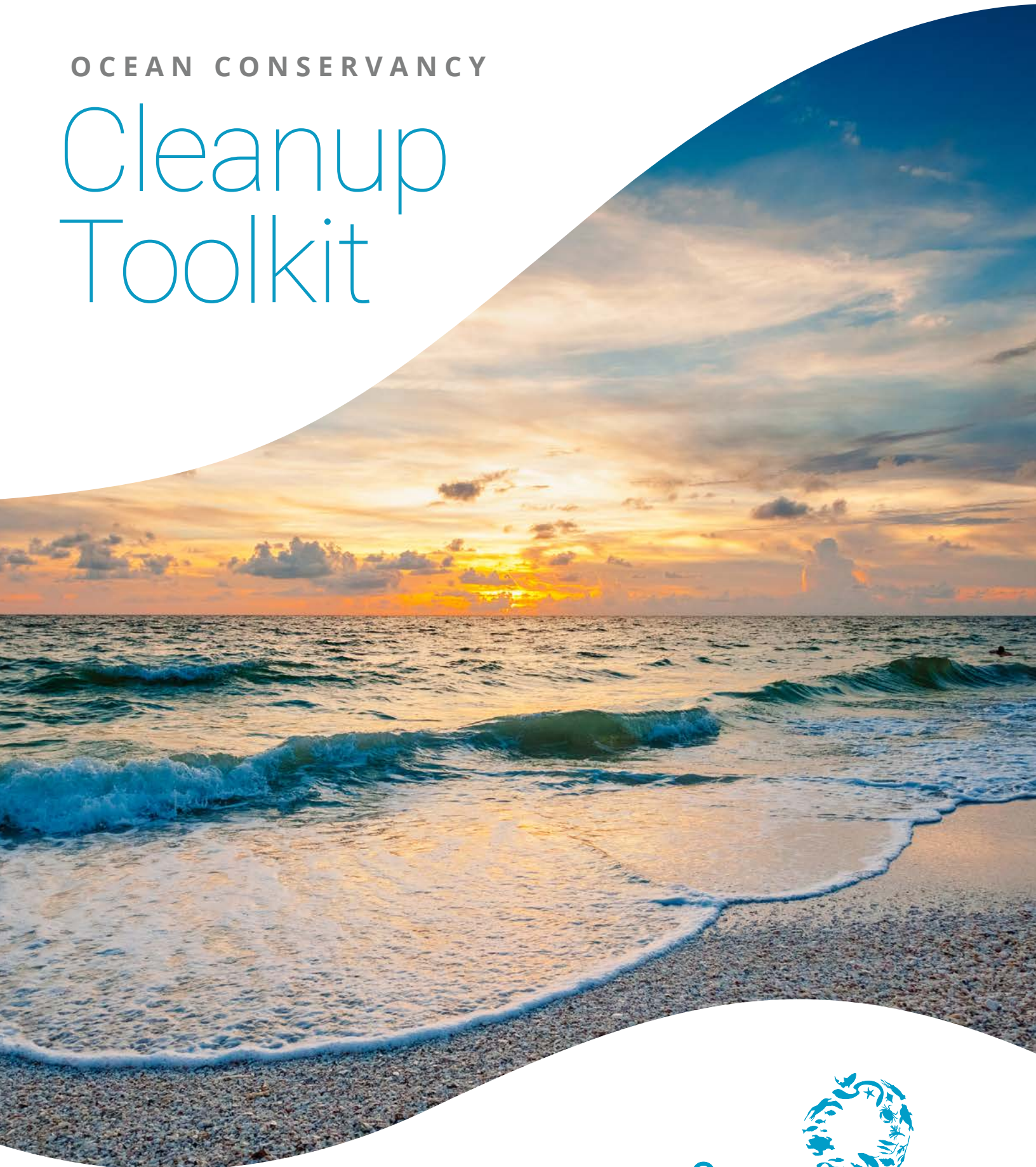


OCEAN CONSERVANCY

Cleanup Toolkit



Ocean
Conservancy®



more than

17

million
volunteers
have collected

340+
million
pounds of trash

Every year during Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup®, hundreds of thousands of volunteers comb lakes, rivers and beaches around the world for trash. Volunteers have collected information on 265 million marine debris items.

If you're not able to participate in the International Coastal Cleanup®, you can consider hosting a cleanup of your own at any time. This toolkit will help guide you through the process.



Before
the Cleanup



4-6 WEEKS
OUT

Pick a Location

Identify beaches or waterways in your area that could be cleaned and that are safe and accessible. Contact any local parks agencies that oversee the cleanup location to make sure you have the necessary permission to be there. Come up with a plan for how you will properly dispose of the trash and recyclables you collect at your cleanup to ensure items are not placed in overflowing bins.

Some additional questions to keep in mind when selecting a cleanup location:

- Would this location be safe for your group of volunteers to collect trash?
- Is the location accessible for all types of volunteers?
- Is there parking if needed?
- Are restroom facilities nearby and open to the public?
- Are there any safety hazards to be aware of?
- What is upstream and downstream of this location?
- What should be done to prevent harming the environment while conducting a cleanup in this spot?

Visit the site in advance of the cleanup date to determine:

- Where to set up a check-in station
- Where to leave bags of trash and recyclables
- What areas volunteers will clean



4 WEEKS
OUT

Contact Your Crew

Encourage others in the community to get involved and help organize the cleanup. Create a calendar invite with family and friends or a Facebook event so interested volunteers can RSVP and you can easily communicate with attendees. Spread the word through email and social media.

Meet ahead of time with other dedicated volunteers to plan the event and assign roles. Depending on your event, you might want to pre-assign a couple people to help with early set-up, checking in volunteers as they arrive, taking photos during the event and helping with take-down. In your outreach, make sure to mention Ocean Conservancy's data collection app, [Clean Swell](#), so that interested volunteers can download it before arriving at the cleanup.

Sample Event Description

"[We/I] strongly believe that no matter where we live, our ocean and waterways support and improve our lives. Today, plastic has been found in 62% of all seabirds and in 100% of sea turtle species. That's why we're partnering with Ocean Conservancy to help keep our ocean and waterways clean, and we'd like you to join us! **[Your Group]** is hosting a cleanup at **[Location]** on **[Date and Time]**, where we can all get together and work toward a common goal. Download the easy-to-use data collection app [Clean Swell](#) onto your phone in advance of the event. Information collected during our cleanup will contribute to a global database that gives insight into this ever-growing problem while also helping inspire real solutions. Hope to see you there!"



4 WEEKS
OUT

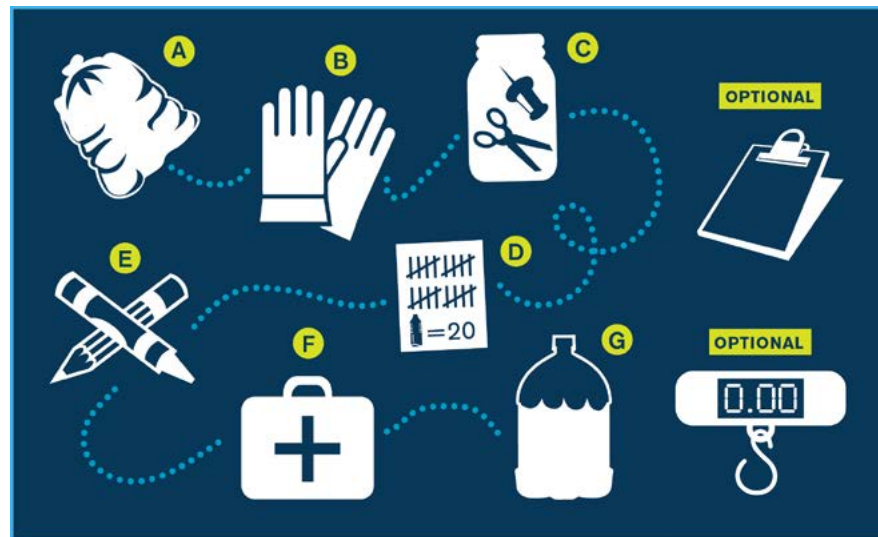
Promote Your Cleanup

Gather the materials you need – press releases and talking points – to generate news stories on your event. Post the materials on your website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed and use Ocean Conservancy's [customizable flyer](#) to share all of your cleanup information. Now let the media know!



2 WEEKS
OUT

Gather Supplies



Determine what kinds of supplies you will need, such as:

- Work gloves for volunteers
 - You can ask volunteers to bring a pair of gloves. If you are looking to provide them for volunteers, we often purchase the reusable “dipped” work gloves as they work well for grabbing even the little trash. Here are examples of what we order in the United States from [Lowes](#) and [Home Depot](#). Check for similar resources in your area. The best part: You can wash and reuse them at your next cleanup.
- Water cooler with enough water to keep your volunteers properly hydrated, especially in warm temperatures. Encourage volunteers to bring their own reusable bottle to fill up.
- First-aid kit for minor cuts and scrapes
- Depending on weather, sunscreen and bug spray may be needed
- Trash bags (or request your volunteers bring reusable containers, like buckets)
 - We recommend looking for creative, reusable options. Ask your local coffee shop for used bean bags, or a nearby brewery for grain bags.

- If plastic trash bags are needed, we recommend purchasing 2-3 per volunteer. Very large bags can become unwieldy, so we usually get 13 gallon size bags. Drawstrings are helpful for tying and weighing full bags.
- Sign-in sheet to record the number of participants and enable you to contact them later with thanks and photos. The park agency or organization that manages the location may have a waiver that your volunteers need to sign too.
- Pens or pencils
- Information on [how to download Clean Swell](#) or [how to use the Volunteer Data Card](#)
- Hand sanitizer or wipes are nice to have available for your volunteers after the cleanup
- Scale
 - If you have a fish or luggage scale (a scale with a hook), you can use it to weigh full trash bags. If you are expecting a good amount of trash or very heavy bags, an electronic shipping scale could also work but make sure it has batteries and a flat surface to sit on.

A note on weighing trash: Depending on your cleanup location, you may need to ensure proper waste disposal by coordinating or hiring a waste management company to deliver a bin or roll-away dumpster on your event date. If you go this route, they should be able to provide a total weight of the bin/dumpster after the event as well as the weight of the empty bin. Then you can easily obtain your total weight of trash collected by subtracting the empty dumpster weight from the overall weight they report back to you. If this option is available to you, you can then skip weighing all the individual bags during your event.

Keep These Safety Tips in Mind

Review what to do in case of a health emergency (heat exhaustion or heatstroke, broken bone, etc.) and find out whether any of your volunteers have medical training or know basic first aid. Plan ahead for handling sharp items, such as syringes or pieces of broken glass. We recommend disposing of these items in a widemouth container with a tight screw lid, such as an empty liquid laundry detergent bottle that you have clearly labeled. Only adult volunteers should handle sharp items.

Find out how to contact your local authorities in case you encounter any dead, entangled or injured wildlife (in the United States we contact our local Fish and Wildlife Office at www.fws.gov). You can report these finds on your [Volunteer Data Card](#) or on the comments section in the Clean Swell app, but be sure to leave any wildlife handling to the experts.



2

WEEKS OUT

Plan Ahead to Reduce Event Waste

Food

Providing a meal at your cleanup can be tricky when you're trying to reduce waste! Use these tips to cut down on packaging, single-use plastics, and food waste.

- Provide healthy snacks, such as fruit, that don't require packaging.
- Serve easy to eat food. Finger food—sandwiches and veggies/chips & dip—can be eaten without cutlery.
- Ask volunteers to bring lunch with them, or make it a potluck.
- If you host events regularly, it may be best to purchase inexpensive, reusable plates and silverware that you wash in between events.

- If ordering from a restaurant for a meal, make sure to speak with them beforehand about your choice
- If some items must be wrapped, unwrap them in advance, to reduce to risk of light-weight packaging blowing away in the wind at your cleanup location.
- Donate any leftover food to a local soup kitchen (locate one beforehand and communicate about what they can accept) or suggest that volunteers bring food home with them to eat later.

Water

Volunteers must have water at cleanups, but it doesn't have to be from a disposable bottle. Avoid single-use:

- Provide a container of water at the event and encourage volunteers to bring reusable water bottles. Make sure to pack reusable or compostable cups as well for those without.
- Purchase, borrow, or rent reusable water solutions to avoid using single-use plastic water bottles.

Supplies

Learn how to find reusable, sustainable material solutions.

- Rather than single-use gloves, purchase reusable gardening gloves to use over and over for cleanups. Wash them in a regular laundry machine in between cleanups (let them air dry if they have rubber on them). Or you can always ask volunteers to bring their own reusable gardening gloves.
- Save paper by using the Clean Swell app! You'll also save time and money by eliminating the need to mail the [Volunteer Data Cards](#) to Ocean Conservancy. That said, if you prefer the paper route, Volunteer Data Cards can be scanned and emailed to Cleanup@oceanconservancy.org after your event to avoid postage.

Transportation

Reduce the impact from transportation to the event with recommendations to volunteers.

- Suggest that volunteers walk, bike, use public transport, or carpool to the event.

Deposit Bins

Well-sorted waste is the key to success.

Make sure to label bins with explanations of what items can go where. Tape signs to bins for "Compost," "Recycling," and "Landfill." You can sort the debris you collect and the waste generated during the event. This is a great educational moment for volunteers!

- **Recycle:** Be aware of what items your local recycling facility accepts and be sure to sort any items collected or used during the event to be recycled. This may include plastic, metal, or glass items.
- **Compost:** Perhaps a volunteer has a compost bin at home or your municipality has a compost system in place. Collect organic materials such as food scraps and paper in this bin.
- **Landfill:** All other items that cannot be recycled or composted.
- **Potentially hazardous materials:** Check with your local municipality to see what can be done with batteries, electronics, tires and even paint.



During
the Cleanup

Arrive early to set up, post signs, and label your trash drop-off site. At your check-in station, ensure you have pens, pencils and sign-in sheets ready for your volunteers.

What to Tell Your Volunteers

Instruct volunteers on what to do if they encounter any hazardous items, such as sharp objects or dead, entangled, or injured animals. Remind them of any local safety hazards, such as power lines or poison ivy.

Tell volunteers what to do with the filled bags of trash, and set a meeting time for the end of the cleanup so that everyone returns at the same time. Children should always have adult supervision.

Emphasize the importance of **data collection**. Make sure each cleanup team has a designated data recorder with [Clean Swell](#) downloaded on their device so they can keep track of the items being collected by the group. Make sure your volunteers know this valuable information is used to create a snapshot of the global ocean trash problem and it informs upstream solutions!

- Make data collection easier by suggesting that volunteers work in small teams that can have one designated data recorder with the Clean Swell app or a paper data card.
- Provide your volunteers with a **group name** to be entered in the Clean Swell app – this makes it easy to look up your group totals later. This could be your event title, your organization or group name, or even different team names within your event, to track a friendly data-collection-competition!
- It is easier to collect data as items are picked up, rather than sorting and tallying everything at the end of your event. We instruct volunteers to simply name what they are putting in their collection bag. The team data recorder can follow along, listen, and tap on those items on the app or data card.

Document the Cleanup

Take before/after photos of the cleanup site as well as shots of your volunteers in action and a final group picture with all of the trash collected. Clean Swell has a photo capture tool that allows volunteers to take photos during their cleanup, which are automatically submitted to Ocean Conservancy and saved on the user's phone camera reel.

As the volunteers finish, remind them to review the information they entered into [Clean Swell](#), such as number of participants, and then make sure they click "Finish my Cleanup" on the app. Collect all completed paper [Volunteer Data Cards](#) and sum them onto one grand total card.

Get a Total Weight

There are a few options for measuring or calculating an estimate of the total weight of trash removed at your cleanup event. The easiest and most accurate option is described on page 5, utilizing a waste management service to obtain a total weight of a roll-off bin or dumpster and subtracting the empty bin/dumpster weight to get the trash weight.

If that is not an option, the next best route is to use a scale to weigh each bag of trash. We recommend consolidating as many partially-full bags into fewer, fuller trash bags as possible. You can reuse those empty bags at your next event! If using a flat luggage or shipping scale, make sure it has a solid, level surface to rest on and is tested beforehand with a known weight.

Finally, if you don't have access to a scale, you can use the ICC standard average of 2 lbs./1 kg for each filled small or grocery-sized bag, 7 lbs/3.5 kg for each medium or kitchen trash bag and 15 lbs./7 kg for each large, dumpster-sized trash bag to estimate the overall weight of your collected trash.

Ensure all trash is properly disposed of and that no materials are left behind as you leave the cleanup.



After
the Cleanup

Share Your Results

After volunteers submit their data on [Clean Swell](#), encourage them to share their accomplishments via the social media share options right in the app. If your volunteers used paper [Volunteer Data Cards](#), please scan and send the summary card to the International Coastal Cleanup team at cleanup@oceanconservancy.org.

It is a good idea to survey your cleanup team post-event. Encourage everyone to share experiences, stories and pictures about what they saw. This might encourage others to attend future events—and now is the time to start planning. Let them know about your next cleanup; get volunteers onboard while their enthusiasm is high!

Provide Data to Ocean Conservancy

Ocean Conservancy can help combine all data associated with your cleanup so you can see the total impact and how your team contributed to a cleaner ocean! Reach out to our email here if your group used the Clean Swell app and you would like to obtain those data and summary reports from Ocean Conservancy's online, open-access database.

If you have any questions, or would like to share photos or highlights, feel free to reach out to Ocean Conservancy:

- **Email:** Cleanup@oceanconservancy.org
- **Mail:** Ocean Conservancy
Attn: International Coastal Cleanup
1300 19th St NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20036

Say Thanks!

Send out an email or social media post saying, “Look what we did!” Include how many friends, family and community members joined in, and the total weight of trash that was collected. Celebrate your accomplishment as a cleanup organizer and ocean advocate. **Thank you!**



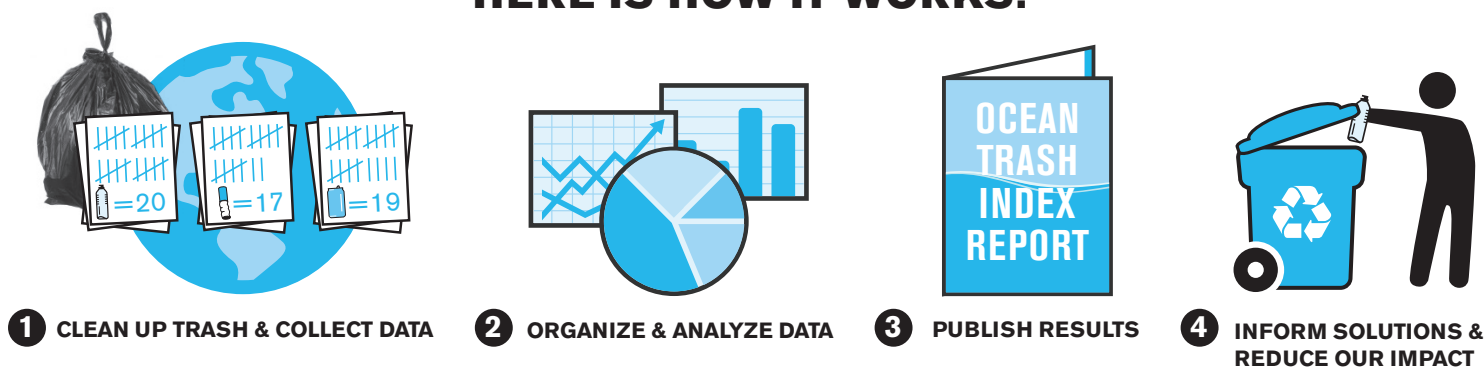
VOLUNTEER

OCEAN TRASH DATA FORM



Ocean and waterway trash ranks as one of the most serious pollution problems choking our planet. Far more than an eyesore, a rising tide of marine debris threatens human health, wildlife, communities and economies around the world. The ocean faces many challenges, but trash should not be one of them. Ocean trash is entirely preventable, and data you collect are part of the solution. The International Coastal Cleanup is the world's largest volunteer effort on behalf of ocean and waterway health.

HERE IS HOW IT WORKS:



NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

CLEANUP SITE DESCRIPTION

Type of Environment (choose one):

- ☐ Saltwater (Ocean/Bay/Estuary)
- ☐ Freshwater (River/Stream/Lake)
- ☐ Inland (No Water Body Present)

Mode of Data Collection (choose one):

- ☐ Land (beach, shoreline or inland)
- ☐ Underwater
- ☐ Watercraft (powerboat, sailboat, kayak or canoe)

SITE INFORMATION:

Cleanup Site Name:	<input type="text"/>		
State or Province:	<input type="text"/>	Zone or County:	<input type="text"/>
Country:	<input type="text"/>	Nearest Crossroad or Landmark:	<input type="text"/>

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS WORKING ON THIS CARD:

adults

children
(under 12)

MOST UNUSUAL ITEM COLLECTED:

DATE OF CLEANUP:

GO PAPERLESS!

Collect and record
your data on
Clean Swell!

Download the
free app on your
mobile device.



Please return this form to your area coordinator.

If you are unable to do so, please mail or email it to:

Ocean Conservancy
Attn: International Coastal Cleanup
1300 19th Street, NW, 8th Floor, Washington, DC 20036
cleanup@oceanconservancy.org

Trash Free Seas: www.oceanconservancy.org/cleanup
Be a Green Boater: www.oceanconservancy.org/goodmate
Sponsors: www.oceanconservancy.org/cleanupsponsors
Clean Swell: www.oceanconservancy.org/cleanswell



Updated 2021

TRASH COLLECTED

Citizen scientist: Pick up all trash and record all items you find below. No matter how small the items, the data you collect are important for Trash Free Seas.®

EXAMPLE:

Plastic Bags:

|||||

TOTAL #



= 8

Please DO NOT use words or check marks.
Only **numbers** are useful data.

MOST LIKELY TO FIND ITEMS:



Grocery bags (plastic): =
Other bags (plastic): =
Beverage bottles (glass): =
Beverage bottles (plastic): =
Beverage cans: =
Beverage sachets/pouches: =
Bottle caps (metal): =
Bottle caps (plastic): =
Cigarette butts: =

Cups, plates (foam): =
Cups, plates (paper): =
Cups, plates (plastic): =
Food containers (foam): =
Food containers (plastic): =
Food wrappers (candy, chips, etc.): =
Lids (plastic): =
Straws/stirrers (plastic): =
Utensils (plastic): =

FISHING & BOATING:

TOTAL #



Line, nets, traps, rope, etc.: =
Foam dock pieces: =

PACKAGING MATERIAL:

6-pack holders: =
Foam packaging: =
Other plastic bottles (oil, bleach, etc.): =
Strapping bands: =

PERSONAL HYGIENE:

TOTAL #



Condoms: =
Cotton bud sticks (swabs): =
Diapers: =
Gloves & masks (PPE): =
Syringes: =
Tampons & applicators: =

OTHER ITEMS NOT LISTED:

TOTAL #



1. =
2. =
3. =
4. =
5. =

ILLEGAL DUMPING:

TOTAL #



Appliances: =
Construction materials: =
Tires: =

OTHER ITEMS/DEBRIS:

TOTAL #



Balloons: =
Clothing: =
E-cigarettes: =
Electronic waste (phones, batteries): =
Footwear (shoes/slippers): =
Paper bags: =
Tobacco products (lighters, cigar tips, wrap): =
Toys: =
Other plastic waste: =
Other waste (metal, paper, etc.): =

TINY TRASH LESS THAN 2.5CM

TOTAL #



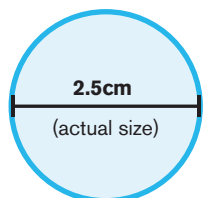
Plastic/foam pieces: =

DEAD/INJURED ANIMAL

Type of animal:

Status: dead/injured Entangled: yes/no

Type of entanglement item:



CLEANUP SUMMARY (circle units)

Number of Trash
Bags Filled:

Weight of Trash
Collected:

 lbs/kgs

Distance
Cleaned:

 miles/km

Area
Cleaned:

 miles²/km²

