

## Re: mbuf usage for an idle machine

**Source:** <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/FreeBSD/net/2003-08/0220.html>

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**From:** Mike Silbersack (*silby\_at\_silby.com*)

**Date:** 08/27/03

Date: Wed, 27 Aug 2003 11:40:17 -0500 (CDT)  
To: "Giovanni P. Tirloni" <gpt@tirloni.org>

On Wed, 27 Aug 2003, Giovanni P. Tirloni wrote:

> *Hi,*  
>  
> *I've been reading about mbufs and how they're used for*  
> *holding network packets and socket buffers and the*  
> *output of 'netstat -m' for a idle machine I've here*  
> *made me curious about how FreeBSD handles it in -CURRENT.*  
>  
> *Why is it using so many mbufs when it's idle? My*  
> *small knowledge doesn't permit me to answer this*  
> *question yet ;)*

The mbufs in question are (mostly) being used as receive buffers by the network drivers. With modern DMA based cards, you pre-allocate the buffers, then hand them over to the card's control. Once they're filled with packet data, the NIC informs the OS, which replaces them with new buffers.

A lot of our drivers have 128 (or some power of 2) receive buffers, hence your mbuf usage.

Mike "Silby" Silbersack

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