

The International Coastal Cleanup

The International Coastal Cleanup engages people to remove trash and debris from the world's beaches and waterways, to identify the sources of debris, and to change the behaviors that cause pollution.

The 2007 ICC: A Dynamic Global Snapshot of Marine Debris

In 2007, the ICC's success improved yet again, generating a detailed picture of trash in our ocean. International participation jumped from 66 countries in 2006 to 76 in 2007. More than 378,000 people picked their way across more than 33,000 miles of stream, river, and ocean shoreline to collect six million pounds of debris. That translates to an average of 16 pounds per person. Once again, Project Aware led scuba divers (8,321 of them) below the surface in underwater cleanups that yielded 161,513 pounds.

With more than 190,000 volunteers scouring shorelines above and below the waterline in 45 states, the United States accounted for half of all ICC volunteers, 22 percent of pounds collected, and nearly 25 percent of miles cleaned. The 2007 Cleanup also marked additional participation in inland cleanups along local waterways, with states such as Alabama, Kentucky, and Louisiana more than doubling their number of volunteers from last year.

In the U.S., Ocean Conservancy President Vikki Spruill was honored to join First Lady Laura Bush to announce the White House's new marine debris initiative during the dedication ceremony of the J.L. Scott Marine

Education Center – Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Biloxi, Mississippi. The White House Initiative calls for an increase in public/private partnerships on cleanups, enhanced public education on debris prevention, and an emphasis on international cooperation to end dumping in the ocean.

Through its Regional Seas Programme (RSP) and the Global Programme for Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) has developed a "Global Initiative on Marine Litter" to address the global pollution issue. The initiative focuses on both regional and global efforts, and provides a platform to establish partnerships and cooperation for the coordination of activities to control and sustainably manage marine debris.



2007 ICC: Utah

In Utah, 74 volunteers participated in the ICC, removing 3,216.5 pounds of trash and debris from 7.5 miles of shoreline.

Dangers of Marine Debris

In addition to being an eyesore, marine debris also poses dangers for wildlife and people. Marine debris kills more than one million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals and turtles annually. Unfortunately, each year ICC volunteers find a variety of marine wildlife species entangled in debris. In 2007, participants found 237 entangled animals. Birds represented nearly 35 percent of entangled wildlife, followed by fish (27 percent), invertebrates (20 percent), mammals (nearly 13 percent), reptiles (almost five percent), and amphibians (less than one percent).

Discarded monofilament fishing line is perhaps the single-most dangerous debris item, accounting for 65 percent of entanglements found during the ICC. In fact, derelict fishing gear – which includes fishing line, nets, rope, lures, and light sticks, and crab/lobster/fish traps – represented 72 percent of all entanglements.

Conclusion

Trash in our ocean pollutes our water, kills and injures wildlife, and also costs local communities in debris removal, lost tourism, and lower property values. While the ICC accomplishes amazing results, one day of cleaning up will only be a drop in the ocean unless we expand our reach, bringing in new volunteers and new countries and expanding our commitment beyond the Cleanup to keeping our ocean healthy all year round. We have the opportunity to make significant strides not only in cleaning up the existing trash that is polluting our water, but – more importantly – in reducing the amount that enters the ocean in the first place.

If we all join together and make the ICC's mission an integral part of our daily lives, we could truly *start a sea change*, every day. It starts one day at a time.



10 Things You Can Do To Stop Marine Debris

1. Join Ocean Conservancy's International Cleanup!

Visit www.oceanconservancy.org/coastalcleanup

2. Clean up your trash. Throw all trash away in proper receptacles, even when you're not on the water. Pick up any debris you see while out.

3. Collect your monofilament fishing line.

Don't leave fishing line behind and retrieve any other line you may find while fishing, but be careful not to tug on snagged lines, which could be caught on habitat below the surface.

4. Contain and properly clean spills when boating. Use oil-absorbent rags and materials to clean spills. Check Ocean Conservancy's *Good Mate* manual for helpful tips on reducing your negative impacts on the water.

5. Recycle used motor oil and oil filters. Local gas stations should have appropriate facilities for recycling these materials. NEVER pour oil, paint, antifreeze, or other household chemicals into an open sewer or down a storm drain.

6. Consider organic alternatives to household detergents and cleaners. Use lemon juice, vinegar, and baking soda for household cleaning. Avoid using fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and harsh chemical cleaners that can wash into waterways.

7. Choose reusable items and use fewer disposable ones. Use fewer disposable bags when shopping or bring your own reusable ones.

8. Properly dispose of used batteries and electronics. Don't dump them in landfills, use your local recycling center. These items leach harmful chemicals into the environment that take a long time to disperse.

9. Keep streets, sidewalks, parking lots, and storm drains clear of trash and debris – they empty into our ocean.

10. Contact your elected representatives and let them know you care about marine debris – and that they should care, too. Vote for candidates who support marine debris prevention and policies that protect our environment.



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