



NOAA Marine Debris Program Innovative Removal

Derelict Crab Trap Removal in Southern New Jersey Coastal Bays

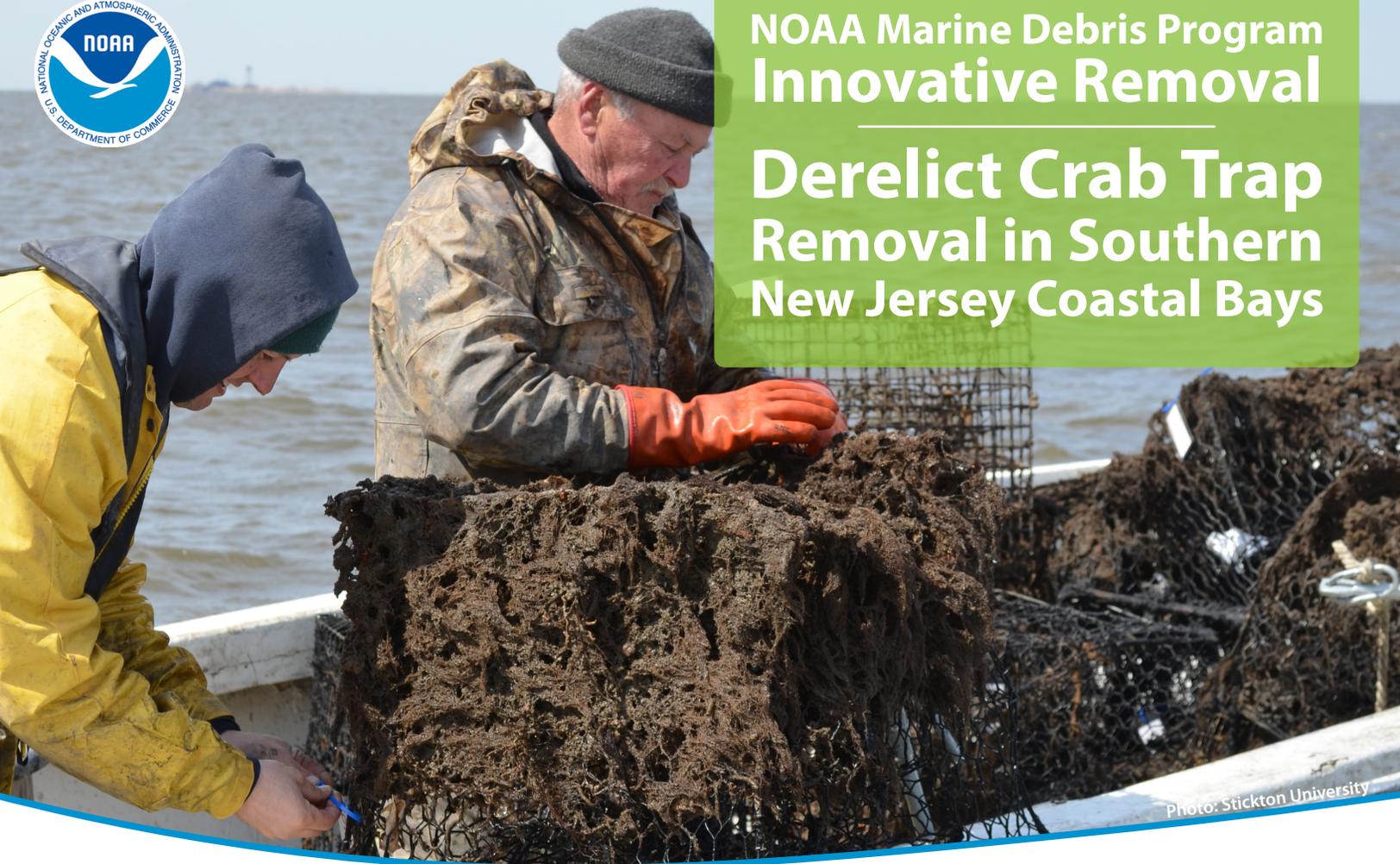


Photo: Stockton University

Project Description

Led by Stockton University and funded by the NOAA Marine Debris Program, this project expands on a derelict crab trap removal project in New Jersey. Previously, Stockton University identified areas of high crab pot loss in coastal bays related to the intersection of commercial and recreational crabbing activities with recreational boating, specifically areas with more than 250 pots per square kilometer. With this information and the assistance of local crabbers, Stockton University removed 1,038 derelict crab traps, helping reduce damage to sensitive habitats and decrease navigational hazards in the area.

Through this project, Stockton University continues to work directly with commercial crabbers, with the goal of identifying and removing an additional 1,000 derelict crab pots from ten coastal bays between Tuckerton and Ocean City, NJ. All salvageable pots are either returned to their owner or made available to local crabbers, while non-salvageable pots are recycled.

Innovative Techniques

Stockton University works directly with commercial crabbers to perform removal activities outside of their regular fishing season, allowing them to prevent financial losses from both lost pots and the bycatch of harvestable crabs and other species.

Prior to crab pot removal activities, Stockton University performs towed sonar surveys in order to identify and assign GPS coordinates to derelict pots. Commercial crabbers can then use their own low-cost sonar units to reacquire and remove pots at a later time. A grappling hook is used to grab and remove the pots from the sea floor. Crabbers are also trained to use these methods during crabbing season to detect their own pots soon after loss, further preventing derelict fishing gear in New Jersey bays.

Uses & Lessons Learned

This method is a low-tech and low-cost approach to the removal of derelict crab pots that highlights the importance of working directly with the commercial fishing industry. Stockton University is teaching other organizations and commercial crabbers how to use the same methods across New Jersey. More information about this project can be found at <http://www.wecrabnj.org/>.

Point of Contact

Steve Evert
Stockton University
steven.evert@stockton.edu



Photo: Stockton University