtles, northern elephant seals, Risso's dolphins, Laysan albatrosses, loggerhead sea turtles, and black-footed albatrosses.

From 2007 through April 17, 2017:

- 206,987 animals were discarded
- 46% of the total catch was discarded
- 64,926 of the discarded animals were released dead or injured, resulting in a death/injury rate of discards of 31.4%
- Over 750 seabirds, 60 dolphins, and 190 sea turtles were caught by this fishery
- 131,270 sharks and rays were discarded
- In 2015, a humpback whale and a fin whale were entangled in this gear and consequently injured



A discard refers to any animal caught that is not kept. This includes animals released alive, dead, or injured. Discard rates (percentage of the total number of animals caught that are thrown overboard) are determined using data provided by fishery observers.² The HI SSL fishery has 100% observer coverage. Data from all sets in the fishery for 2007 through April 17, 2017 were used to determine discard rates.

Keep Shallow-Set Longlines Off the U.S. West Coast

In 1989, longlines were prohibited off the state of California and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) included this prohibition in the West Coast Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan. The Council in 2009 voted to not authorize a West Coast-based pelagic shallow-set longline fishery on the high seas due to significant bycatch concerns.

The drift gillnet swordfish fishery also has very high bycatch, jettisoning approximately 61 percent of everything it catches, on average. Adding another dirty gear to a fishery with disturbingly high discard rates will only complicate and delay progress toward reducing bycatch in the West Coast swordfish fishery. Selective, alternative gear, such as deep-set buoy gear, must be promoted and utilized to build a responsible and sustainable swordfish fishery off the U.S. West Coast.

¹K.A. Curtis, J. Moore, and S. Benson. 2015. Estimating Limit Reference Points for Western Pacific Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in the U.S. West Coast EEZ. PLoS One DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0136452

²NMFS. 2017. Hawaii shallow-set longline observer data. Freedom of Information Act release.