

# Celebrate Ocean Conservancy's 25th International Coastal Cleanup

Volunteer for a Sea Change on 25 September 2010



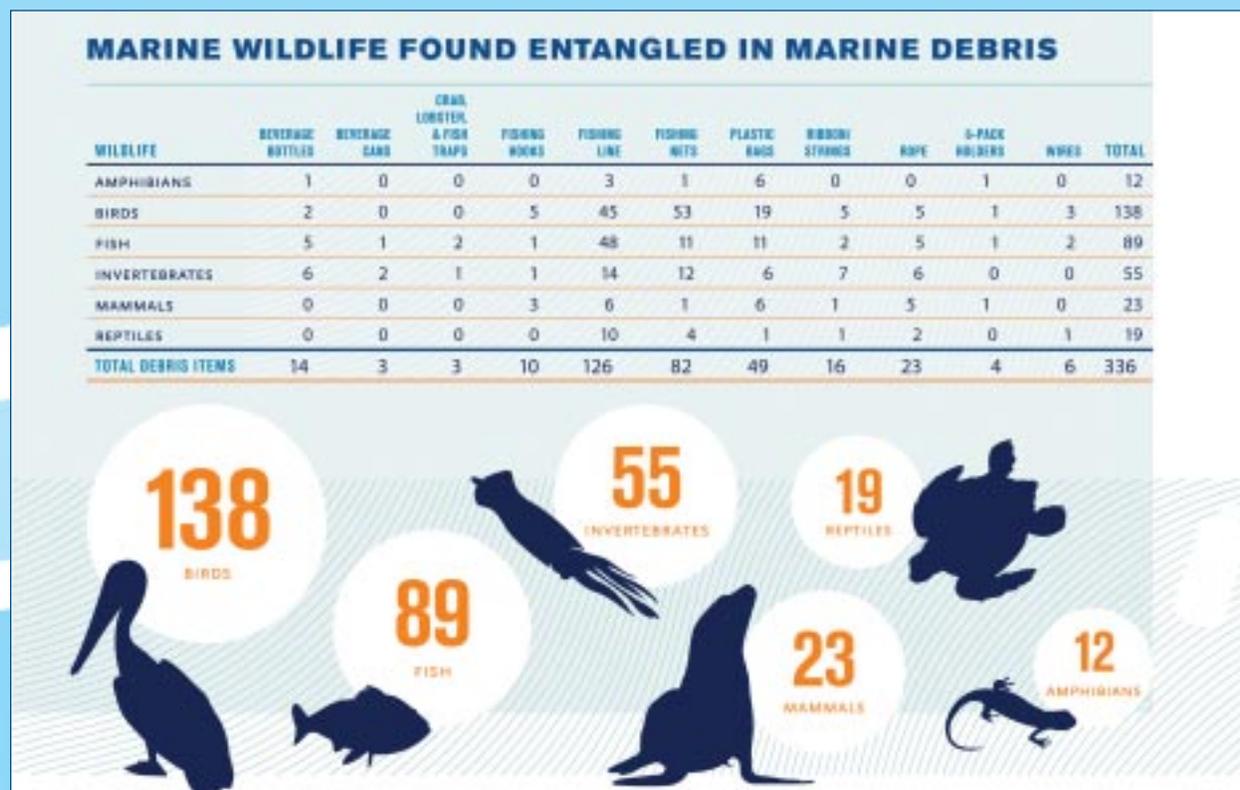
**IN MARCH 2010**, Ocean Conservancy delivered an important message at the U.S. Navy Environmental Forum, “Partners for the Planet,” in Alexandria, VA—trash in the ocean and waterways is more than an eyesore. One of the greatest pollution problems of our time, trash impacts the health of humans,

wildlife, ecosystems, and coastal economies. Sharp items injure beachgoers, and accident-causing debris snarls boat propellers. Packing straps, lost fishing nets, or cast-off fishing line can kill wildlife that becomes entangled. And when animals eat things they shouldn't, they can sicken and die. Unfortu-

nately, much of the trash in our ocean will last for years.

## Local Action, Global Change

But there's good news—anyone, anywhere can readily address this envi-



People of all ages—including these kids in Texas—enjoy the hands-on experience of the International Coastal Cleanup.



## Marine debris is one environmental challenge anyone, anywhere can readily address.

Environmental challenge through Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup, a year-round movement to clean shorelines and waterways, collect data, and raise awareness.

It all began twenty-five years ago, when one woman took local action that became a global movement. Dismayed by the huge amount of trash she saw on a Texas beach, Linda Maraniss enlisted like-minded partners to help organize a beach cleanup. In just two hours, Texans picked up 124 tons of trash along 122 miles of coastline. That effort has grown into the world's largest volunteer effort on behalf of ocean health.

The International Coastal Cleanup's signature annual event traditionally takes place on the third Saturday in September (though official cleanups can be held throughout September and October to accommodate religious or government holidays or bad weather). This year, the event will be held on

Saturday, 25 September. Last year alone, a million helping hands got to work in 108 countries and locations. Working shoulder-to-shoulder with friends, family, and co-workers—and in spirit with people across many time zones—this extensive network of volunteers picked up an astounding 7.4 million pounds of trash on just one day.

Because trash travels down storm drains and waterways to the ocean, the International Coastal Cleanup takes place along rivers, lakes, and streams as well as ocean beaches. People with boats clean beaches that walkers can't easily reach, and thousands of scuba divers collect trash below the surface.

### Delivering Data for Better Decisions

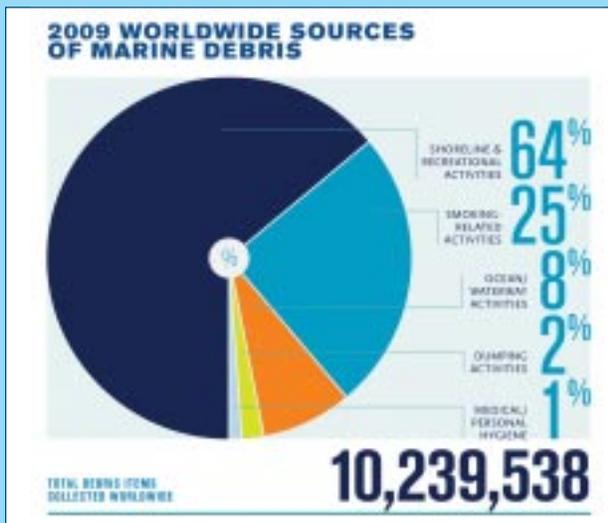
These dedicated volunteers don't just pick up trash; they record what they find—10.2 million individual items in



keeping trash out of the ocean in the first place.

### Talking Trash

From decision makers to individuals, everyone can help stop trash at the source. For example, the top three items found in 2009 were cigarette butts (2.2 million), plastic bags (1.1 million), and food wrappers/containers (943,233). Sixty-four percent of the debris



year came from shoreline and recreational activities. The data also show that sixty percent of items collected in 2009 consisted of disposable, single-use items, including 512,517 cups, plates, forks, knives, and spoons—enough for a picnic for over 100,000 people. Changing behavior to keep those items out of the water can make a tremendous difference for ocean health.

Joining forces with the International Coastal Cleanup and filling out data cards provides an opportunity to go beyond cleaning up what's out there.

2009 alone. They tally items ranging from drinking straws and bottle caps to major appliances and lost fishing gear on standardized data cards. Ocean Conservancy compiles and analyzes the data; the resulting Marine Debris Index is the only global accounting of trash in the ocean. Collected since the very first International Coastal Cleanup in 1986, the item-by-item, location-by-location data have a long history of raising awareness about this world-wide problem and informing policies and programs to address it.

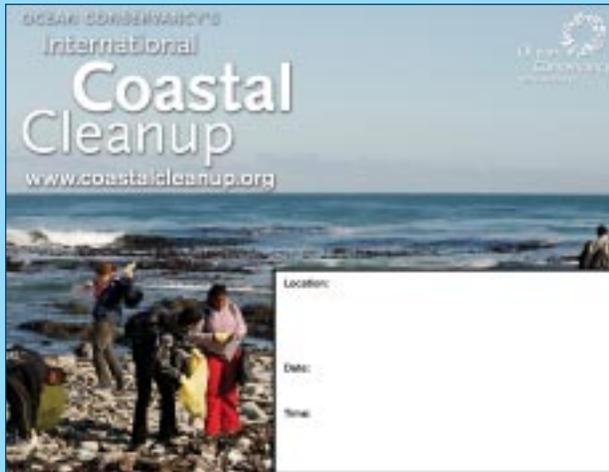
“Momentum is building. There is a growing understanding of the significant impact trash has on wildlife, the economy, and the productivity and resiliency of our ocean,” said Vikki Spruill, President and Chief Executive Officer of Ocean Conservancy. “The data generated by

The Navy currently conducts cleanups from its bases around the world, and many Navy personnel participate enthusiastically in community cleanup programs as well. Joining forces with the International Coastal Cleanup and filling out data cards provides an opportunity to go beyond cleaning up what's out there. Building on the marine debris data base will support future decisions about

### To Learn More

LEARN MORE IN the report entitled, “Trash Travels: From Our Hands to the Sea, Around the Globe, and Through Time,” posted on Ocean Conservancy’s web site in an easy-to-page-though version.





Volunteers pull together to clean up Santo Domingo's El Gringo Beach in the Dominican Republic.

Juan Fach/Aurora Photos



hundreds of thousands of dedicated volunteers around the world provide us with a global snapshot of the trash in our ocean, but cleanups alone cannot solve the problem—it's time to stop marine debris at the source. From design to disposal, we all have a role to play: corporations can reduce packaging, governments can enact strong marine debris policies, and each of us can choose re-usable items, recycle when possible and put trash in its place.”

Ocean Conservancy is inviting U.S. Navy personnel around the world to be part of the solution.

- Help stop huge amounts of trash from reaching the ocean in the first place; small everyday actions can have a big impact.
- Choose products with less packaging.
- Make a modest investment in reusable items, from shopping bags and carryout containers to picnic utensils.
- Recycle everything you can.
- Be part of the 25th anniversary of the International Coastal Cleanup on 25 September.

To find out how to sign up with friends, family, and coworkers for an existing event (or organize one of your own), visit [www.oceanconservancy.org/cleanup](http://www.oceanconservancy.org/cleanup) then select “Organize Your Own Cleanup.” Once there, you can:

- Propose your own cleanup event!
- Download a poster that you can personalize to promote your event!
- Invite your friends!
- Find out Which Ocean is Your Ocean!
- Download a contact sheet so your attendees can stay updated about ocean trash and other easy things they can do to help protect the ocean! 

#### CONTACT

Catherine Clarke Fox  
Ocean Conservancy  
202-280-6291  
[cfox@oceanconservancy.org](mailto:cfox@oceanconservancy.org)