



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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For Immediate Release: December 24, 2012

BOAT RECOVERED FROM PUNALUU SHORELINE POTENTIALLY JAPAN TSUNAMI MARINE DEBRIS

HONOLULU – The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), the state’s lead agency for marine debris responses, has reported that an open boat recovered on Sunday from the shoreline of Punaluu, Oahu, may be the next piece to be verified as Japan tsunami marine debris, pending confirmation by the Government of Japan, with assistance by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu.

The approximately 24-foot boat was found by a Punaluu family, who flipped it over and carried it up the stream to their home. DLNR and Honolulu Police Department were contacted yesterday.

Today, DLNR staff, including an invasive species expert, inspected the boat and found gooseneck barnacles and several types of crabs. These species have been typical of pelagic (open ocean) organisms found on previously confirmed tsunami marine debris items and are not considered invasive.

However, green mussels native to Japan were also found and are considered invasive species. Samples of the mussels were taken for identification, and DLNR aquatic invasive species staff will return on Thursday to search the area where the boat was found to see if any mussels were dislodged while grounding.

On Wednesday, DLNR staff will remove the boat to its Halawa baseyard to clean and examine it further. Since registration numbers are clearly visible, DLNR will work with NOAA and the Japan Consulate in Hawaii to identify an owner in Japan. If the owner does not want it, the Hawaii family may then put in a salvage claim.

As of Nov. 29, NOAA has received approximately 1,400 official debris reports to disasterdebris@noaa.gov from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. With the assistance of the Consulates and Government of Japan, 17 items have been confirmed as items lost during the March 2011 tsunami. Four of those confirmed items have arrived in Hawaii since Sept. 18, 2012: a large blue plastic bin, a fishing boat recovered 700 miles north of Maui by a Hawaii longline fisherman, a skiff found at Midway Atoll, and a skiff in pieces found at Kahana Bay, Oahu.

“While not every item may be traceable back to Japan, it is still important that the public help ensure the health and safety of our community and our coastal environment by reporting bulky, hazardous, large or unusual items in our waters or coastline,” Aila said. “Smaller items can be reported and disposed of safely.

“We are thankful for the efforts of community groups on every island who have been active in reporting items to the state and NOAA, and helping to properly dispose of them.”

For the latest information on tsunami debris, please visit the NOAA Marine Debris Program website about the Japanese tsunami debris at <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/tsunamidebris/>.

To report findings of possible tsunami marine debris, please call DLNR at (808) 587-0400 or send an email to dlnr.marine.debris@hawaii.gov and disasterdebris@noaa.gov.

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Images of the boat and marine organisms found may be found online at:
<https://plus.google.com/101613020396360217549?hl=en#photos/101613020396360217549/albums/5825711114482639793>

For more information news media may contact:

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