

## From Marine Debris Weekly Media Attention Paid to NOAA's Unmanned Aerial System Project



NOAA's new unmanned aerial system, Malolo I, will be used to help locate debris at sea. Photo courtesy of NOAA.



At-sea test flight of the Malolo I. Photo courtesy of NOAA.

On December 13th, staff with the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument and the NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center's Coral Reef Ecosystem Division joined Airborne Technologies to display the capabilities of their new unmanned aerial system (UAS), the Malolo I ("flying fish"). A TV crew from KHNL News 8 highlighted the UAS during its practice flights at Schofield Barracks on Oahu. Prior to this, on December 11th and 12th, the UAS was successfully tested over waters off of the north shore.

The Malolo I has a 7 ft. wingspan, weighs approximately 10 lbs, and is equipped with an inertial navigation unit, GPS, and camera attached to the underside. It can be launched by hand from a ship or small boat and land in the water. The UAS can autonomously fly a search pattern or can be controlled by an operator via remote control. The system will be used to help NOAA detect derelict fishing gear, such as nets, at-sea in an area in the North Pacific called the Subtropical Convergence Zone, and where debris is known to accumulate. The ultimate goal is to be able to detect and remove this debris before it enters the nearshore area where it poses an entanglement risk and damages sensitive habitat, particularly in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (Northwestern Hawaiian Islands).

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To view the video and article visit: “National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s New Eye in the Sky” -

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