



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

Clean 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 **20th 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