



# CLEAN OCEAN ACTION'S Beach Sweeps & Waterway Cleanup Annual Report - 2005

## 2005 Sites

Asbury Park  
 Atlantic Highlands  
 Atlantic City  
 Avalon  
 Avon  
 Barnegat  
 Bay Head  
 Belmar  
 Bradley Beach  
 Brick  
 Brigantine  
 Cape May  
 Cape May Ct. House  
 Cape May Point  
 Deal  
 Elberon  
 Glen Ridge  
 Highlands  
 Island Beach St. Park  
 Keansburg  
 Keyport  
 Lake Fred  
 Lavallette  
 Long Branch  
 Manasquan  
 Mantoloking  
 Margate  
 Monmouth Beach  
 Ocean City  
 Ocean Grove  
 Ortley Beach  
 Port Monmouth  
 Pt. Pleasant  
 Pt. Pleasant Beach  
 Sandy Hook  
 Sea Bright  
 Sea Girt  
 Sea Isle City  
 Seaside Heights  
 Seaside Park  
 Spring Lake  
 Stone Harbor  
 Strathmere  
 Tinton Falls  
 Tuckerton  
 Union Beach  
 Ventnor  
 Villas  
 Wildwood  
 Wildwood Crest

**C**lean Ocean Action (COA), a broad-based coalition of over 150 organizations working to improve and protect the waters off the New Jersey and New York coasts, hosted its **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Beach Sweeps** in 2005. The Beach Sweeps, held in New Jersey, is one of the longest running cleanups of its kind in the United States. This event has grown from **75** people at one location in 1985, to attracting thousands of volunteers at over 100 sites in 2005.

Despite heavy rain and wind during both 2005 Spring & Fall Beach Sweeps events, **2,769** volunteers braved the weather at **89** locations in **50 municipalities** and collected, recorded, and returned datacards with important information about debris found during the beach cleanups. Volunteers gathered from Raritan Bay to Delaware Bay to rid beaches and waterways of litter. Also, volunteer efforts went beyond the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and included cleanups along inland waters that lead to the ocean.

- In all, the combined Spring and Fall Beach Sweeps:
- resulted in nearly **7,500** volunteer hours performed for the protection of the marine environment,
  - collected and recorded over **160,800** items, and
  - removed nearly **43,400** pounds of debris from beaches.

It is important to note that hundreds of additional volunteers picked-up debris without completing and returning COA's datacards. Therefore, the numbers in this report (see pages 4-5) are considered conservative.

### IN THIS REPORT:

- 2005 Sweeps Data & Highlights
- New Jersey's "Dirty Dozen"
- "Roster of the Ridiculous"

### Who Participates in the Beach Sweeps?

People from the tall and the small participate in large groups, or as families or individuals. Many schools, community groups, and organizations lead cleanups or volunteer at the Sweeps. Some groups participate in both spring and fall cleanups and have been involved in the Sweeps for many years (see picture above of Lower Cape May Regional High School students).

In 2005, **196** organizations, including **32** Girl and Boy Scouts groups, **73** schools, **51** environmental and civic groups, and **17** business teams participated. A recent trend is for businesses and corporations to send teams of employees to help in the cleanup effort.

### About the Beach Sweeps

Beach Sweeps are necessary for two reasons. **First**, to remove litter because it is lethal to marine life. Often, fish, whales, birds, and other animals mistake litter for food. As a result, animals get entangled or ingest items, such as plastic bags, cigarette filters, and fishing line, with deadly results.

For example, cigarette filters have been found in the stomachs of fish, whales, and birds, blocking and affecting their digestion. Also, the filters, which are made of plastic fibers, trap carcinogenic (cancer-causing) chemicals that are introduced into the marine environment when

cigarettes are not disposed properly. These chemicals have been found in fish tissues. In addition, many types of litter, especially plastics, take many decades to several hundred years to break down, thereby threatening wildlife for years to come. **Second**, garbage-strewn beaches can ruin an otherwise wonderful day at the beach.

Ultimately, the **goal** is to eliminate the need for Beach Sweeps. To reach that goal, citizens must be educated about marine debris and taught that they are both the sources of and the solutions to ocean pollution. The Beach Sweeps events are more than people picking-up trash from beaches. Participants learn about the types and quantities of debris that are found along the coast and the shorelines of rivers, lakes, and streams. Sweeps volunteers remove debris and identify, categorize, record, and tally what they collect by using datacards. Each datacard is reviewed and entered in a computer database and analyzed by COA. Over ten years of data is available.

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The **data collected** from the beach cleanups is used to identify and monitor pollution trends. The information helps find solutions to keep New Jersey beaches clean and healthy for citizens and marine life. Indeed, the data has been used to help create programs and laws to reduce litter in the environment. In sum, the data turns the one-day events into a legacy for action.

The information from the Beach Sweeps is also made available to the public to further educate people about **nonpoint source pollution**. Finally, the data from the Fall Beach Sweeps is submitted to The Ocean Conservancy in Washington, DC, as part of its international database on marine debris and worldwide campaign against ocean pollution.



Visit COA at [www.CleanOceanAction.org](http://www.CleanOceanAction.org)