



TH INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP

2025-2026 REPORT
#SEATHECHANGE



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A MESSAGE FROM OCEAN CONSERVANCY'S CEO

2025 signified forty years of one of the most powerful worldwide volunteer efforts on behalf of a healthy ocean and a thriving planet—the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup® (ICC). The impact of this grassroots-driven effort to protect our waterways, coasts and ocean is nothing short of astonishing. Progress in addressing this global scourge would not be possible without the efforts of each cleanup volunteer, coordinator or organization that has translated their concern into action. Our entire team at Ocean Conservancy thanks you for rolling up your sleeves for each turtle, dolphin, fish, whale, bird or next-door neighbor that will benefit from your work.

Last year was marked by both scientific and policy advances in the field of ocean plastic pollution. At the root of our forward momentum is one word—collect. Collective action. The collection of trash. The collection of data. It was an extraordinary year for the ICC, with 630,069 volunteers removing a total of 13,861,048 individual pieces of litter from all around the world.

The growing body of scientific research on marine plastic pollution could not be done without the data collected by ICC participants and uploaded to our open-access global database. There's a clear line connecting the thousands of volunteers at cleanup events around the world carefully logging each single-use plastic container, food wrapper or other piece of trash, now totaling almost 440 million items, and more than 300 studies published in peer-reviewed journals that cite ICC data. Our treasure-trove of data allows researchers to see patterns and changes over time.

The data collected through the ICC paints a clearer picture of the scale of the problem. Our community science is also helping policymakers steer resources to the most effective interventions and solutions. One example is California's Better Bag Ban which went into effect on January 1. Plastic bags are among the top five deadliest forms of ocean plastic pollution, with turtles and other sea life often mistaking them for jellyfish and ingesting them. A peer-reviewed

study from 2025, utilizing ICC data, showed that plastic bag bans result in a 25–47% reduction of plastic bags in the environment where implemented.

Each of you is a vital node in this global network, bringing science and solutions to bear for our ocean's biodiversity for our climate and for our communities. Read on to learn about how ICC volunteers in Bangladesh have brought national attention to unmanaged tourism waste and inadequate trash collection systems. Be inspired by the Dominica chapter of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network whose members pick up and log in the Clean Swell® app litter that has been carried from far-flung locations by ocean currents and deposited on the beaches of “the nature island of the Caribbean.” Sprinkled throughout this report are countless examples of how the simple act of picking up and counting trash along our shorelines and in the ocean is leading to smart new policies to address plastic pollution.

We have come so far together over the past 40 years. What began as



the vision of two passionate ocean advocates and a cleanup in one U.S. state has turned into a global phenomenon that has involved almost 20 million volunteers in more than 160 countries. I want to close with the inspiring words of our Hong Kong ICC partner, Lisa Christensen (pg. 7), “Our cleanups are about far more than removing trash. They are acts of love, protection and hope for our ocean and all life it sustains.”

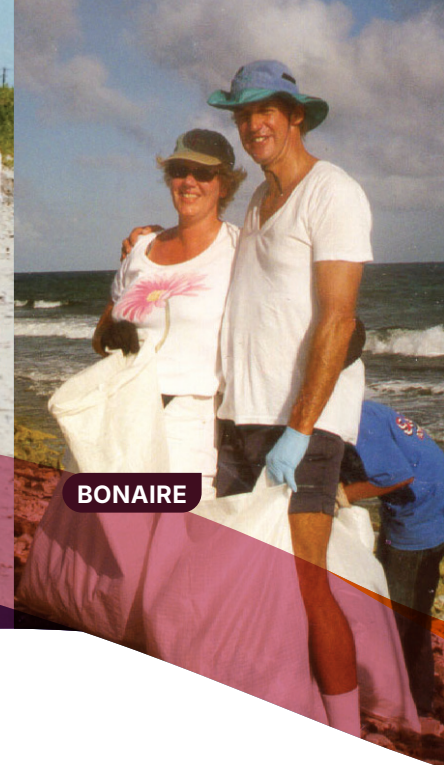
Thank you for your part in this collective act of love for the ocean,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Janis", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Janis Searles Jones, CEO



TEXAS



BONAIRE

40 YEARS OF THE ICC FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

Forty years ago, on the third Saturday of September 1986, 2,800 volunteers with a shared concern about the increasing amounts of trash on Texas beaches gathered along the Gulf Coast to pick up 124 tons (273,373 pounds) of trash. Little did Linda Maraniss and Kathy O'Hara, the two intrepid organizers at the Center for Environmental Education, Ocean Conservancy's predecessor, realize, but they would set the wheels in motion for what would turn into an

annual global movement that plays an essential role in getting us closer to solving a plastics crisis that knows no borders.

Within just three years, the number of volunteers had increased twenty-fold and cleanups were organized in more than 25 U.S. states, as well as in Mexico and Canada. The event was renamed the International Coastal Cleanup®. Over four decades this premier cleanup event has involved

19.6 million volunteers and resulted in over 405 million pounds of trash being removed along rivers and beaches, from Texas to Taiwan.

From the very start, the world's largest volunteer effort for the ocean's health has been about more than just cleaning up physical trash, so that each of us can have a more enjoyable experience on our favorite shoreline and marine animals have a better chance at a long and healthy

life. The two founders envisioned a different kind of cleanup, one that would connect people power to policy power and ultimately result in true impact for the ocean.

The unique aspect that transformed the ICC into *the* lynchpin for addressing ocean plastics has been the data collection that happens every single year, thanks to the diligence of each and every volunteer. In that first year, Maraniss



OREGON



HONG KONG



MEXICO

and O'Hara produced data cards to catalogue both the amount of and, crucially, the type of trash found. The numbers were shared widely with media, the U.S. Navy, cruise ship operators, fishing industry companies and the public. As O'Hara wrote, "This approach allowed volunteers to immediately recognize that plastic items were most prevalent among the debris collected. When it came time to compile the information, highlighting the overwhelming

presence of plastics was essential in demonstrating the scale of the issue."

The policy impact of coastal cleanups was apparent from the get-go. After the very first year, the Texas General Land Office announced a new initiative aimed at reducing beach debris across the state. Today, people from around the globe are using Ocean Conservancy's Clean Swell® mobile application to record their cleanups. The data, in turn, continues to inspire

an ever-growing list of evidence-based policies to address the plastics crisis from local to international levels. For example, in 2022 California passed the strongest [plastic pollution reduction law](#) in the world, requiring companies to reduce single-use plastics by 25% and requiring plastic producers take responsibility for waste they create. Globally, ICC citizen-science data helped contribute to the passage of [a treaty](#) preventing ships from dumping plastics at sea.

If there is a single event that proves that individual people can make a difference, it is the International Coastal Cleanup. At this 40-year mark, we give a tip of our sunhats to Maraniss and O'Hara, and to each of you for your dedication to clean coasts and contributions to a global data set that plays an essential role in upstream solutions. As Maraniss says, "It's a joy to celebrate with everyone who has made the International Coastal Cleanup a success . . . Thank you."

INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP

40-YEAR DATA SUMMARY

For four decades, volunteers with the International Coastal Cleanup have picked up everything imaginable along the world's shorelines: cigarette butts, food wrappers, even the proverbial kitchen sink! Here, we share highlights and grand totals from the ICC dataset, stretching back to when it all began in 1986.

Our Grand Totals: Since the ICC began, approximately **439,194,964** trash items have been collected by **19,680,511** volunteers, traversing some **577,058** miles (928,683 km) of coastlines and waterways. Over four decades, YOU have helped us remove **405.6 million** pounds (183.9 million kilograms) from shorelines worldwide!

Geographic Reach: The first ICC took place along an immense stretch of beach in Texas, USA. The movement has blossomed over **40 years** to include data from volunteers in **166 countries** and territories.

GLOBAL TOP 10 ITEMS COLLECTED (1986–2025)

	1	Cigarette Butts	65,632,086
	2	Food Wrappers (candy, chips, etc.)	32,469,436
	3	Beverage Bottles (Plastic)	26,967,584
	4	Bottle Caps (Plastic)	20,466,040
	5	Straws, Stirrers	16,310,248
	6	Grocery Bags (Plastic)	13,788,833
	7	Beverage Bottles (Glass)	12,409,187
	8	Beverage Cans	12,140,773
	9	Other Plastic Bags	12,106,394
	10	Cups, Plates (Plastic)	8,825,433



BRAZIL

TINIEST TRASH

Plastic, foam and glass pieces meticulously collected and recorded by volunteers:
109,986,448



THE FISHY STUFF

11,481,671 fishing-related debris items have been collected over four decades of the ICC, including more than **4.2 million** meters (4.5 million yards) of rope and more than **2.2 million** meters (2.4 million yards) of fishing line.



BELIZE

THE BIG STUFF

190,804 appliances and large electronics, such as refrigerators, washers and television sets have been removed from the environment by ICC volunteers. And **995,458** tires have also been taken away!



SEATTLE



THE SMOKY STUFF

In addition to cigarette butts, which contain a plastic filter, volunteers have also cataloged **7,020,931** smoking and tobacco-related debris items, including **1.5 million** cigarette lighters.



OTHER CULPRITS

While not found as frequently as the Top 10, these trash items have still been a nuisance for 40 years:

- 1,912,085** balloons
- 1,920,757** toys
- 1,785,449** diapers
- 1,279,692** 6-pack holders
- 1,260,936** shoes & flip-flops
- 536,729** PPE items such as disposable gloves & masks (in just the last five years!)
- 300,752** foam dock pieces

CAMEROON



CLEANUP MILESTONES



BANGLADESH

TWENTY YEARS OF ICC IN BANGLADESH

Muntasir Mamun, Founder of Kewkradong Bangladesh (ICC Bangladesh)

For two decades, Bangladesh's participation in the International Coastal Cleanup has evolved from a small, volunteer-driven awareness initiative into one of the country's longest-running citizen-led environmental movements, generating one of Bangladesh's most consistent long-term datasets on marine debris.

What began as a modest shoreline cleanup gradually developed into a platform for environmental observation, public engagement and policy dialogue. Over the years, ICC Bangladesh expanded far beyond the collection of waste. It became a means of documenting changing consumption patterns, tracing the rise of single-use plastics, and revealing the growing pressures of tourism, urbanization, and unmanaged development on coastal ecosystems. The data gathered through these cleanups

reflected a profound transition in the composition of waste itself, from relatively recoverable materials to the increasing dominance of low-value flexible plastics, multilayer packaging and disposable food wrappers.

Cox's Bazar and St. Martin's Island emerged as central sites within this effort, functioning not only as cleanup locations but also as living case studies of the environmental pressures facing coastal and island ecosystems in the developing world. Through repeated field observations, volunteer participation and waste audits conducted over many years, ICC Bangladesh has helped bring national attention to issues that often remain structurally invisible: unmanaged tourism waste, open burning, inadequate waste infrastructure, weak collection systems, and the limitations of environmental policies in ecologically sensitive areas where enforcement remained inconsistent.

Over the course of twenty years, the movement has brought together students, local residents, researchers, businesses, travelers and environmental advocates. Many who first joined as young volunteers later returned with families of their own, transforming the cleanup into an intergenerational effort shaped by continuity, memory and shared responsibility. What began as participation gradually became tradition.

Beyond the physical removal of debris, perhaps the most enduring contribution of ICC Bangladesh has been the creation of environmental memory. The initiative has documented how coastlines changed over time, how consumer behavior has evolved, and how plastic has slowly embedded itself into the rhythms of everyday life. In a country where long-term environmental monitoring has often remained fragmented or limited, ICC Bangladesh has demonstrated that

citizen science and volunteer action can still contribute meaningfully to national environmental understanding.

As ICC Bangladesh enters its third decade, its experience reflects both the scale of the marine debris crisis and the significance of sustained local action in confronting a global environmental challenge. Yet beyond the data, the reports and the years of cleanup campaigns, there remains something more difficult to explain. There is a quiet fulfillment in continuity itself, one rarely found elsewhere. If there had been something easier to do, something requiring less effort while offering a clearer return to our own lives, we would likely have chosen it. We would have found it. But we did not. Not because of obligation alone, nor because persistence became habit, but because nothing else came as close to answering what we were searching for. And so, without ever fully explaining why, we kept returning to the shore.



ACTS OF LOVE FOR THE OCEAN: A NOTE FROM HONG KONG CLEANUP

Lisa Christensen, Founder & Director of Hong Kong Cleanup

As Ocean Conservancy celebrates 40 years of the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) and Hong Kong Cleanup marks 25, I have deep gratitude for the extraordinary journey we've shared through the ICC network, and beyond.

For the past 25 years, one of the greatest honors of my life has been to stand alongside so many passionate ocean and water guardians around the world, united in protecting the blue heart of our planet. The ocean gives us half the oxygen we breathe and sustains all life on Earth, yet so many of its magnificent beings, from whales and dolphins to turtles, sharks, rays and coral reefs, remain under threat.

Our cleanups are about far more than removing trash. They are acts of love, protection and hope for the future of our ocean and all life it sustains. Thank you, Ocean Conservancy, for four decades of ICC leadership, inspiration and global impact! We are excited to continue leading the movement in Hong Kong!



PARTNER SPOTLIGHTS

MARKING 40 YEARS OF CLEANUPS: ON THE GROUND IN DOMINICA

During this 40th milestone year, Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup team went on tour, visiting locations hosting unique marine ecosystems critical to biodiversity, where cleanup partners exemplify what it means to be part of a global cleanup movement. When we reconnect and spend time with partner organizations in person, in their own communities, we benefit from rich conversations, usually while we're picking up trash along a remote shoreline or as part of a community cleanup. We hear stories of how partners got involved in marine debris work in the first place and what drives them to return each year to host ICC events. Sometimes we are fortunate enough to capture footage of the stunning ocean, iconic wildlife and coastal ecosystems these partners work so hard to protect.

In June 2025, we went to Dominica, to take part in a World Oceans Day cleanup with ICC Partner CYEN- Dominica (Caribbean Youth

Environment Network, Dominica chapter). We quickly understood why the country is dubbed "the nature island of the Caribbean," as we trekked to see waterfalls in lush forests and dove into the water with the CYEN team to observe resident sperm whales. The island boasts healthy coral reef ecosystems, an offshore underwater volcanic crater, and an astounding 365 rivers that feed into the marine environment. Together, we hiked local trails in search of a rare endemic bird and walked sea turtle nesting beaches by moonlight, hoping to see a female leatherback emerge from the water to lay her nest. Everyone we met had a connection to the natural world, clearly a major part of their community and personal identity.

Despite all the beauty, trash and plastics were still a visible problem. Like many island nations, waste management is challenged by the lack of space and ocean currents that bring in debris from far-flung locations. We met with government

officials, sea turtle experts, educators and community leaders about this issue. All were committed to continuing existing solutions while seeking other ways to prevent ocean trash.

The trip concluded with a phenomenal cleanup where 144 volunteers removed 936 pounds of debris from over 15 miles of shoreline in one day. At our site, we worked, using the Clean Swell® app, alongside students to log hundreds of plastic and glass beverage bottles and dozens of food wrappers, bags and bottle caps.

Our visit to Dominica and time spent with members of CYEN reinforced the fact that there are many reasons why people continue to clean their coasts of debris. We clean up for the whales, the dolphins and turtles, but we also clean up to be an example for the next generation, to beautify community green (and blue) spaces, and to help find lasting solutions to this global challenge. Cleanups provide a simple

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thread that connect all of us, no matter where we are, and show us what our clean coasts may look like.

Words can hardly scratch the surface of our time visiting “the nature island,” so we put together a video, part of Ocean Conservancy’s *40 Years of Action, 40 Years of Impact* series that you can check out by scanning the QR code above.



ITALY

A WOMEN-LED MOVEMENT, ONE MISSION: DEFENDING THE SEA

Mila Cataldo, Marevivo

Founded in 1985 by environmentalist and diver Rosalba Giugni, Marevivo was born from a simple yet powerful intuition: The sea needed a dedicated voice and a driving force for its protection. Alarmed by the first visible signs of marine pollution along the Italian coastline, Giugni and a small group of volunteers began with one of the most direct forms of action available: cleaning beaches and removing litter from the shore.

What started as local activism soon evolved into one of Italy’s leading marine conservation organizations. She pulled in scientists, volunteers and

lawmakers, walked into the halls of politics, and insisted that one woman’s heartbreak over a dirty sea could become real laws, real campaigns, a real movement.

Today, Marevivo—now a leader of the International Coastal Cleanup across Italy—is still a women-led environmental foundation whose work includes education, advocacy, protecting marine biodiversity and promoting the creation of marine protected areas. Our activities combine scientific knowledge, public engagement and practical action, involving thousands of volunteers, schools, researchers, institutions and local communities throughout Italy. At the heart of Marevivo’s story are

three women whose commitment has helped shape the organization over four decades. Founder and President Rosalba Giugni continues to provide vision and leadership. Director Carmen Di Penta, who has been part of the organization since its earliest years, has played a key role in transforming that vision into a nationwide movement. Secretary General Raffaella Giugni has further strengthened Marevivo’s educational, institutional and conservation programs, helping expand the foundation’s impact and reach.

Marevivo remains guided by the same belief that inspired its founders: Protecting the sea means protecting life itself.

POLICY PULSE: PLASTIC POLLUTION

SCAN
ME



FLORIDA

WHERE DOES YOUR STATE STAND IN THE FIGHT AGAINST PLASTIC POLLUTION?

Ocean Conservancy's 2025 United States of Plastics Report

The United States produces more plastic waste than any other country in the world and ranks among the top contributors to ocean plastic pollution. Plastic doesn't just hurt ocean animals—it affects human health too, showing up in the food we eat, the water we drink and even the air we breathe.

When it comes to policy implementation to prevent or better manage plastics in the United States, commitments and approaches vary widely.

Policy experts on Ocean Conservancy's Ending Ocean Plastics program set out to analyze state-level efforts to combat plastic pollution on a five-point scale. In 2025, this work culminated in the [United States of Plastics](#) report, the first to grade all 50 states and Washington, D.C. on how well they're fighting plastic pollution. The verdict? Most states have a lot of work to do.

States were scored on a scale of 1 to 5 stars across more than 20 factors, including bans on single-use plastics like bags, straws and foam containers; recycling programs; rules that hold plastic producers responsible for their waste; and efforts to reduce microplastics. The report also features the top 10 items collected by International Coastal Cleanup volunteers for each state, which helped inform recommendations for each one.

The national average was just **1.5 stars**—a rating of “needs improvement.” Forty-four out of 50 states scored below 3 stars, and only six states earned a “good” rating or higher. No state scored a perfect 5, meaning every state has room to grow. On the positive side, seven states have passed Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws since 2021, which makes the companies that *make* plastic responsible for its management or disposal. That's progress—but it still covers only about 20% of Americans.

Ocean Conservancy is working with states and their representatives to understand their status and know that they have the power to change this, and the *United States of Plastics* report gives them a clear roadmap.

If you're curious where your state stands, or want to read the full report, scan the QR code above.



COUNTING TRASH, CHANGING LAWS: HOW VOLUNTEERS' DATA HELP SHAPE PLASTIC POLLUTION POLICY

Community-driven data collection is at the heart of the International Coastal Cleanup. Ocean Conservancy is proud to preserve, store and verify hundreds of thousands of marine debris data points from the ICC in an online, open-access database.

But how the data are used is the key. Ocean Conservancy utilizes the data in myriad ways—from publishing this report you're reading now, to use in scientific research, to advocating for policies that combat plastic pollution on the state, federal and international levels.

The beauty of the ICC data set is that it is truly open for all sorts of stakeholders to use toward science, solutions, education and more. Our team has worked with ICC partners globally to round up a few examples of

how YOUR cleanup and the data you collect have led to positive change—and continue to help us measure the effectiveness of these solutions.

- In the late 1980's, data collected by ICC volunteers provided some of the first evidence of plastics as a major ocean threat, helping drive adoption of MARPOL Annex V's restrictions on plastic dumping at sea.
- Cleanup volunteers traced 30 pounds of balloon litter collected on Assateague Island to 52 sources across six U.S. states, providing evidence that contributed to Virginia's 1991 ban on mass balloon releases.
- To address the nuisance of plastic film, especially from plastic bags, Kenya in 2017 adopted one of the strongest policies which prohibits

the manufacture, import and usage of single-use plastic bags in the country. Before implementation, ICC volunteers in Kenya were collecting upwards of 30 plastic bags per volunteer. In 2025, that number was down to 7.5 plastic bags per volunteer.

- ICC Partner Hong Kong Cleanup used their volunteer-collected data to successfully encourage the government to introduce a plastic shopping bag levy in 2009. ICC data were also incorporated into the government's Marine Refuse Study. Hong Kong Cleanup noted: "We observed through our own data a significant decline in plastic bags after the levy was introduced. They used to be among the most commonly recorded items during cleanups,

but today they are nowhere near the top of our list."

- For many years, cigarette butts were the top item collected by ICC volunteers in the U.S. As of the 40th ICC, there are now more than 1,200 city or municipal laws addressing this form of litter, such as designated smoking-free beaches.
- Ocean Conservancy and colleagues used ICC data on expanded polystyrene (foamed plastic such as take-out clam shells, plates and cups) to create the *What the Foam?! report* in 2022. This led to a campaign which culminated in the introduction of a federal bill and, later, passage of the [Farewell to Foam Act](#). As of 2026, 13 states and Washington, D.C., have phased out foam foodware.



KUWAIT

THE SCIENCE BEHIND PLASTIC POLLUTION



HOW MUCH PLASTIC IS TOO MUCH PLASTIC FOR AN OCEAN ANIMAL?

Every single minute, more than a garbage truck's worth of plastic enters the ocean. That's a shocking amount, and it's hurting ocean animals in ways scientists are just beginning to understand.

Plastics kill ocean animals by blocking their digestive systems, twisting their organs, or tearing through organ walls. Animals often can't tell the difference between a jellyfish and a plastic bag—they just see food.

Researchers at Ocean Conservancy wanted to answer a tough question: *How much plastic does an animal actually have to ingest to cause death?* To find out, they studied data from over 10,000 animal autopsies—examining seabirds, sea turtles, and marine mammals—to figure out exactly how dangerous swallowed plastic can be.

The answers were alarming.

Seabirds are incredibly sensitive to plastics. Swallowing just six tiny pieces of rubber—each smaller than a pea—is enough to kill a seabird 90% of the time. Even three pieces of rubber (like shredded balloon bits) give a bird a 50/50 chance of dying. About 35% of seabirds studied had plastic in their stomachs.

Sea turtles are bigger, but they're just as vulnerable. Swallowing less than half a baseball's worth of plastic is enough to kill one out of every two loggerhead sea turtles. Nearly half of all sea turtles in the study had plastic in their guts when they died—which is especially scary since five of the seven sea turtle species are already threatened with extinction.

Marine mammals like dolphins, seals and whales are most at risk from lost fishing nets and gear (called "ghost gear"). Just 28 pieces of fishing debris—each smaller than a

SCAN
ME



tennis ball—can kill a sperm whale. And only about half a soccer ball's worth of soft plastic (think grocery bags) is deadly to most dolphins and seals.

The good news? [This research](#) helps scientists and lawmakers know *exactly* which plastics are most dangerous. Balloon shreds and plastic bags are especially deadly, so banning or reducing those items could save thousands of animals. Beach cleanups also help by keeping plastic out of the ocean in the first place.

Furthermore, Ocean Conservancy scientists developed a "Wildlife Impact Calculator" based on the findings of this study. With this, you can plug in the types and quantities of plastic items you removed from your cleanup and know how many marine animals you helped *protect* by preventing interactions with plastics. Scan the QR above to calculate your impact today.

FROM SHORELINES TO SCIENCE: HOW ICC DATA HAVE TRANSFORMED OUR UNDERSTANDING OF OCEAN PLASTICS

You may have found yourself at a cleanup, logging a "plastic bottle cap" on the Clean Swell app for the 50th time, asking the question: *What happens with these data? How are data collected during the International Coastal Cleanup actually used?*

In full honesty, four decades worth of your cleanup data have been relied upon so *often*, we can't keep track of it all! One fact is clear: ICC data have been used in the expanding field of plastic pollution research, cited in nearly 300 peer-reviewed articles, with 163 of those studies published in the last five years alone. Increasingly, scientists recognize plastics as a planetary-scale pollutant, disrupting key systems on Earth including biodiversity and terrestrial, freshwater and marine health.

We pulled just a handful of these studies to show the breadth of how your cleanup data are helping Ocean Conservancy and scientists all over the world better understand the issue and steer resources to the most effective solutions.

- [Plastic bag bans and fees reduce harmful bag litter on shorelines:](#)

This study used ICC data to show that plastic bag policies lead to a 25% to 47% decrease in plastic bags as a share of total items collected at cleanups relative to areas without policies, with taxes possibly further reducing shoreline litter.

- [The contributions of citizen science to United Nations' \(UN\) monitoring and reporting on marine plastics:](#) This study shares how Ghana became the first country to integrate existing citizen-science data, most of which were ICC data, in their official monitoring and reporting of the UN [Sustainable Development Goal](#) that tracks shoreline plastic debris density. This helped to bridge local data collection efforts with global monitoring processes and policy agendas.
- [Assessing macroplastic debris collected from eight diverse river systems across four continents: Insights from synchronous three-year community-led research efforts:](#) Researchers spent three years (2020–2023) collecting trash from eight rivers across four continents. Out of the

3.8 million kilograms (8.37 million pounds) of debris they analyzed, nearly two-thirds turned out to be plastic. The types of plastic, the single-use items found, and what eventually happens to that plastic all looked different depending on which river was studied. Based on these findings, the researchers put together recommendations for how communities—and the world—can stop so much plastic from ending up in rivers in the first place.

As our knowledge about the extent and impacts of plastic pollution grows, so does public concern. An [Ocean Conservancy-led study](#) published last year found that in the United States, plastic pollution is seen as the greatest threat to the ocean, and there is strong public support for policies to solve this problem by holding plastic producers accountable. Experts agree that solving the plastic crisis requires a full lifecycle approach and multinational collaboration. As far as cleanups go, the ICC will continue to be a touchpoint for scientists and policymakers to see how effective our interventions and solutions can be.

2025 INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP RESULTS

Total plastic & foam pieces 2.5cm or smaller:
1,340,349

GLOBAL TOP 10 ITEMS COLLECTED

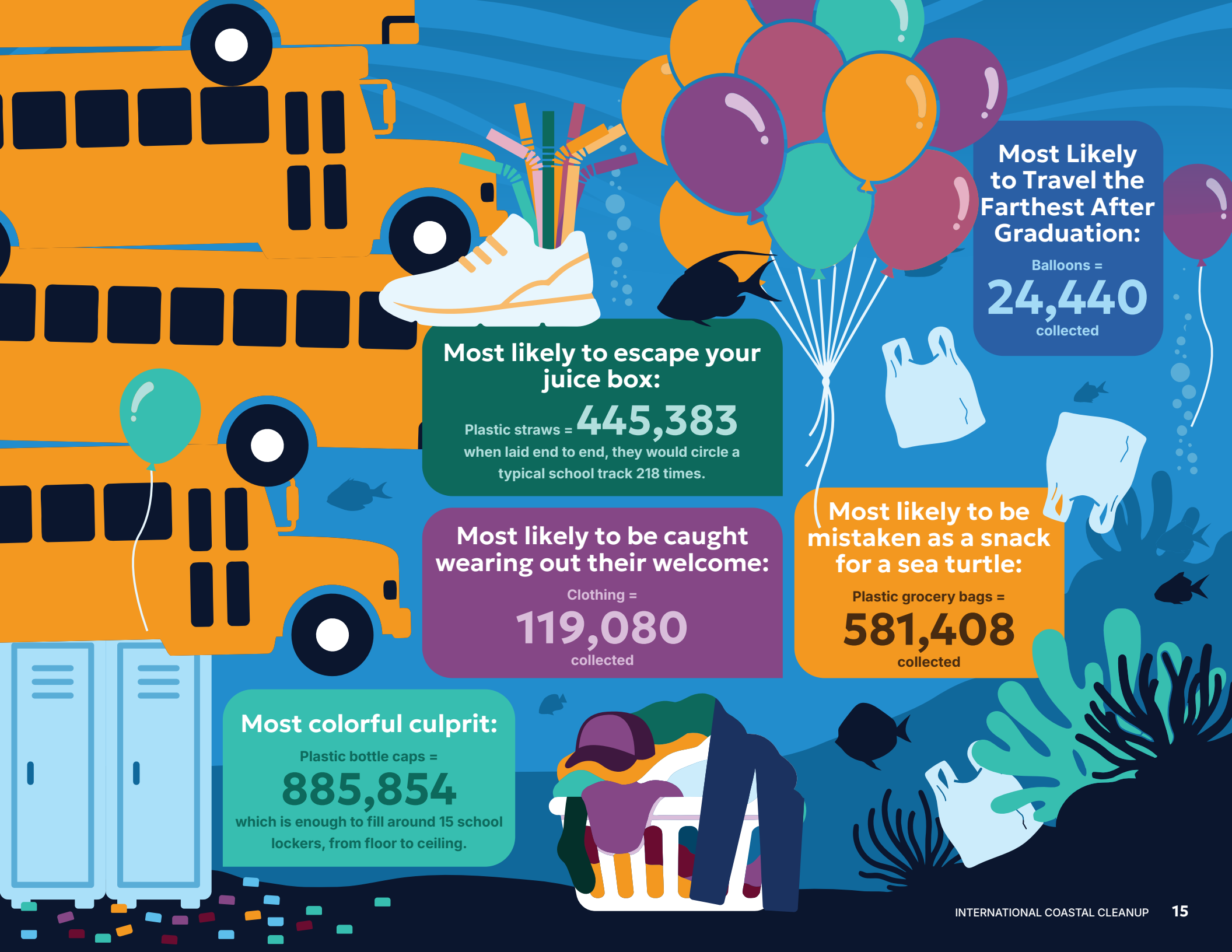
	1	Beverage bottles (plastic)	1,338,712
	2	Cigarette butts	1,197,920
	3	Bottle caps (plastic)	885,854
	4	Beverage cans	840,046
	5	Food wrappers (candy, chips, etc.)	809,645
	6	Grocery bags (plastic)	581,408
	7	Other bags (plastic)	562,077
	8	Food containers (plastic)	513,745
	9	Straws/stirrers (plastic)	445,383
	10	Cups, Plates (paper)	416,420

Most likely to make the biggest splash:

All the trash collected during the 2025 ICC =
7.9 MILLION pounds and weighs more than 545 standard school buses.

GLOBAL SUMMARY

Number of Volunteers	630,069
Total Kilograms Removed	3,586,528
Total Pounds Removed	7,917,279
Total Kilometers Covered	24,364
Total Miles Covered	15,142
Total Items Collected	13,861,048



**Most Likely
to Travel the
Farthest After
Graduation:**

Balloons =
24,440
collected

**Most likely to escape your
juice box:**

Plastic straws = **445,383**
when laid end to end, they would circle a
typical school track 218 times.

**Most likely to be caught
wearing out their welcome:**

Clothing =
119,080
collected

**Most likely to be
mistaken as a snack
for a sea turtle:**

Plastic grocery bags =
581,408
collected

Most colorful culprit:

Plastic bottle caps =
885,854
which is enough to fill around 15 school
lockers, from floor to ceiling.

2025 ICC LOCATIONS

Participating countries
shaded in green.



WASHINGTON, DC

ALASKA



RHODE ISLAND



CALIFORNIA



ARGENTINA



HONG KONG



GERMANY



AUSTRALIA



BANGLADESH



GABON



2025 GLOBAL OCEAN TRASH INDEX

LOCATION	Total Volunteers	Total Kilograms	Total Pounds	Total Kilometers	Total Miles	Total Items Collected	GLOBAL TOP TEN ITEMS COLLECTED									
							1 Beverage bottles (plastic)	2 Cigarette butts	3 Bottle caps (plastic)	4 Beverage cans	5 Food wrappers (candy, chips, etc.)	6 Grocery bags (plastic)	7 Other bags (plastic)	8 Food containers (plastic)	9 Straws/stirrers (plastic)	10 Cups, Plates (paper)
Algeria	6	148	327	0.5	0.3	15					1	13				
Angola	21	220	485	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Argentina	1	16	36	0.2	0.1	148	23	7	39	16	1		1		2	3
Australia	1,605	5,383	11,868	36.7	22.8	62,062	825	4,157	1,908	775	3,361	390	403	24	948	23
Bahamas	1,163	2,028	4,471	26.1	16.3	20,063	2,532	491	1,143	1,947	1,034	292	478	625	845	623
Bangladesh	530	1,850	4,079	8.0	5.0	56,530	579	8,766	153	3	8,766	8,752	3,854	1,177	8,178	1,870
Barbados	146	269	593	9.7	6.0	6,496	714	155	657	82	469	60	185	104	208	199
Belgium	38	603	1,329	5.9	3.7	2,568	107	357	40	139	88	87	266	67	20	69
Belize	733	2,362	5,208	47.2	29.4	38,770	4,968	506	2,554	1,734	2,056	2,580	2,694	244	1,150	890
Bermuda	830	3,142	6,927	43.8	27.3	20,595	719	2,773	804	621	435	284	290	164	148	209
Bonaire	7	7	15	2.4	1.5	510		76	27	2	6	4	9	1	4	7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	22	64	141	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brazil	1,583	16,614	36,628	21.6	13.4	63,058	15,102	706	2,622	1,059	1,853	6,956	4,211	1,614	579	181
British Virgin Islands	318	214	471	3.9	2.4	2,261	515	23	165	181	103	102	30	8	19	11
Brunei	120	488	1,075	2.6	1.6	1,931	221	178	54	118	103	95	67	103	27	68
Burkina Faso	4	1	1	0.2	0.1	6	1			1			1			
Cambodia	424	1,589	3,504	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cameroon	200	7,070	15,587	0.8	0.5	35,045	3,934	160	15,333	41	620	374	10,050	102	52	37
Canada	8,227	17,591	38,782	502.6	312.2	232,432	5,516	87,178	9,899	4,705	18,829	2,396	2,007	2,169	2,929	384
Chile	10,198	73,444	161,914	116.2	72.2	221,806	5,539	59,318	4,899	9,678	6,942	11,761	3,822	2,547	1,664	1,133
China	2,041	1,225	2,700	178.2	110.8	52,303	2,489	28,417	1,890	1,026	2,304	2,408	1,358	324	998	663
Colombia	246	2,908	6,412	7.6	4.7	4,521	386	451	462	36	175	238	107	241	188	69
Costa Rica	135	592	1,304	5.2	3.3	4,679	243	69	545	144	311	376	171	18	79	4
Croatia	47	320	706	0.4	0.3	1,473	36	302		1	21	47	137		1	
Curaçao	281	2,208	4,867	3.5	2.2	22	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cyprus	4,907	21,900	48,281	42.1	26.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Czechia	17	77	170	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Denmark	4	63	138	0.2	0.1	36		2	1	3	1	3	1	1	1	2

							GLOBAL TOP TEN ITEMS COLLECTED									
LOCATION	Total Volunteers	Total Kilograms	Total Pounds	Total Kilometers	Total Miles	Total Items Collected	1 Beverage bottles (plastic)	2 Cigarette butts	3 Bottle caps (plastic)	4 Beverage cans	5 Food wrappers (candy, chips, etc.)	6 Grocery bags (plastic)	7 Other bags (plastic)	8 Food containers (plastic)	9 Straws/stirrers (plastic)	10 Cups, Plates (paper)
Dominican Republic	26,807	175,367	386,617	10.9	39.0	2,699,542	283,749	75,940	189,149	118,241	49,669	46,993	74,561	330,867	148,944	278,094
Ecuador	6,699	27,960	61,641	265.5	164.9	165,127	13,857	7,373	15,010	2,616	10,470	8,193	7,678	5,678	4,614	3,561
Egypt	46	305	672	0.3	0.2	56,150	9,150	20,000		4,000	5,000	10,000		3,000		
El Salvador	26	488	1,076	0.2	0.1	515	60	28	17	49	8	5	1	4	8	12
Ethiopia	86	1,897	4,182	5.0	3.1	9,001	3,450	1,284		528	993	993	994	1,145		
Fiji	58	147	325	4.5	2.8	2,121	72	636	48	157	58	12	76	9	39	19
Finland	120	109	240	4.8	3.0	3,002		2,976								
France	37	44	97	0.2	0.1	63	3				1	1	6	1	1	7
Gabon	50	2,342	5,163	2.8	1.8	16,673	16,518	13	27	66					38	
Germany	1,091	1,187	2,617	43.8	27.2	32,046	191	17,112	13	302	547	4,572	270	62	73	247
Ghana	318	4,007	8,833	0.2	0.1	175,815	1,692	27,675	2,171	19	2,365	1,365	1,965	1,192	3,538	21
Greece	16,302	25,156	55,460	70.0	43.5	193,268	12,176	31,796	12,317	155	2,560	4,572	1,446	753	11,055	771
Guam	715	3,016	6,650	88.7	55.1	20,015	1,507	1,543	1,433	2,670	881	377	639	161	308	296
Guyana	130	1,319	2,908	1.0	0.6	10,747	2,405	10	148	1,097	87	401	474	178	28	343
Honduras	48	330	728	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hong Kong	17,154	172,303	379,859	276.0	171.5	4,188	81	82	35	7	44	28	35	40	23	13
India	17,036	28,253	62,287	2.1	1.3	801	83	30	37	21	41	127	43	47	36	34
Indonesia	264	338	745	2.2	1.3	2,912	219	9	47	47	444	268	498	2	46	4
Ireland	81	178	393	15.8	9.8	2,428	71	291	50	69	348	42	36	31	49	69
Israel	87	318	702	1.2	0.8	394	68		5	61	2	33	3	12		
Italy	1,243	5,238	11,548	8.7	5.4	12,240	164	5,869	790	91	154	71	124	139	220	66
Jamaica	8,159	35,926	79,201	193.3	120.1	434,298	134,608	3,703	56,249	10,859	16,461	8,893	22,926	7,858	2,777	10,571
Japan	4,369	5,736	12,645	166.1	103.2	99,462	5,182	12,141	5,876	2,387	5,986	1,457	4,170	2,826	1,179	456
Kenya	400	1,035	2,281	1.6	1.0	20,127			773		7,848			1,420	1,164	
Kuwait	273	18,000	39,683	6.0	3.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Libya	400	22,035	48,579	4.8	3.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lithuania	9	22	48	4.1	2.6	759	5	192	11	1	52	9	17		8	6
Madagascar	85	299	660	5.1	3.2	1,651	273	115	43	44	196	24	12	6	11	8
Malaysia	9,071	32,855	72,432	984.3	611.7	469,456	68,850	59,846	17,078	10,125	23,141	44,055	23,690	12,594	18,658	6,209

2025 GLOBAL OCEAN TRASH INDEX

LOCATION	Total Volunteers	Total Kilograms	Total Pounds	Total Kilometers	Total Miles	Total Items Collected	GLOBAL TOP TEN ITEMS COLLECTED									
							1 Beverage bottles (plastic)	2 Cigarette butts	3 Bottle caps (plastic)	4 Beverage cans	5 Food wrappers (candy, chips, etc.)	6 Grocery bags (plastic)	7 Other bags (plastic)	8 Food containers (plastic)	9 Straws/stirrers (plastic)	10 Cups, Plates (paper)
Maldives	20	48	105	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mexico	4,015	26,454	58,319	247.4	153.8	97,485	7,978	20,571	7,992	2,453	3,652	4,928	3,024	954	1,696	894
Montserrat	56	497	1,095	2.4	1.5	1,656	26	125	27	74	30	25	17	11	25	
Morocco	6,654	82,596	182,091	154.1	95.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mozambique	93	7,689	16,950	6.0	3.7	7,130	985	147	1,334	37	99	60	49	34	88	14
Myanmar (Burma)	2	481	1,060	0.3	0.2	500	2	4	4	21	8	2	20	6	3	11
Namibia	52	357	788	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nepal	90	59	130	6.0	3.8	1,035	63	115	27	78	63	40	57	7	29	18
New Zealand	38	274	604	3.1	2.0	3,989	68	150	126	132	191	77	331	24	20	28
Nicaragua	620	2,439	5,377	9.3	5.8	35,333	4,208	2,220	7,736	399	1,961	2,330	2,102	325	889	1,239
Nigeria	103	451	994	0.9	0.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Northern Mariana Islands	352	700	1,544	30.4	18.9	14,958	658	3,295	874	757	916	348	612	207	361	185
Norway	20,890	243,869	537,634	628.9	390.9	75,181	1,194	826	31	57	2,117	36	3,371	1,018	352	51
Pakistan	1,051	229	505	16.1	10.0	3,309	612	32	45	15	228	61	192	20	25	178
Panama	1,664	11,941	26,325	22.4	13.9	24,789	2,606	6	496	1,076	287	5,925	2,909	258	82	409
Peru	121	63	139	1.5	0.9	1,830	882	44	138	36	38	67	46	4	35	
Philippines	228,474	720,757	1,588,981	1,706.4	1,060.5	4,074,772	380,009	122,221	258,127	536,530	394,212	265,538	261,121	72,016	110,164	71,008
Portugal	28	62	137	7.7	4.8	458	26	115	32	10	40	13	7	4	18	3
Puerto Rico	8,635	54,887	121,004	1,076.7	669.2	419,612	37,539	41,037	37,481	20,196	11,959	7,383	16,709	3,251	22,704	7,914
Rwanda	15	34	75	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Saba	8	15	33	0.3	0.2	115	14	1	3		1					
Saudi Arabia	15	80	176	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seychelles	430	317	698	248.1	154.2	8,304	588	628	620	135	538	44	97	82	126	29
Sierra Leone	120	10,000	22,046	10.0	6.2	1,950	500	400	900		50		100			
Singapore	403	992	2,187	10.7	6.6	13,704	982	523	1,284	374	1,048	1,170	655	418	384	170
Sint Maarten	31	74	164	3.3	2.1	1,551	90	280	82	19	26	25	33	14	144	14
Slovakia	18	4,017	8,857	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Slovenia	189	167	369	0.2	0.1	15,012	139	10,446	144	123	663	104	164	211	118	17

							GLOBAL TOP TEN ITEMS COLLECTED									
LOCATION	Total Volunteers	Total Kilograms	Total Pounds	Total Kilometers	Total Miles	Total Items Collected	1 Beverage bottles (plastic)	2 Cigarette butts	3 Bottle caps (plastic)	4 Beverage cans	5 Food wrappers (candy, chips, etc.)	6 Grocery bags (plastic)	7 Other bags (plastic)	8 Food containers (plastic)	9 Straws/ stirrers (plastic)	10 Cups, Plates (paper)
South Africa	3,738	9,765	21,527	404.3	251.3	45,331	697	6,311	1,977	590	2,750	19,745	642	301	2,440	105
South Korea	1,456	3,033	6,686	22.7	14.1	85,830	251	563	163	98	471	424	44	56	82	75
Spain	1,524	3,076	6,781	20.6	12.8	31,676	353	24,577	303	586	677	175	247	54	187	192
Sri Lanka	2	1	2	0.0	0.0	5		1								
St Kitts & Nevis																
St. Kitts	373	409	902	9.3	5.7	5,430	1,473	52	1,260	24	100	45	132	17	101	10
Nevis	125	499	1,099	38.8	24.2	12,610	1,053	43	484	125	339	53	58	78	89	76
St Lucia	28	461	1,016	0.5	0.3	2,004	704	14	256	26	160	64	65	77	7	101
Sweden	2,962	8,128	17,920	1.6	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Switzerland	2	4	8	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Taiwan	8,713	5,000	11,023	31.9	19.8	89,002	18,318	5,143	10,422	1,270	1,675	3,646	21	2,091	5,551	4
Tanzania	887	7,287	16,064	9.6	5.9	3,584	503	49	197	37	176	171	134	38	83	72
Thailand	2,381	39,413	86,891	377.7	234.7	582,965	80,014	8,594	8,378	10,974	36,114	32,759	17,814	15,645	26,565	2,321
Trinidad and Tobago	1,918	9,124	20,115	66.7	41.5	104,878	24,257	1,738	8,285	3,421	3,509	2,644	2,949	1,727	915	2,001
Türkiye	2,043	5,941	13,098	17.4	10.8	161,226	2,800	151,549	820	250	795	93		6	21	53
Uganda	524	7,313	16,122	11.3	7.0	5,515	532	298	1,932	102	843	192	542		673	
United Arab Emirates	1,133	4,171	9,194	86.4	53.7	15,569	2,426	984	1,083	563	716	831	639	316	383	516
United Kingdom	8,609	6,935	15,288	174.8	108.6	5,605	87	100	169	54	435	44	82	13	98	7
U.S. Virgin Islands	531	1,463	3,226	3.2	2.0	14,706	928	447	1,355	550	574	375	392	131	391	201
United States	165,975	1,556,731	3,432,005	15,488.6	9,624.2	2,216,518	115,601	312,208	150,517	71,715	149,131	38,172	60,362	27,375	47,544	17,684
Uruguay	109	518	1,143	11.9	7.4	5,152	60	1,689	251	167	460	52	279	51	92	89
Venezuela	7,571	21,497	47,392	107.6	66.9	409,379	50,480	17,569	35,891	10,941	17,636	24,009	16,199	9,347	11,961	3,434
Vietnam	200	2,245	4,950	0.4	0.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wallis and Futuna	50	67	148	1.3	0.8	1,259	123	49	86	107	122	29	54		80	45
Yemen	10	1	1	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grand Total	630,069	3,586,528	7,917,279	24,364	15,142	13,861,048	1,338,712	1,197,920	885,854	840,046	809,645	581,408	562,077	513,745	445,383	416,420

2025 UNITED STATES OCEAN TRASH INDEX

					UNITED STATES TOP TEN ITEMS COLLECTED									
STATE	Total Volunteers	Total Pounds	Total Miles	Total Items Collected	1 Cigarette butts	2 Bottle caps (plastic)	3 Food wrappers (candy, chips, etc.)	4 Other plastic waste	5 Beverage bottles (plastic)	6 Other waste (metal, paper, etc.)	7 Beverage cans	8 Foam packaging	9 Other bags (plastic)	10 Fishing gear: Lines, nets, traps, ropes, etc.
Alabama	2,962	15,516	271.2	45,514	10,106	2,631	3,097	1,864	2,902	1,511	2,655	436	899	535
Alaska	570	6,518	44.2	356		24		24	84	12		84		96
Arizona	83	336	9.9	1,873	492	144	162	15	147	22	200		14	32
Arkansas	2	1	0.1	16		5	1							
California	41,974	322,515	1,293.0	418,663	98,793	16,978	33,544	25,197	10,322	33,379	7,327	5,210	9,675	3,105
Colorado	1,454	24,203	44.2	2,598	161	69	286	56	251	233	265	30	123	1
Connecticut	2,951	19,758	310.6	219,270	14,734	4,369	8,958	5,786	5,107	5,143	3,425	15,469	2,292	978
Delaware	1,076	5,891	207.0	4,849	535	503	616	272	386	335	51	29	88	26
District of Columbia	341	1,602	6.1	6,244	485	315	490	182	689	415	208	35	248	170
Florida	25,414	136,259	1,500.3	533,359	63,865	67,547	27,847	36,974	19,415	18,709	12,159	7,096	14,606	8,353
Georgia	5,616	147,725	607.0	60,404	5,173	2,497	6,591	691	8,248	851	5,205	1,666	1,763	2,578
Hawaii	614	31,752	18.3	32,215	10,301	1,227	2,168	2,931	498	3,020	686	286	334	222
Idaho	1	2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Illinois	29	163	2.1	1,143	8	65	63	77	92	13	48	3	37	2
Indiana	141	196	1.0	3,136	444	115	523	143	94	71	86		131	1
Iowa	3	38	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kansas	17	138	9.0	1,381	55	64	127	140	132	161	107	55	24	
Kentucky	3	38	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Louisiana	528	6,946	17.6	26,605	520	2,535	345	829	956	274	492	116	329	14,317
Maine	667	21,868	52.2	27,213	5,470	504	1,403	189	2,572	700	396	324	244	8,085
Maryland	375	3,567	27.1	24,511	1,950	1,815	1,635	167	1,775	540	240	389	343	17
Massachusetts	5,596	75,150	240.1	121,264	11,482	11,877	5,139	4,054	4,292	2,030	4,918	19,297	2,114	2,574
Michigan	203	635	4.3	7,629	1,102	285	1,076	156	259	239	259	88	268	111
Minnesota	343	4,045	12.5	399	40	28	51	16	14	33	15	8	21	3
Mississippi	1,239	2,388	42.0	50,879	13,257	2,205	3,135	3,383	1,253	4,350	686	605	754	668

					UNITED STATES TOP TEN ITEMS COLLECTED									
STATE	Total Volunteers	Total Pounds	Total Miles	Total Items Collected	 1 Cigarette butts	 2 Bottle caps (plastic)	 3 Food wrappers (candy, chips, etc.)	 4 Other plastic waste	 5 Beverage bottles (plastic)	 6 Other waste (metal, paper, etc.)	 7 Beverage cans	 8 Foam packaging	 9 Other bags (plastic)	 10 Fishing gear: Lines, nets, traps, ropes, etc.
Missouri	8	158	3.8	894	314	8	93	33	66	139	45	1	21	17
Montana	165	68,928	121.2	14,699	560	332	304	1,352	277	4,419	410	674	158	143
Nebraska	3	30	1.0	45	3	4	17		3	3				2
Nevada	3	57	1.5	302	4	2	9	34	26	37	19	1	2	
New Hampshire	709	4,101	39.6	17,460	3,439	815	1,467	557	220	683	415	148	182	1,080
New Jersey	1,262	17,987	32.4	6,698	305	193	669	22	622	22	534	5	22	2,995
New York	3,644	933,291	209.4	141,135	7,341	7,230	8,688	6,628	26,373	5,345	10,459	2,946	11,151	590
North Carolina	1,120	21,921	110.9	9,038	976	540	882	196	460	911	263	54	268	257
Ohio	1,010	12,385	63.3	46,720	4,971	953	5,189	2,344	4,077	1,986	2,853	1,215	1,862	808
Oklahoma	3	103	1.0	718	12	32	48	71	75	104	59	1	96	53
Oregon	5,671	85,941	10.7	749	40	27	3	18	6		4	3	21	4
Pennsylvania	21,057	649,113	2,195.4	57,283	10,244	1,845	6,584	51	2,084	597	5,389	139	549	584
Rhode Island	2,991	15,713	230.9	117,968	20,938	7,757	9,191	11,004	7,007	8,008	4,249	1,909	2,967	1,700
South Carolina	1,046	2,528	45.1	7,026	1,526	466	465	216	229	252	179	10	68	148
South Dakota	124	1,802	6.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tennessee	6,945	104,006	655.0	203	19	16	10	4	46	2	14		4	5
Texas	20,980	583,115	507.2	32,981	3,386	6,496	984	1,753	1,758	3,067	891	228	804	1,041
Utah	148	2,793	18.3	194	10	6	5	31	3	28	7		13	4
Vermont	212	1,527	6.7	9,644	2,138	232	1,564	792	338	448	430	41	95	55
Virginia	1,605	34,851	376.5	50,899	5,682	3,119	4,917	3,388	2,915	3,866	1,628	1,031	1,245	621
Washington	588	2,303	55.6	13,778	2,282	442	1,152	991	310	877	309	234	153	126
West Virginia	1	2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wisconsin	1,143	13,111	72.2	19,852	2,341	844	4,125	442	1,636	336	1,342	2	632	1
Location Not Listed	3,335	48,987	139.9	78,711	6,704	3,356	5,508	4,461	7,582	2,814	2,788	1,109	5,742	1,319
Grand Total	165,975	3,432,005	9,624.2	2,216,518	312,208	150,517	149,131	117,534	115,601	105,985	71,715	60,977	60,362	53,427

ICC INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ARGENTINA

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AUSTRALIA

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Long Island

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Nassau

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The Israeli Plastic Pollution Prevention Coalition and The Israeli Diving Federation
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SPAIN

"I've been able to clearly observe the evolution and global impact of this wonderful citizen participation project with the benefit of hindsight, having coordinated it for 35 years—first in Argentina and later on in Spain. The ICC is the heart and soul of our organization, and it has enabled us to place the issue of marine debris on the media and public agenda, as well as to build ocean literacy to gradually reclaim our lost connection with the sea."

– Daniel Roller
*Asociación Ambiente
Europeo, Spain*



MALAYSIA

"The ICC has been a meaningful journey for us since 2018. The annual campaigns have raised awareness amongst our volunteers—both regular and one-off ones—on the seriousness of marine debris along our coastlines."

– Theresa Ng
Reef Check Malaysia

FROM RIVER TO OCEAN 40 YEARS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP

Ocean Conservancy proudly marked the 40th International Coastal Cleanup with its flagship Washington, D.C. event at Anacostia Park, bringing together volunteers, partners and community leaders in a shared commitment to protecting our waterways and ocean. This year's Washington, D.C. event served as both a celebration of four decades of impact and a reminder of the urgent work ahead. Located along

the Anacostia River, the cleanup highlighted the important connection between inland waterways and ocean health. Trash collected in urban rivers can travel hundreds of miles downstream, ultimately contributing to marine debris and plastic pollution in the ocean.

At Anacostia Park, 326 volunteers removed more than 1,500 pounds of debris in just a few hours, collecting common litter such as plastic bottles,

bottle caps and cigarette butts, along with larger unexpected items.

The 40th ICC reflected the strength of Ocean Conservancy's partner network, the dedication of local volunteers and the growing momentum to address plastic pollution at its source. As we look ahead, the ICC remains a critical tool for driving change, protecting wildlife and building healthier communities for generations to come.

WASHINGTON, DC





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PROTECT WHERE WE PLAY

With one year under its belt, Protect Where We Play—an Ocean Conservancy initiative—is turning our passion for sports, art and music into action for our ocean so we can keep on playing for generations to come. This effort came to life through several key cleanups that helped local leaders gain first-hand experience with reducing the impact of plastic pollution already on our shores, while fostering the community needed to address this global issue going forward.

In November 2025, we teamed up with the City of Long Beach, California, representatives from the USA Artistic Swimming National Team and the U.S. Olympians and Paralympians Association, and 74 local volunteers to remove 769 pounds of trash from Alamitos Beach. This past June, along with Green Operations & Advanced Leadership (GOAL) and the FIFA World Cup 2026 Miami Host Committee, we brought together 50 sustainability leaders in the live-event venue industry to remove 102 pounds of trash from Historic Virginia Key Beach Park. Together, Team Ocean is preserving and protecting our ocean and all the spaces where we come together!



**PROTECT
WHERE
WE PLAY**
WITH OCEAN CONSERVANCY

CALIFORNIA

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Katia Kalinowski, ICC Brazil

This image was taken during the 2025 International Coastal Cleanup in the Maracanã Extractive Reserve in Pará, Brazil. Deep in the Amazon rainforest, this photo displays one aspect of the immense challenges faced when conducting cleanups in remote areas, where isolated traditional communities often suffer from the environmental impact of tons of incoming marine debris. The ICC Brazil team and local residents united in a day of action to completely fill a traditional boat with waste removed from the beach. As we departed at sunset, everyone on board was deeply moved when dozens of pink river dolphins and flocks of birds emerged to accompany the vessel, as if they too were celebrating a cleanup mission accomplished.

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