



BEACH SWEEPS

2020 REPORT

CELEBRATING
35
YEARS

7,424,453
Pieces of Debris
Collected Over 35 Years!



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 Overview
- 3 Data Trends Since 1985
- 4 Celebrating 35 Years
- 5 2020 Roster of the Ridiculous
- 6 2020 Fall Detailed Data
- 7 2020 Fall Dirty Dozen
- 8 Beyond Beach Sweeps
- 9 Data: Legacy of Action
- 10 Ocean Wavemakers
- 11 Sponsor Spotlight



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Overview: Day of Service, Legacy of Evidence for a Cleaner Ocean!

The global ocean is awash with refuse that finds its way into our waterways from one source - people. Carried by wind, or stormwater runoff, or even dumping, the waste ultimately flows or blows into the sea. The vast and growing percentage of the waste is made from plastic—a man-made product that lasts hundreds of years, slowly breaking apart into smaller and smaller bits. Those that suffer most are marine life who mistake it for food and/or become entangled. Ingestion and entanglement can cause grisly and



Laura, Rosemary and Lisa Bagwell with reusable buckets at the Beach Sweeps

painful harm and even death to all life from the smallest zooplankton to the largest blue whales and every creature in between.

Often a fraction of this waste washes onto beaches and shorelines until the tides or storms flush it out to sea. While unsightly, it offers an opportunity for citizens to step up and remove the offending debris, and gather evidence about the increasing threats this people pollution poses.

In response, in 1985, Clean Ocean Action (COA) mobilized a small group of 75 people on Sandy Hook, NJ, and started removing the piles of trash. From this humble start, the Beach Sweeps evolved. Since then, every Spring and Fall for 35 years volunteers returned to give back by collecting, counting, and ridding the beach of trash. The data collected has been



Happy volunteers proud of their work

used to drive better public policies to help reduce waste and wasteful ways. Combined over the years, 147,860 volunteers dedicated 864,688 hours and removed 7,424,453 million pieces of refuse from New Jersey’s beaches and waterways. COA compiles the data into an annual report that is used to advocate for legislation and ordinances to reduce sources of pollution. The annual report presents results (pgs. 6-7), notes interesting finds (pg. 5), acknowledges Wave Makers – Beach Captains and volunteers (pgs. 4, 10) and thanks sponsors whose support helps fund the event (pg.11).

2020 Beach Sweeps

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Spring Beach Sweeps was cancelled and replaced with a Virtual Celebration of 35 Years of Beach Sweeps (pg. 4). Fortunately, the Fall event was held but added new challenges to ensure that activities complied with the Center for Disease Control and NJ Department of Health guidelines. Nearly 4,000 socially-distanced volunteers removed over 185,000 items at 60 locations (pg. 6). Given the times, COA added personal protective equipment (PPE) to the Fall 2020 Data Card. The 2020 Fall Beach Sweeps was unlike any other, and its success is a testament to the dedicated Beach Captains, towns, and volunteers.



Beach Sweeps is a family-friendly event

35th Anniversary Trends: Over the decades, one fact is undeniable: the plastic portion of the waste has increased. However, it is interesting to note the changes and trends (pg. 3).

The Goal: As a people-caused problem, people are the solution. Beach Sweeps has generated evidence that has been used to improve policies to reduce sources (pg. 9), as well as a call for us all to become less wasteful. The goal is simple: one day, our beaches will be clean naturally, without cause for Beach Sweeps.

A global boost: Fall data is sent to the Ocean Conservancy for inclusion in the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) report.

Cumulative Numbers Since 1985

 Pieces of Trash Removed:
7,424,453

 Volunteers:
147,860

 Hours Donated:
864,688

Data Trends: “35 Years of Hands in the Sand and Feet on the Beach”

1985 - 1989:

1984: COA establishes the need for a coastal cleanup.

1985: Launched as a “Debris-A-Thon,” punch-cards document number of bags collected.

1987: “Trash Bash” event includes all 4 coastal counties.

Data collection evolving: Volunteers use color-coded t-shirts to gather prominent or problem debris: recyclables, plastics, tampon applicators, medical waste, and others.

1989: COA adopts the national data card established by the Center for Marine Conservation (now Ocean Conservancy), which provides a standard framework for marine debris data.

1990 - 1999:

Most common items: 1) Cigarette filters, 2) Plastic bags, 3) Plastic pieces

Sign of the times items: Pogs (collectable milk caps), film canisters, cassette tapes, computer disk and floppy disks, 2 TVs and antenna

Unusual items: Plastic tube crack vials and caps, plastic tampon applicators, syringes and blood bags, police tape, deck of nude playing cards, kazoo, plastic santa head

1990: “Trash Attack” – cigarette filters added to data card and shot to #1 item.

1991: “Beach Sweeps” coined for forever more.

1994: South Jersey Coordinator Tony Totah compiles the Annual Beach Sweeps Report.

1995: Volunteers exceed 5,000. COA’s “Tampon”, a lampoon of a fishing lure made from plastic tampon applicators found on beaches, is featured in the Smithsonian Institution’s “Ocean Planet” exhibition.

1999: Event is archived a “Local Legacy” for the 200th Anniversary of the Library of Congress to highlight distinctive cultural traditions for future generations of Americans by US Representative Frank Pallone.



Trash Attackers



2000 - 2009:

Most common items: 1) Cigarette filters, 2) Plastic caps/lids, 3) Food/candy wrappers

Sign of the times items: Newspaper vending machines, yo-yos, PEZ dispensers, chewing tobacco cans, iPhone & other cell phones, flash drive, television sets

Unusual items: Crack drug vials/bags, gumball machine, toy piano, acrylic fingernail, plunger, ice cube tray, toolbox, bowling ball, vacuum

2001: Belmar is first town in NJ to establish smoke-free beach zones. Staten Island Landfill closes.

2003: Data card is updated to add more plastic items.

2005: First Corporate Beach Sweeps held with Goldman Sachs.

2010 - 2020:

Most common items: 1) Plastic pieces, 2) Plastic caps/lids, 3) Food/candy wrappers

Sign of the times items: Juul pods, Keurig coffee maker, phone charger, cell phones, Croc shoes, selfie stick, iPod, iPhone, headphones, Garmin, Blackberry cell phone

Unusual items: Adult-sized Elmo costume, vinyl records, oven, engagement announcement, bag of arcade tickets, house thermostat, safe, rubber brain, lawn mower, Chinese newspaper, diamond engagement ring

2010: Beach Sweeps Symposium held to highlight trends and identify solutions.

2012: Response to Superstorm Sandy, “Waves of Action for the Shore,” connects 13,825 volunteers and 125 organizations to clean up 281 coastal areas in 70 towns.

2014: Microplastics study launched.

2018: Record number of volunteers.

2019: The Bucket Brigade is launched –BYO Bucket– to reduce plastic collection bags.

2020: Spring: cancelled due to COVID pandemic. Fall: PPE added to the data card. Beach Sweeps remains one of the longest running clean-ups in the world.



NJ Governor Whitman and NJ Assemblyman Corodemus at the Beach Sweeps with COA’s Cindy Zipf



Bucket Brigade – Bring Your Own Bucket Campaign

Celebrating 35 Years of Beach Sweeps - Virtually!



Kathleen and Leo Gasienica with their vintage COA t-shirt collection

Though the 2020 Spring Beach Sweeps was cancelled due to the pandemic, COA held a fun-filled Virtual Vintage Beach Sweeps to celebrate 35 years of Beach Sweeps! The celebration kicked-off via social media on Earth Day, and continued through 2020 Spring Beach Sweeps Day. Each day presented a new challenge with a chance to win a cool limited edition Beach Sweeps T-shirt. Over the four-day celebration, participants tested their beach litter knowledge, recalled their most ridiculous finds, donned their vintage Beach Sweeps apparel, and shared their favorite memories. Every location is led by a Beach Sweeps Captain. They are indispensable to the overall success of the program and heroes of the day. They recruit, coordinate, welcome, train, support and provide refreshments for all volunteers, and collect and tabulate all the data. Waves of thanks to our Beach Captains over the years!



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Amanda Wheeler (left), Bradley Beach Captain of 41 Sweeps, stands with the original site Captain, Kathy Robinson. Kathy and her best friend Marion were Beach Captains for many years before Amanda.



Bill Cleary of the East Coast Diving Center is a Spring Lake Beach Captain of 39 Sweeps. Bill ran a campaign to raise funds to purchase Snorkel Masks that can be retrofitted into reusable PPEs for Morganville First Aid.



Mark Woldseth, former Sea Bright Beach Captain, enjoyed watching his son Cash grow-up over the course of 25 years of Beach Sweeps, with two great dogs Harley and Bindie.



Long time Ortley Beach Captains Crystal DeCaro, Ryan Carr and Hamlette the minipig look forward to continuing to help protect a place they call home each year during the Beach Sweeps.



Pickle Jar



1970s bottle of hair dye collected in Avon-by-the-Sea in 2017



Porta Potty remains



Fake teeth

During the virtual celebration, submissions received for oddest item found over the years included: 1970s bottle of hair dye, pickle jar, Porta Potty remains, fake teeth (left), baking sheet, E-ZPass tag, and a long storm pipe.



First Beach Sweeps (then known as Debris-a-thon) t-shirt in 1986



35th Annual Beach Sweeps t-shirt designed by Jetty Ink



COA received submissions from Beach Sweepers over the years including a beach cleaning shark in Belmar, NJ



1990: Assemblyman Doc Villane, DW Bennett COA President, and Mayor Olga Boekel

2020 Data: Roster of the Ridiculous

All Dolled-Up

Doll, doll head, dog toys, colored pencil, Barbie doll, Batman toy, fidget spinner, frisbee, kite, lego, Maui fish hook toy, plastic toy chicken, remote control boat, Rainbow Loom rubber bands, rubber duck, toy dinosaur, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle toy, toy car, toy shovel, toy soldier

A Personal Matter

Backscrubber, bag of tobacco, chapstick, cologne bottle, comb, dental flossers (x5), fake acrylic nails, full prescription bottle, hairbrush, Juul pod (x4) and caps, makeup containers, mouthguard, pacifier, pregnancy test, shaving razor handles, toothbrush and toothpaste, vape cartridge (x5)

Beach Tech

2 Air pods, earbud, computer battery, Fitbit, Garmin smart watch plastic case, iPhone, LG computer monitor, printer cartridge, SIM card, wall plug, USB



Believe It or Not

Bong, car key, caution tape, check for \$81, foam tombstone, grease tube, NYE party hat, parking ticket, plastic skeleton skull, road flare, religious statue, rusted metal machine cog, Saints flag with pole from boat, Trump 2020 flag, wedding souvenir glass, wooden barrel, wooden pig head

Dressed to Impress

Backpack, bathing suit, beaded bracelet, belt buckle, bra, child's shoe, Croc shoe, earring, flip flops, nose ring, Nike sneaker, pair of boots, shoelace, shoe with sock, sole of shoe, visor, scarf, ski mask, sunglasses, Shoes, swim trunks, surfboard wax, water shoe, yarmulke, underwear

Garden Party

Bbq grill, ceramic duck planter, 12 foot hose, garden shovel, grill cover, lawn mower, roses, sprinkler, solar garden light, tiki torch

Fixer-Upper

Aluminum flashing, car wheel rim, chain and lock, countertop piece, green floor molding, gutters, laminate flooring, nail gun strip, rusty hammer head, scissors, tool box, wiper blades



Fun in the Sun

Baseball bat, baseballs, boat canopy, boat cushions, beach chair, 1980s bicycle, bike helmet, bike reflector, bike tire guard, boat seat, boogie board, fishing rod, flamingo pool floatie, football, guitar pick, golf ball, golf club, hover board, hub cap, paint set, ping pong balls, tricycle with wheels, pool noodles, safety bar from a Seadoo watercraft, 10 ft sailboat, shuttlecock, surfboard, swim goggles, tennis balls, tent stake

Picnic at the Beach

Birthday candle, coconut, cocktail shaker, lemon, kid's cup, menu from Sirena, plastic shell plate, 8 pumpkins, wine glass, vintage Skippy peanut butter jar

The Comforts of Home

Bed frame, boot tray, doorstop, dryer sheets, dust pan, garbage lid, kitty litter scoop, large doormat, mirror, picture frame, pillows, roof shingles, rug, tablecloth, towel, seat cushions

PPE: A New Beach Debris in 2020



Amidst the global COVID-19 public health crisis, the world is facing an environmental health risk caused by littering of personal protective equipment (PPE). NJ towns and municipalities are witnessing increased dumping and littering of used masks and disposable gloves. All litter eventually finds its way to the ocean and will end-up as marine debris. As a result, COA added PPE to the Fall 2020 Data Card. In total 1,113 pieces of PPE were collected at the Fall 2020 Beach Sweeps.



2020 Fall Detailed Data

| Items | Spring | Fall | % of | |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Total* | Total | Total | Total |
| Food, Candy Wrappers/Bags | | 17,555 | 17,555 | 9.48% |
| Store/Shopping Bags | | 2,830 | 2,830 | 1.53% |
| Trash Bags | | 815 | 815 | 0.44% |
| Other Bags | | 2,521 | 2,521 | 1.36% |
| Beverages/Soda Bottles | | 5,812 | 5,812 | 3.14% |
| Bleach/Cleaner Bottles | | 148 | 148 | 0.08% |
| Other Bottles | | 893 | 893 | 0.48% |
| Buckets/Crates/Bins | | 434 | 434 | 0.23% |
| Cap/Lids | | 21,741 | 21,741 | 11.74% |
| Cap/Rings | | 2,832 | 2,832 | 1.53% |
| Cigarette Filters | | 15,948 | 15,948 | 8.61% |
| Lighters | | 455 | 455 | 0.25% |
| Cigarette Packaging | | 869 | 869 | 0.47% |
| Cigar Tips | | 4,585 | 4,585 | 2.48% |
| Bait Bags/Containers | | 260 | 260 | 0.14% |
| Line | | 751 | 751 | 0.41% |
| Lures, Floats | | 445 | 445 | 0.24% |
| Fishing Nets - Small | | 146 | 146 | 0.08% |
| Fishing Nets - Large | | 47 | 47 | 0.03% |
| Cups | | 1,664 | 1,664 | 0.90% |
| Diapers | | 79 | 79 | 0.04% |
| Forks, Knives, Spoons | | 2,031 | 2,031 | 1.10% |
| Light Sticks | | 172 | 172 | 0.09% |
| Plastic Pieces | | 32,190 | 32,190 | 17.38% |
| Pens | | 507 | 507 | 0.27% |
| Ribbon/Tape (no balloons) | | 948 | 948 | 0.51% |
| Rope | | 636 | 636 | 0.34% |
| G-Pack Holders | | 80 | 80 | 0.04% |
| Sheeting Tarps | | 79 | 79 | 0.04% |
| Shotgun Shells | | 326 | 326 | 0.18% |
| Strapping Bands | | 509 | 509 | 0.27% |
| Straws/Stirrers | | 10,601 | 10,601 | 5.72% |
| Syringes | | 158 | 158 | 0.09% |
| Tampon Applicators | | 1,114 | 1,114 | 0.60% |
| Toys | | 1,212 | 1,212 | 0.65% |
| Vegetable Sacks | | 44 | 44 | 0.02% |
| Other Plastics | | 2,835 | 2,835 | 1.53% |
| Building Materials | | 356 | 356 | 0.19% |
| Buoys/Floats | | 105 | 105 | 0.06% |
| Fast Food Containers | | 566 | 566 | 0.31% |
| Foam Cups | | 825 | 825 | 0.45% |
| Packaging Materials | | 497 | 497 | 0.27% |
| Foam Pieces | | 9,263 | 9,263 | 5.00% |
| Foam Plates | | 271 | 271 | 0.15% |
| Other Foam Plastic | | 591 | 591 | 0.32% |
| Beverage Bottles | | 2,417 | 2,417 | 1.30% |
| Other Bottles/Jars | | 163 | 163 | 0.09% |
| Lights: Bulbs | | 40 | 40 | 0.02% |
| Lights: Fluorescent Tubes | | 4 | 4 | 0.00% |
| Pieces | | 4,662 | 4,662 | 2.52% |
| Other Glass | | 510 | 510 | 0.28% |

| Items | Spring | Fall | % of | |
|---------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Total* | Total | Total | Total |
| Balloons - Mylar | | 711 | 711 | 0.38% |
| Mylar With String/Ribbon | | 389 | 389 | 0.21% |
| Balloons - Rubber | | 712 | 712 | 0.38% |
| Rubber With String/Ribbon | | 296 | 296 | 0.16% |
| Condoms | | 221 | 221 | 0.12% |
| Rubber Bands | | 596 | 596 | 0.32% |
| Gloves | | 692 | 692 | 0.37% |
| Tires: Part | | 110 | 110 | 0.06% |
| Tires: Whole | | 13 | 13 | 0.01% |
| Other Rubber | | 738 | 738 | 0.40% |
| Appliances | | 23 | 23 | 0.01% |
| Batteries: Car | | 7 | 7 | 0.00% |
| Batteries: Other | | 33 | 33 | 0.02% |
| Bottles Caps | | 2,068 | 2,068 | 1.12% |
| Aerosol Cans | | 74 | 74 | 0.04% |
| Beverage Cans | | 3,096 | 3,096 | 1.67% |
| Other Cans | | 125 | 125 | 0.07% |
| Car Parts | | 37 | 37 | 0.02% |
| Crab/Fish Traps | | 13 | 13 | 0.01% |
| 55 Gallon Drums: Old | | 1 | 1 | 0.00% |
| 55 Gallon Drums: New | | - | - | 0.00% |
| Fishing: Hooks | | 68 | 68 | 0.04% |
| Fishing: Sinkers | | 42 | 42 | 0.02% |
| Foil | | 688 | 688 | 0.37% |
| Nails | | 436 | 436 | 0.24% |
| Pieces | | 674 | 674 | 0.36% |
| Pull/Pop Tabs | | 198 | 198 | 0.11% |
| Wire | | 383 | 383 | 0.21% |
| Other Metal | | 464 | 464 | 0.25% |
| Bags | | 473 | 473 | 0.26% |
| Cardboard | | 773 | 773 | 0.42% |
| Cartons/Boxes | | 273 | 273 | 0.15% |
| Cups | | 562 | 562 | 0.30% |
| Newspaper/Magazines | | 285 | 285 | 0.15% |
| Paper Pieces | | 4,986 | 4,986 | 2.69% |
| Plates | | 172 | 172 | 0.09% |
| Other Paper | | 1,511 | 1,511 | 0.82% |
| Crab/Lobster Traps | | 24 | 24 | 0.01% |
| Crates/Baskets | | 30 | 30 | 0.02% |
| Ice Cream Spoon/Sticks | | 345 | 345 | 0.19% |
| Lumber Pieces | | 3,380 | 3,380 | 1.82% |
| Pallets | | 114 | 114 | 0.06% |
| Other Wood | | 935 | 935 | 0.50% |
| Blankets/Sheets/Towels | | 232 | 232 | 0.13% |
| Clothing: Specify | | 652 | 652 | 0.35% |
| Shoes/Sandals | | 254 | 254 | 0.14% |
| String (No Balloon) | | 703 | 703 | 0.38% |
| Other Cloth | | 954 | 954 | 0.52% |
| Face Masks | | 680 | 680 | 0.37% |
| Wipes | | 92 | 92 | 0.05% |
| Other/Unspecified | | 341 | 341 | 0.18% |

***NOTES FOR USING BEACH SWEEPS DATA:** This Report can be used to study and understand marine debris. When analyzing, it is important to note that the amount of debris collected depends on a variety of factors, such as weather, tides, participants, and accuracy.

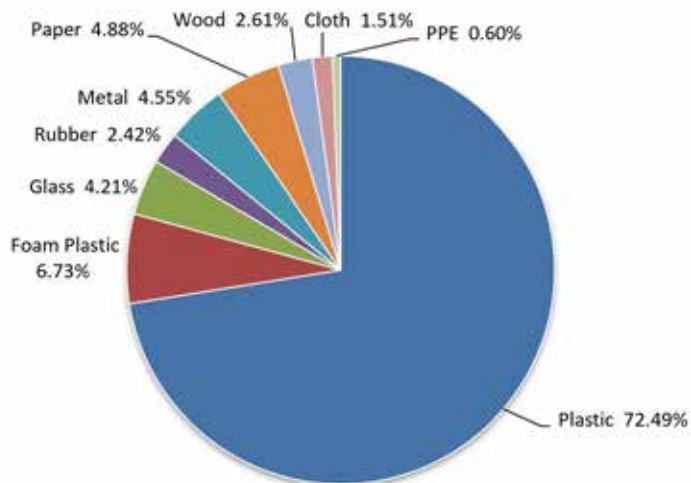
***The 2020 SPRING Beach Sweeps produced no data, as the event was cancelled due to COVID-19.**

LOCAL DATA, GLOBAL NETWORK: Every October, COA submits the Fall Beach Sweeps data to the Ocean Conservancy in Washington D.C., for their International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Report.

| 2020 Beach Sweeps | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Total Items Collected | 185,221 |
| Number of Volunteers | 3,746 |

2020 Fall Beach Sweeps Dirty Dozen

Percent Breakdown by Category/Debris Type



The 2020 Fall Dirty Dozen: The 12 Most Commonly Collected Pieces of Debris

1. Plastic Pieces
2. Plastic Caps/Lids
3. Food, Candy Wrappers/Bags
4. Cigarette Filters
5. Straws/Stirrers
6. Foam Pieces
7. Plastic Beverage/Soda Bottles
8. Paper Pieces
9. Glass Pieces
10. Cigar Tips
11. Lumber Pieces
12. Metal Beverage Cans

Breakdown by Category/Debris Type

| 2020 Totals | Spring* | Fall | Total | % of Total |
|-------------------------|---------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Plastic | | 134,272 | 134,272 | 72.49% |
| Foam Plastic | | 12,474 | 12,474 | 6.73% |
| Glass | | 7,796 | 7,796 | 4.21% |
| Rubber | | 4,478 | 4,478 | 2.42% |
| Metal | | 8,430 | 8,430 | 4.55% |
| Paper | | 9,035 | 9,035 | 4.88% |
| Wood | | 4,828 | 4,828 | 2.61% |
| Cloth | | 2,795 | 2,795 | 1.51% |
| PPE | | 1,113 | 1,113 | 0.60% |
| Pieces of Debris | | 185,221 | 185,221 | |
| Volunteers | | 3,746 | 3,746 | |

| 2020 Rank | Debris Items | 2020 | Change in Rank | 2019 | 2019 Rank | 2018 | 2018 Rank | 2017 | 2017 Rank |
|-----------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Plastic Pieces | 32,190 | — | 95,963 | 1 | 75,899 | 1 | 56,201 | 1 |
| 2 | Plastic Caps/Lids | 21,741 | — | 67,011 | 2 | 61,358 | 2 | 50,881 | 2 |
| 3 | Food, Candy Wrappers/Bags | 17,555 | — | 50,270 | 3 | 40,780 | 3 | 40,227 | 3 |
| 4 | Cigarette Filters | 15,948 | ↑ | 27,751 | 5 | 21,998 | 6 | 29,008 | 5 |
| 5 | Straws/Stirrers | 10,601 | ↓ | 35,124 | 4 | 36,156 | 4 | 31,167 | 4 |
| 6 | Foam Pieces | 9,263 | — | 25,630 | 6 | 24,127 | 5 | 21,117 | 6 |
| 7 | Plastic Beverage/Soda Bottles | 5,812 | ↑ | 13,908 | 8 | 16,358 | 7 | 12,114 | 7 |
| 8 | Paper Pieces | 4,986 | ★ | 7,733 | * | 6,462 | * | 7,694 | 9 |
| 9 | Glass Pieces | 4,662 | — | 10,703 | 9 | 7,437 | 11 | 7,172 | 10 |
| 10 | Cigar Tips | 4,585 | ↓ | 15,399 | 7 | 14,078 | 8 | 5,774 | * |
| 11 | Lumber Pieces | 3,380 | — | 8,698 | 11 | 8,861 | 10 | 5,949 | 12 |
| 12 | Metal Beverage Cans | 3,096 | ★ | 6,046 | * | 5,564 | * | 3,897 | * |
| | Total Dirty Dozen | 133,819 | | 368,783 | | 325,320 | | 276,560 | |
| | Percent of Total Debris | 72% | | 74% | | 72% | | 74% | |
| | Number of Volunteers | 3,746 | | 10,724 | | 10,148 | | 7,416 | |

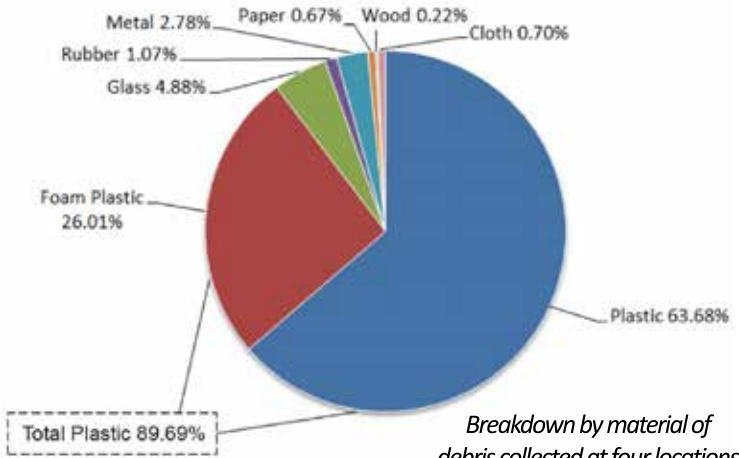
↑ moved up in rank ↓ moved down in rank ★ new to the Dirty Dozen — no change in rank * did not make rank for indicated year

*The 2020 SPRING Beach Sweeps produced no data, as the event was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Beyond Beach Sweeps

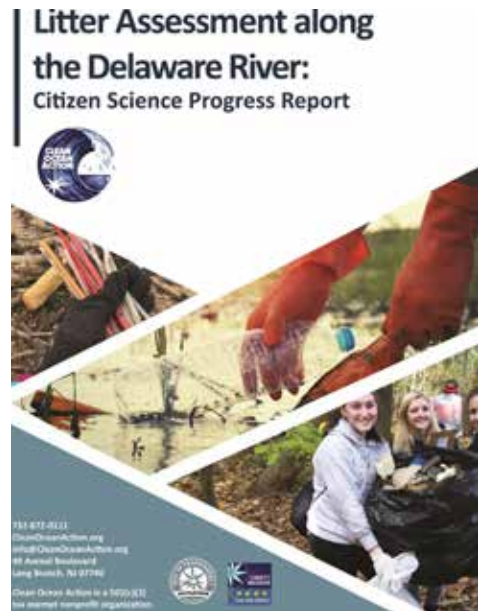
Plastic Pollution Exposed in Delaware River

COA released the “Litter Assessment along the Delaware River: Citizen Science Progress Report” in 2020 during National Estuary Week. Plastics and other manufactured debris pollute waterways, embankments, and beaches, and can be found even in the most remote locations and deepest trenches in the ocean. In New Jersey, the shoreline of the Delaware River is no exception. Indeed, concentrations of marine debris found in “hotspot areas” of litter accumulation along the tidal portion of the river are even higher than along the ocean shoreline. In 2015, Clean Ocean Action launched the Reduce Litter in the Delaware River



Breakdown by material of debris collected at four locations along the Delaware River from 2016-2019

project to determine why, and to reduce sources. The goal of this project is to monitor litter and reduce the land-based sources of trash that contribute to pollution along and in the river, and that ultimately flow into the ocean. This report summarizes the results of the initial phases of the project, which included a citizen science initiative to remove debris and conduct a comprehensive assessment of litter accumulation. To read the report visit CleanOceanAction.org. Made possible thanks to the Environmental Endowment of NJ.



A citizen science initiative along the New Jersey side of the Delaware River launched in 2015 to identify “hotspots” of litter accumulation as part of COA’s Reduce Litter in the Delaware River project

Assessing Marine Debris During a Pandemic



Throughout Summer 2020, COA’s Marine Debris and Water Quality Intern Jacob Sorrentino began work on a new project, Wrackline Assessments. The line of debris left along the beach following high tide, known as the wrackline, is often a combination of seaweed, seashells, litter, and plastic debris. During a wrackline assessment, the recorder walks along the most prominent wrackline on the beach, recording and collecting all marine debris that is present. This achieves two goals: 1) removing debris from the marine environment, and 2) collect data on marine debris. Although this Spring’s Beach Sweeps were not held due to COVID-19, citizen science volunteers were able to gather vital data during weekly wrackline assessments at two locations: Sea Bright and Sandy Hook.

Data: Legacy of Action to Reduce Marine Debris

The data collected by Beach Sweeps volunteers provides hard evidence about the scope and magnitude of the marine debris problem, which people can use to convince elected officials to pass and enforce laws and policies to reduce the sources.

With over 100 specific items tallied and the Roster of the Ridiculous, each Beach Sweeps provides a snap-shot of what is found on nearly every beach from Perth Amboy to Cape May, NJ, and beyond. Over the years, this data suggests trends. Since 1984, one trend is unequivocal: single-use plastic items are on the rise.

Beach Sweeps data has resulted in state and federal laws, and local town ordinances. Often, it is local town efforts led by grassroots citizen action that build pressure for statewide laws. Below are the highlights.

International/Federal Laws:

- Plastic Pollution Control Act which led to the passage of the Marine Plastic Pollution Control Act in which the US also ratified the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Annex V) to restrict dumping of garbage and plastics from ships
- Microbead-Free Waters Act prohibits the use of micro-beads in cosmetics and personal care products, such as toothpaste

New Jersey Laws:

- 2019: New Jersey law prohibiting smoking on public beaches and in parks went into effect

Municipal Laws/Ordinances in New Jersey:

- Nearly 50 towns with ordinances banning single-use bags
- 11 towns with plastic bag bans
- 4 towns with plastic and paper bag fees
- 14 towns with plastic bag bans and fees on paper bags
- 18 towns with bans or limits on plastic straws, plastic bags, and polystyrene foam
- 2 towns limiting plastic utensils to “by request only”

Single-use Plastic Reduction Act in New Jersey: In 2020, municipal actions above led to the passage of the nation’s strongest statewide law to reduce single-use waste:

- Phase 1 – Straws only upon request, effective November 2021
- Phase 2 – Bans all single-use plastic bags and paper bags from grocery stores, and all foam plastic foodware products at food service businesses, effective May 4, 2022



2020 Pending Bills to Reduce Plastics



Federal Legislation: Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act

Introduced by U.S. Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) and U.S. Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), this comprehensive bill will address waste, especially plastics. If passed, it would establish a national bottle deposit program, ban single-use plastics bags, require minimum recycled content for beverage containers and food packaging, and invest in recycling and composting infrastructure. Importantly, it would also put a hold on new plastic manufacturing facilities.

NJ Balloon Release Ban Bill

This bill (A4322) would prohibit the outdoor release and tethering of balloons and other floating devices. Balloons are festive and fun but released outdoors they can be lethal to marine life. This bill would be the strongest in the country.



NJ Recycled Content Bill

This bill (S2515) will require rigid plastic containers, plastic beverage containers, glass containers, paper bags, plastic bags, and plastic trash bags be made of percentages of recycled content material if made or sold in New Jersey. The law also prohibits the sale or distribution of loose polystyrene fill packaging, known as “peanuts.”

Ocean Wavemakers

Special thanks to our Ocean Wavemakers who contributed time effort, resources, and donations!

Beach Captains

Ryan Baine, Sandra and Eric Beyer, Marianne Borke, Keri Branim, Sheri Bruns, Alicia Calkins, Beth Collis, Ann Commorato, Lisa Cordova, Isabella Cozzone, Crystal DeCaro, Jennifer Deeney, Julia DeRosso, Fran Donnelly, Skye and Jordan Donzelli, Brian Dougherty, Christina Fehre, Margot Fernicola, Julie Finnell, Dave Finter, Joe Gawrysiak, Eric Gehring, Brent Germano, Marianne Grant, Kyle Gronostajski, Eric and Eva Hanan, Brianna Hellrigel, GG Hencoski, Stephen Hudson, Michele Irizarry, Diya Jariwala, Ted Jermansen, Andrew Kaplan, Stephanie Kealy, Liz Lawrence, Richard Lee, Mary Lenahan, Greg Love, John Majeski, Andrea and Rocco Mariani, Jeff Martin, Carol McCallum, Jason McKairnes, Sanura Nash-McKairnes, Derek Noah, John O'Neill, Mike Palmisano, Josh, Julie, and John Peterson, Keith Rella, Derek Riddle, Deanna and Emma Rodriguez, Michael Rohal, Troy and Angela Romanowski, Leah Savia, Lynn Schambach, Matthew Schmidt, Nicole Sherry, Caitlin Sia, Doreen Silakowski, Sarah Steiner, Lisa Stickle, Graceanne Taylor, Cody Valkos, Gene Viereck, Tina Maria Walling, JJ Walsh, Gretchen Whitman, John Wnek, Anita Zalom

Civic Groups & Parks

Berkeley Twp Waterways Advisory Committee, Go Green Galloway, Keyport Clean Communities, Keyport Environmental Commission, Lavallette Board of Education, Lavallette Republican Committee, Long Branch Environmental Commission, Middlesex County Parks, Rumson Environmental Commission, Seaside Park Mayor and Council, Stone Harbor Police Department, Summit Recycling Advisory Committee

Organizations

4-H Eco-Club of Barnegat, American Council of Engineering Companies of New Jersey, AmeriCorps NJ Watershed Ambassadors, Amnesty International, ASTEP, Clam Crusaders, Come Get Your Trash, Friends of Jackson Woods, Friends of Ortley Beach, Fun Club Brigantine, Garden Club of LBI, Ideal Beach Community Association, Indivisible Bayshore, Jersey Shore Alumni Chapter of ZTA, Junior League of Monmouth County, Monmouth Ocean Regional Realtors, Mrs. Earth USA, Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation, NextGen E-ko, North Wildwood Beach Beautification Brigade, Phlock of South Jersey, Save Barnegat Bay, Sewa Central Jersey,

Sierra Club, Stone Harbor Property Owners Association, Syracuse Alumni Club Central Jersey, The OisF Foundation, Wall Ice Hockey, Woman's Club of Manasquan, Woman's Club of Spring Lake, YMCA of Greater Monmouth County

Businesses

Active Design Group Engineering, Atlantis Yacht Club, Baine Contracting, Beach Buddies Animal Hospital, Bumblebee Food, First National Realty Partners, Guppi Sustainable Surf Co, Hackensack Meridian Health: Jersey Shore University Medical Center OBGYN Dept., Riverview Medical Center, Jersey Central Power & Light, Langosta Lounge, Manasquan Bank, Northfield Bank OceanFirst, Resources Realty, SAP Concur Shore Medical Center School of Radiology, SomLyfe LLC, Suttons Group, TerraCycle, The Allied Group, Urban Engineers, Inc., Wildflowers Farm

Faith-Based Groups

Church of Precious Blood, Holy Cross Church CCD, Nativity of Our Lord, Our Lady of Mount Church, St. Mary's by the Sea Environmental Stewardship Committee, Temple Sinai, United Methodist Church, Red Bank Visitation Church

Pre/Elementary/Middle Schools

Assumption Regional Catholic, Atlantic Highlands Elementary, Avon Elementary, Bayshore Middle, Belhaven School, Brayton Elementary, Clinton Public, Drum Point Elementary, Emma Havens Elementary, Forrestdale Middle Fusion Academy, George J. Mitchell Elementary, Green Brook Middle, H.W. Mountz Elementary, Holy Cross Academy, Knollwood School, Lake Riviera Middle, Long Branch Middle, Monmouth Beach Elementary, Neptune Middle, Newark Academy, Oakwood School, Ocean Avenue Elementary, Osborneville Elementary, Raritan Middle, Southern Regional Middle, St. Leo the Great, Wall Intermediate: National Honors Society

High Schools

Brick Memorial: Key Club, Brick Township Central Regional, Christian Brothers Academy, Colts Neck: Girls Varsity Soccer, Donovan Catholic, East Brunswick, Freehold: Earth Club, Fusion Academy, Highland Park: Key Club,

Holmdel: National Honor Society, Jackson Liberty, Jackson Memorial: Key Club, Lower Cape May Regional, Madison: Students Save Seas Club, Manalapan: SAVE Club, Manasquan, Marine Academy of Science and Technology, Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science, Marlboro: Leo Club, Matawan Aberdeen Regional, Mater Dei Prep, Middletown NorthMiddletown South: Soccer Team, Millburn: Key Club, Monmouth Regional: Environmental Club Monroe: Key Club Moorestown, Neptune: NJROTC, Newark Academy, North Brunswick: Key Club, Ocean Township, Pennsbury: Honors Society, Pt. Pleasant Boro: National Honor Society, Ranney School: Key Club, Raritan: Environmental Club, World Language Club, National Honor Society, Red Bank Regional: Environmental Club, Rumson Fair Haven: Key Club, Environmental Club, Shore Regional, South Brunswick: SB Earth Club, Southern Regional, Spotswood: Environmental Club, St. John Vianney: Sustainability Club, St. Rose, The Pennington School, Toms River East, Toms River North: Boys Basketball Team, Wall: Environmental Club

Colleges

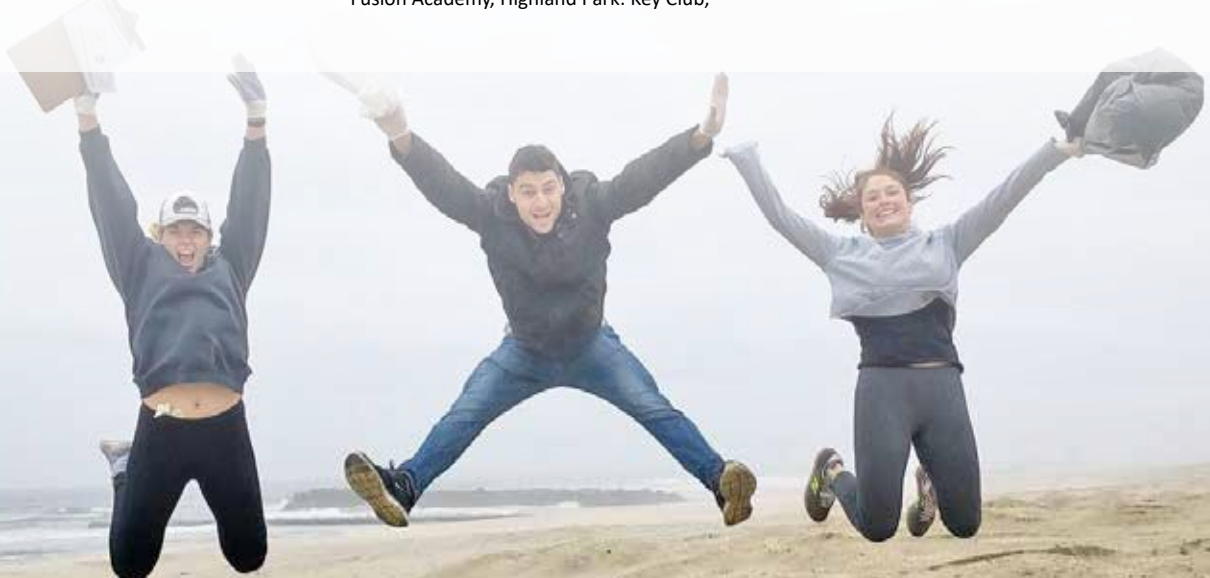
Brookdale Community College: Phi Theta Kappa, Environmental Club, Clarion University, Delaware Valley College: Project Earth, Monmouth University: Chi Sigma Iota, NJ Institute of Technology, Ocean County College, Ramapo College, Raritan Valley Community College: Rotaract, Rider University, Rutgers University - Newark: ALPFA, Rutgers University New Brunswick, University of Delaware, William Paterson University

Boy Scouts

Boy: 1, 8, 17, 30, 58, 67, 73, 97, 102, 187, 210, 258, 454, 836, 5700, 9503, 50049, Linwood
Cub: 1, 35, 58

Girl Scouts

Girl: 20, 47, 52, 168, 184, 219, 235, 318, 343, 347, 505, 574, 577, 710, 868, 890, 951, 1223, 1274, 1390, 1407, 1484, 1835, 12933, 12945, 41037, 50018, 60908, 61222, 80769, 81608
Brownie: 323, 471, 908, 10325



Sponsor Spotlight: Comcast

Essential to the success of the Beach Sweeps is financial support. Over the decades the list of sponsors is unique, impressive, and very long, including companies of all shapes and sizes.

The longest sustaining sponsor is Comcast, whose early corporate roots began supporting the event in the 1990s, thanks to Bob Smith who was a COA trustee. Comcast and Bob remain true-blue.

“Comcast has been a supporter of Beach Sweeps for more than twenty years, and we’re proud to support all Clean Ocean Action does to preserve the beaches, waterways and wildlife along the Jersey Shore. Through the years, Comcast employees have made Beach Sweeps family events, creating opportunities to teach the next generation what it means to be good stewards of the environment. We’re excited to be part of the Beach Sweeps 35th Anniversary celebration,” **said Bob Smith, Comcast, Vice President of Community Impact.**



Comcast Volunteers in 2009 at Sandy Hook

2020 Beach Sweeps Locations



60
Clean-up
Locations

Waves of Thanks to our Sponsors!

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2020 County Sponsors



2020 Site Sponsors

American Council of Engineering Companies of NJ, Atlantic City Electric, Baine Contracting, Dry Master Restorations Inc., Jenkinson’s Boardwalk and Aquarium, Junior League of Monmouth County, Manasquan Bank, OceanFirst Foundation, ServPro of Eatontown/Long Branch

Special Thanks

The following have contributed important resources: Bloomberg LP, Gateway National Recreation Area Sandy Hook Unit, Island Beach State Park, Jetty Ink, Marine Academy of Science & Technology, Middlesex County Park System: Raritan Bay Waterfront Park, Monmouth County Park System: Bayshore Waterfront Park and Popamora Point, NJ Clean Communities Council, Ocean Conservancy, Rotary Club Interact



THANK YOU BEACH CAPTAINS, VOLUNTEERS, SPONSORS, AND TOWNS!



Beachy Clean Fun Since 1985!



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