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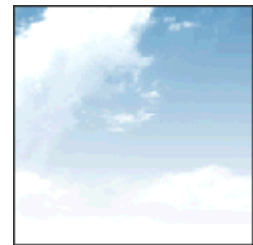
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## Study: El Nino Boosts Marine Debris Risks For Monk Seals

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**HONOLULU** -- A scientific study showed that endangered Hawaiian monk seals get trapped in marine debris more frequently during El Nino years than other years.

El Nino refers to a warming of the tropical Pacific Ocean that occurs every few years.

The study said El Nino caused some ocean currents carrying marine debris to flow father south into the middle of the Hawaiian monk seals' home in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

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Mary Donohue is a marine mammal ecologist with the University of Hawaii's Sea Grant College Program and a co-author of the report.

She said the findings may help by letting experts know they should spend more time looking for and helping entangled monk seals during El Nino years.

Donohue and co-author David Foley of the Joint Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research published their findings in the March issue of New Scientist and April's Marine Mammal Science.

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