

How can you tell if a trap is abandoned?

Each trap consists of 3 components: the trap itself, a surface marker buoy, and a line that attaches the two. The buoy floats on the surface and that is how the fishermen locate a trap. If the surface marker buoy gets cut off, or disengages from the trap line, the fishermen have no way to tell where the trap is. It then becomes abandoned.

Fishermen report losing between 10-15% of their traps every year.

These are the traps that can continue to kill the intended species (lobsters or crabs), but we have also found a variety of fish in them, as well as Cormorants. Because the line is still attached to the trap, the line can float high in the water column, as it is made of material that is lighter than water, hence it floats. Whales, dolphins, turtles and sea lions have been found entangled in this line. Because ODA wants to save as much wildlife as possible, we remove those abandoned traps. ODA is in contact with the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, and we have their blessing to remove this gear.

What do you do with the gear after you remove it?

If the trap is still in good working order, we give them back to the fishermen. If not, the traps go to landfill.

Do you get paid to remove these abandoned traps?

No. All our funding is provided through public donations. ODA is a registered non-profit, and has had a 501c3 status since 2002.