

Bin in Hawaii confirmed to be Japan tsunami debris

September 22 2012, by Jennifer Sinco Kelleher



In this photo provided by the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, a worker removes barnacles and other marine life from the bottom of a large blue plastic bin in Honolulu on Wednesday, Sept. 19, 2012. State and federal officials are trying to determine whether the bin bearing the name of a Japanese seafood company is the first confirmed piece of marine debris from last year's tsunamis to arrive in Hawaii. (AP Photo/Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources)

(AP)—A large plastic bin is the first confirmed piece of marine debris from last year's Japan tsunamis to arrive in Hawaii, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Friday.

Japanese consular officials confirmed that the blue bin found earlier this week floating in the ocean is from Fukushima, said Ben Sherman, a NOAA spokesman in Washington, D.C.

It is the 12th confirmed piece to hit U.S. or Canada waters, he said.

The bin was spotted off Waimanalo, on the southeast coast of Oahu, by Makai [Ocean Engineering](#) staff and was retrieved by the Hawaii Undersea Research Laboratory. Used for transporting seafood, the 4-by-4-foot (1.2-by-1.2-meter) cube bears the name Y.K. Suisan Co. Ltd., the state Department of Land and Natural Resources said.

Nikolai Maximenko, a University of Hawaii researcher and [ocean currents](#) expert who is studying the trajectory of the [tsunami debris](#), said the bin's arrival is consistent with his predictions for when the first pieces would get to Hawaii.

"It came at the right time, according to our model," he said. "But in some sense, it could just be a coincidence."

One million to 2 million tons of debris remain in the ocean, but only 1 to 5 percent of that could reach American and Canadian shorelines, Maximenko has said.

Crabs and [barnacles](#) were found on the bin, the state said, along with five local seabirds. Two flew away and three were found dead inside the bin. There were no foreign plant or animal species in or on the bin, which state officials put in quarantine.

Meanwhile, Hawaii fishermen spotted a large dock drifting toward Oahu that may also be tsunami debris. A Maui fisherman climbed on the dock and saw Japanese writing. The 30-foot (9-meters) by 50-foot (15 1/4-meters) dock was spotted Wednesday off Molokai, heading toward

Oahu.

The Coast Guard was notifying mariners of the debris.

A 165-ton concrete dock torn loose from a Japanese fishing port washed ashore in Newport, Oregon, in June.

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Citation: Bin in Hawaii confirmed to be Japan tsunami debris (2012, September 22) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-09-bin-hawaii-japan-tsunami-debris.html>

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