New disposal stations for old fishing line are making it easier for anglers to relax as they unwind.

Fishing Line Rewound

Story and Photo By
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Wads of knotted, tangled fishing line and good deeds rarely occur together. Whenever fishermen get snagged, or when a cast goes miserably wrong, that tangled monster of hopeless line makes even good anglers think of bad things. First, the line must be cut. That's a total loss. Then, what to do with that wild knot of cursed line?

Some angry anglers vent retaliation by hurling the bird's nest overboard. Bank fishermen might drop the severed coils to the ground. True, no responsible angler would ever throw fishing line away in nature. The backlash can be deadly. But abandoned fishing line still turns up in the wrong places. For wildlife, the trashed line can be end of the line. Each year, miles of discarded fishing line wind up wrapped around waterfowl wings, looped over river otters and tangled around turtles without a chance of escape.

It's why the installation of recycling containers makes it easier for anglers to do what's ethically right while getting rid of the source of their frustration. At many lakes and rivers throughout Illinois, including DNR sites such as Rock Cut State Park, collection bins for old fishing line, along with their plastic spools, have been installed to keep our waters and shorelines free from snags. One fishing line manufacturer is completing the recycling loop by creating fish-habitat structures from a mix of recycled, post-consumer fishing line and recycled beverage containers. The durable posts represent the equivalent of synthetic trees and branches underwater—perfect attractions for both baitfish and predators.

Discarded fishing line poses a significant pollution hazard for wildlife. Collection receptacles provide anglers a great opportunity to recycle their old line.

Don't see a collection container at your local fishing hole? Many sporting goods stores also feature recycling bins for old fishing line and spools. Or you can send your tangles directly to: Berkley Recycling, 1900 18th Street, Spirit Lake, IA 51360.