

Historical Beach Sweeps Totals

Data Observations: 1985-2004

Then...

- Glass bottles and metal cans dominate
- Aluminum pull tabs (from beverage cans)
- Latex balloons occasional
- Plastic tampon applicators abundant
- Litter wash-ups frequent
- Cellophane wrapping for food and candy common
- Foam plastic cups common
- Six-pack beverage holder rings abundant
- Kate Tatem, youngest participant (9 months old)

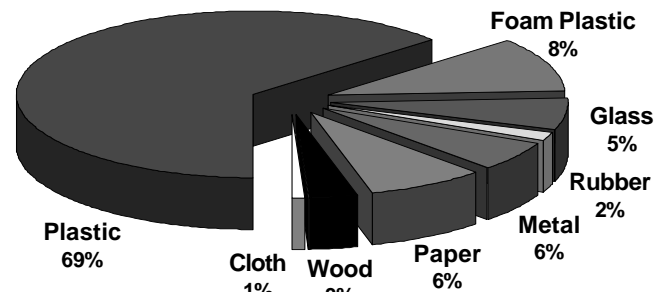
Now...

- Plastic bottles dominate
- Plastic caps and lids are in top ten
- Mylar (plastic) balloons common
- Plastic tampon applicators less common
- Litter wash-ups less often
- Plastic packaging for food and candy tops list
- Less foam plastic cups
- Six-pack beverage holder rings less common
- Kate Tatem, COA Summer Intern and Junior at American University

Nearly 60,000 citizens have participated in Clean Ocean Action's beach cleanups since they began in 1985. Clean Ocean Action (COA) has kept records of volunteer participation and the debris collected during the beach cleanups. Through the years, COA updated and revised the data card used to collect the information to reflect the changing types of consumer products being produced, used, and often improperly discarded and, eventually, found on New Jersey's beaches. The Sweeps program continues to document the debris that plagues our ocean and beaches.

COA has made several observations about the debris collected at beach cleanups over the years. Some of the changes observed may be attributed to laws enacted during that time period that addresses the sources of the debris.

Percent Breakdown by Material*



2,041,878 Pieces of Debris
549,735 Pounds

**Data is from 1993-2002.*

New Jersey's Top 25* from 1993-2002:

Rank	Total	Percent	Item
1	295,350	14.46%	Plastic Cigarette Filters
2	170,450	8.35%	Plastic Food/Wrappers
3	165,823	8.12%	Plastic Pieces
4	148,336	7.26%	Plastic Caps/Lids
5	137,537	6.74%	Plastic Straws
6	112,494	5.51%	Foam Plastic Pieces
7	68,567	3.36%	Paper Pieces
8	66,711	3.27%	Plastic Beverage/Soda Bottles
9	63,630	3.12%	Glass Pieces
10	53,463	2.62%	Plastic Cups/Utensils
11	52,158	2.55%	Metal Beverage Cans
12	51,511	2.52%	Lumber Pieces
13	49,276	2.41%	Glass Beverage Bottles
14	47,229	2.31%	Plastic Other Bags
15	38,805	1.90%	Foam Plastic Cups
16	33,325	1.63%	Other Plastic
17	30,984	1.52%	Foam Packaging Material
18	27,486	1.35%	Metal Bottle Caps
19	24,717	1.21%	Plastic Trash Bags
20	21,035	1.03%	Paper Cups
21	19,707	0.97%	Tampon Applicators
22	19,335	0.95%	Other Plastic Bottles
23	19,274	0.94%	Plastic Rope
24	17,506	0.86%	Newspapers & Magazines
25	17,203	0.84%	Paper Bags

**Items are listed from the most to least common found. The chart provides the rank, total, and percent total by item.*

Why Collect Data?

The Beach Sweeps is more than people picking up trash from beaches. It is an educational experience. Participants learn about the types and quantities of debris that are found along the coast and the shorelines of rivers, lakes, and streams. Volunteers collect, identify, categorize, and tally debris found on New Jersey's beaches.

Data creates a base of information and evidence, which is used to expand and improve laws and regulation to combat pollution sources. The data from the Beach Sweeps have been used to help create programs and laws to reduce litter in the environment. The data turns a one-day event, twice each year, and the dedication of volunteers into a legacy for action.

The act of data collection draws attention to what is being carelessly put into the environment, which leads to the discovery of solutions. By collecting data, a frame of reference is created for the type and amount of debris being found, and for the possible sources. The numbers also provide points of comparison for a specific location, and serve as a mechanism to track trends over time.

Volunteers that participate in the Beach Sweeps collect data on an environmental survey that documents the human impacts on marine and coastal habitats. Meanwhile, Sweeps volunteers learn about the debris and possible sources, and that people are the source and the solution to ocean pollution.

For more data and information about the Beach Sweeps, visit www.CleanOceanAction.org.