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Hempstead to recycle plastic fishing line

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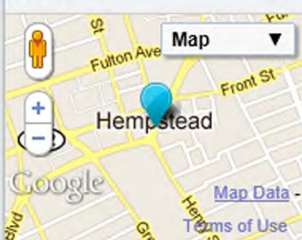
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Hempstead Town officials Thursday launched a new program to recycle plastic fishing line that often ends up tangled around docks, piled on beaches or wrapped around wildlife.

In an effort to safeguard marine wildlife, town officials started Reel Recycling, a program to promote the proper disposal of monofilament fishing line. It is the first comprehensive program of its kind in Nassau County, officials said.

"When not disposed properly, monofilament fishing line can be damaging to our environment and harmful to our precious wildlife," Hempstead Town Supervisor Kate Murray said in a statement. "Hempstead Town's Reel Recycling program will help keep our bays tangle-free."

Fishing line recycling bins will be at 10 sites: Guy Lombardo Marina, Inwood Marina, Point Lookout East Marina, Point Lookout West Marina, Woodmere Docks, Shell Creek Park, Seaman's Neck Park, Seaford Docks, Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve, and Harbor Isle Park.

The non-biodegradable plastic line has entrapped seagulls, turtles and other marine life and shore birds. It can take more than 500 years for monofilament fishing line to decompose, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The town partnered with local environmental and fishing groups, including the New York Marine Trades Association, New York Sea Grant, the South Shore Estuary Reserve Council, the Hempstead Shellfisherman's Association, the New York State Department of State, and Operation SPLASH (Stop Polluting Littering And Save Harbors). The program reflects "the town's proactive and progressive approach to protecting the environment and our valuable marine resources," said Jay Tanski, senior coastal processes and facilities specialist for New York Sea Grant.



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