



# WESTERN CUYAHOGA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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## Dangers of Improperly Discarded Fishing Line

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Discarded fishing line poses a danger to humans, machinery, pets and wildlife.

Results can be deadly if your dog or cat happens to eat an animal that is tangled in fishing line or has ingested it, particularly if a hook is still attached. Humans can step on hooks, requiring surgical removal. Weed whackers can require unnecessary maintenance if the line tangles the rotor and boats can suffer damage if old fishing line is caught between the boat's propellers.

Wildlife, however, bears the brunt of fishing line that has been irresponsibly discarded. According to [Coastal Breeze News](#), fishing line filaments, with or without hooks, that have been discarded along our beaches and waterways are the leading cause of wildlife entanglement. Furthermore, [National Audubon Society](#) estimates that one million shorebirds die every year as a result of marine debris with over 300,000 of those deaths attributed to discarded fishing lines and hooks.

Discarded lines are dangerous to wildlife in many ways. Lines wrapped around a tree limb can trap a bird like a snare. Lines that have been used in nesting can trap a fledgling if the line gets wound around a leg or wing. Entanglement in lines can lead to choking or cut-off circulation

causing a limb to die and rot away. Animals that eat line can eventually starve to death. Hooks can lacerate throats or beaks.

Each one of us has a part to play in protecting ourselves, our wildlife and our pets from the dangers of improperly discarded fishing line.

**Here are suggestions from the 'Save Coastal Wildlife' group of simple things that you can do to help:**

- Recycle fishing line where possible. Some tackle shops will recycle fishing line.
- If you can't recycle personally, place all unwanted line in a Monofilament Line Recycling Bin.
- If no recycling bins are available, always cut fishing line into pieces less than 6 inches long (preferably 1-inch). Dispose of it, along with hooks and tackle, in appropriate covered containers so it does not blow away or become a risk to wildlife.
- Volunteer your time to clean up fishing line debris at local beaches.
- Support the use of biodegradable fishing line that does not have an indefinite life span in the environment.
- Always check gear and terminal tackle. Inspect your gear often to avoid unwanted breaks. Even small amounts of gear in the water can be harmful to wildlife in entangled or ingested.
- Reuse old fishing line. Tired of a necklace always breaking? Restring it with fishing line. Fishing line is very strong.

**Additionally, Coastal Breeze News has these suggestion for helping wildlife:**

- Cast away from birds and shoreline vegetation.
- Use barbless fishing hooks, artificial lures and weighted fishing lines.
- Do not leave fishing poles unattended with bait dangling from the hook.

**The bottom line is that .....**

Always discard fishing line in appropriate containers and pick-up any discarded fishing line you see. Encourage your city and parks to install collection bins for fishing line. Just as award-winning [Cleveland Metroparks](#) has done, [Bay Village Service Department](#) will be implementing this program in Walker Park starting the next fishing season.

If you find an animal that is tangled in fishing line or is hooked, **DO NOT** attempt to remove it yourself. Immediately take the animal to the nearest rehabilitation facility such as [Lake Erie Nature and Science Center](#) in Bay Village, OH.

The wildlife you save will enrich our world and be there for all of us to enjoy.

If you want to build you own container to hang, [watch this video](#).

Photographs are courtesy of [Tim Jasinski](#), Wildlife Rehabilitation Specialist, Lake Erie Nature & Science Center, 28728 Wolf Rd, Bay Village, OH 44140. [Map](#) | [Website](#) | [Phone](#) | [Facebook](#)



**Photo courtesy of Tim Jasinski, Wildlife Rehabilitation Specialist, Lake Erie Nature and Science Center.**



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