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Additional sponsors for the 2003 Sweeps included: AAA Mid-Atlantic, Brookdale Community College Honor Society, C. Rooney Produce Company, Coastal Jersey Parrot Head Club, Divers Two, Inc., Navesink Marina, Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School Environmental Club, and Sam's Club.

Other Sweeps contributors were: Atlantic Cape Community College's SEA; Clean Communities Programs of Cumberland County, Brigantine, and Sea Isle City; Environmental Commissions of Bay Head, Bradley Beach, Manasquan, Pine Beach and Wildwood; FaNagle the Bagel, G 106.3 FM Radio, Gateway National Recreation Area - Sandy Hook Unit, Genuardi's, Island Beach State Park, Jenkinson's Aquarium, Lower Cape May Regional High School, Marine Academy of Science & Technology, Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science, Monmouth County Vocational School, NJ Community Water Watch, The Ocean Conservancy, The Ocean Drive, Pete Smith Surf Shop, Sawmill Pizza, Target, and Wawa.

2003 Underwater Cleanup

Divers Two, Inc., Avon, NJ, hosted their 8th Annual Underwater Cleanup on October 4. Despite an early morning rain shower, a dedicated group of **65** divers and **15** support crew did a superb job of cleaning the bay waters in Belmar. After a brief introduction by Divers Two owner, Joe Skimmons, the divers donned their gear and hit the water. Volunteers collected debris from two locations in the Belmar Marine Park -- near the marina/boat ramp and the gas dock. The divers passed their collection bags to the surface crew, which sorted, counted and recorded the debris retrieved by the divers. The land based volunteers checked the debris for marine life and the live little critters were returned back to the bay.

Divers netted nearly **150** glass bottles, **102** pieces of fishing line, and **57** fishing hooks and sinkers. Some of the more unusual items found included a beach chair, **2** mufflers, **4** large boat batteries, several tools, and a cremation bag from Rosedale Cemetery (Orange, NJ).

As part of the cleanup, Clean Ocean Action staff conducted a biological survey of the animals that were

found in or on the retrieved debris.

Twelve fish and **90** invertebrates were collected during the cleanup. The most common animals collected were **35** mud crabs, followed by **20** oyster drills, **18** seastars, **6** urchins, and one spider crab. The spider crab was heavily entangled in fishing line and had to be cut loose. **Eleven** American eels and **one** tropical short-bigeye were found in some of the bottles that were brought to the surface. These animals were opportunistically using the debris for food and shelter. Items that were heavily encrusted and supporting marine life were returned to the bay.



As always, the staff of Divers Two led an excellent cleanup. COA commends Divers Two for their continuing dedication to the marine environment and all the divers that make the underwater cleanup a success.