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## VOLUNTEERS AND FISHERMEN CLEAR LOBSTER TRAPS FROM LOCAL BEACHES

*Santa Barbara, CA* - On Saturday, April 11, fourteen volunteers with Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and members of the commercial fishing community worked together to remove approximately twenty-six lobster traps that had washed ashore near Blackrock Beach, east of Goleta Beach.


This is the sixth year of shoreline cleanup collaborations for Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara.

During the lobster season, wave action and stormy weather can dislodge traps set by fishermen and send them adrift. When lost traps such as these are carried by currents, they can entangle marine organisms, continue ghost fishing, and pose safety hazards to vessels. When they wash up on shore as debris, they can be hazardous to beachgoers and wildlife.


Over the past nine years, between 2,500 and 6,500 traps are reported lost off the California coast every fishing season, according to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Without regular removal, dozens of traps can accumulate on certain beaches and become embedded in sand and rocks over time. The Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara have been working throughout the season to remove traps.

Last month, Channelkeeper staff surveyed 10 miles of coast between Ellwood and Thousand Steps Beach and geolocated onshore traps. They discovered a high concentration of traps that

had accumulated near Black Rock Beach. At the conclusion of the 2026 lobster season, Channelkeeper staff and local fishermen began planning to clear traps from this stretch of beach which, due to its location, is challenging to access for trap retrieval.

During Saturday's cleanup, volunteers focused efforts on digging out traps that had been buried in the sand and carried them to collection points on the beach. The traps were loaded onto kayaks and hauled through the surf to the F/V Mysteri. Fisherman Adrian Stimson and his crew,  Starkey and Alex Vand, loaded them and transported them to the Santa Barbara Harbor for proper disposal.

In addition to the lobster traps, the team cleared metal fencing, pieces of a shopping cart, plastic tubing, and car tire from the beach.

“Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara is grateful to have partnered with Santa Barbara Channelkeeper again on another successful beach cleanup,” said Ava Schulenberg, Assistant Director of the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara and Executive Director of the CA Lobster & Trap Fishermen's Association. “Commercial traps are extremely labor intensive and costly to build; therefore, no fisherman wants to lose their gear. However, with recent swell events, losing gear is often inevitable. We approach the issue of abandoned gear with a fleet mentality that aims to restore our beaches to their pristine conditions, regardless of whose traps they are. We execute a number of cleanup efforts annually but are especially grateful for our partnered events and very much look forward to doing this again with Channelkeeper and their outstanding volunteers next  year!”



“This cleanup was a great success. We're pleased to partner with local fishermen to remove the traps that washed ashore,” said Channelkeeper's Program Assistant Veronica Moran. “We also appreciate the outstanding volunteer effort. By working together, we were able to remove fishing gear that could have remained on the beach for years.”