



Statewide Alaska Marine Debris Removal Efforts

2025 Summary

Prepared by
Ocean Conservancy, Alaska Sea Grant and Sitka Sound Science Center in support of marine debris removal efforts around Alaska



Alaska has more than 44,000 miles of shoreline, much of which is remote, disconnected from easy transport and difficult to access



Photo Credit: Patricia Chambers

Ocean currents bring tremendous quantities of marine debris to Alaskan beaches from all over the globe, harming wildlife, local economies and threatening subsistence practices.

Addressing marine debris in Alaska presents unique challenges. Vast distances between communities, limited infrastructure, high transportation costs, and harsh weather make removing and properly disposing of debris expensive, difficult, and sometimes dangerous. As a result, rural communities, Tribes, and others are often left to manage the significant impacts and costs of a marine debris problem they did not create.

Durable partnerships among Tribes, communities, nonprofits, industry, and government agencies are essential to addressing this issue. Through collaboration, community-led initiatives, data collection, education, and sustained funding, we can work together to keep Alaska's coasts and communities healthy and free of marine debris.

Alaska has a vibrant and active marine debris community that has been engaged in organized cleanup efforts and collecting data for more than 40 years.

In recent years, the number of communities, organizations, and Tribes leading these efforts has grown substantially. This first edition of the statewide Alaska Marine Debris Summary aims to capture the remarkable collective effort that took place in 2025.

In 2025, we can document that 25 entities coordinated marine debris removal projects across Alaska in partnership with other local groups in their regions. Together, these efforts removed more than 1.5 million pounds of debris and engaged more than 1,500 participants. Participants ranged from youth to elders and included both paid workers and volunteers. The debris collected also varied widely, from microplastics, single-use plastic bottles, and polystyrene foam, to larger items such as aluminum skiffs, derelict fishing gear, and creosote-treated lumber.

Cleanup efforts ranged from single-day, community-wide events to multi-month operations in remote locations that required field camps, helicopters, and vessels. Each of these efforts play an important role in keeping Alaska's shorelines clean and healthy while raising awareness of the growing marine debris problem.



Photo Credit: Patricia Chambers

2025 Alaska Marine Debris Cleanups



1,535,947
lbs of marine debris collected

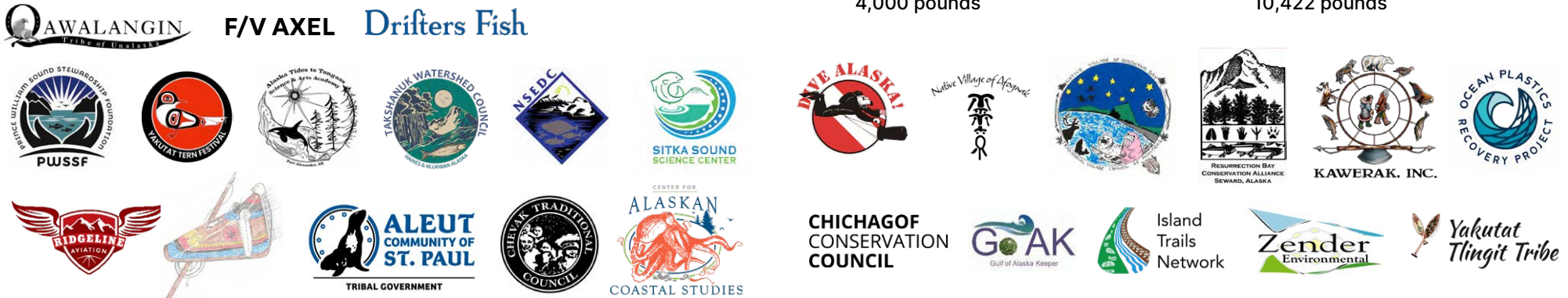
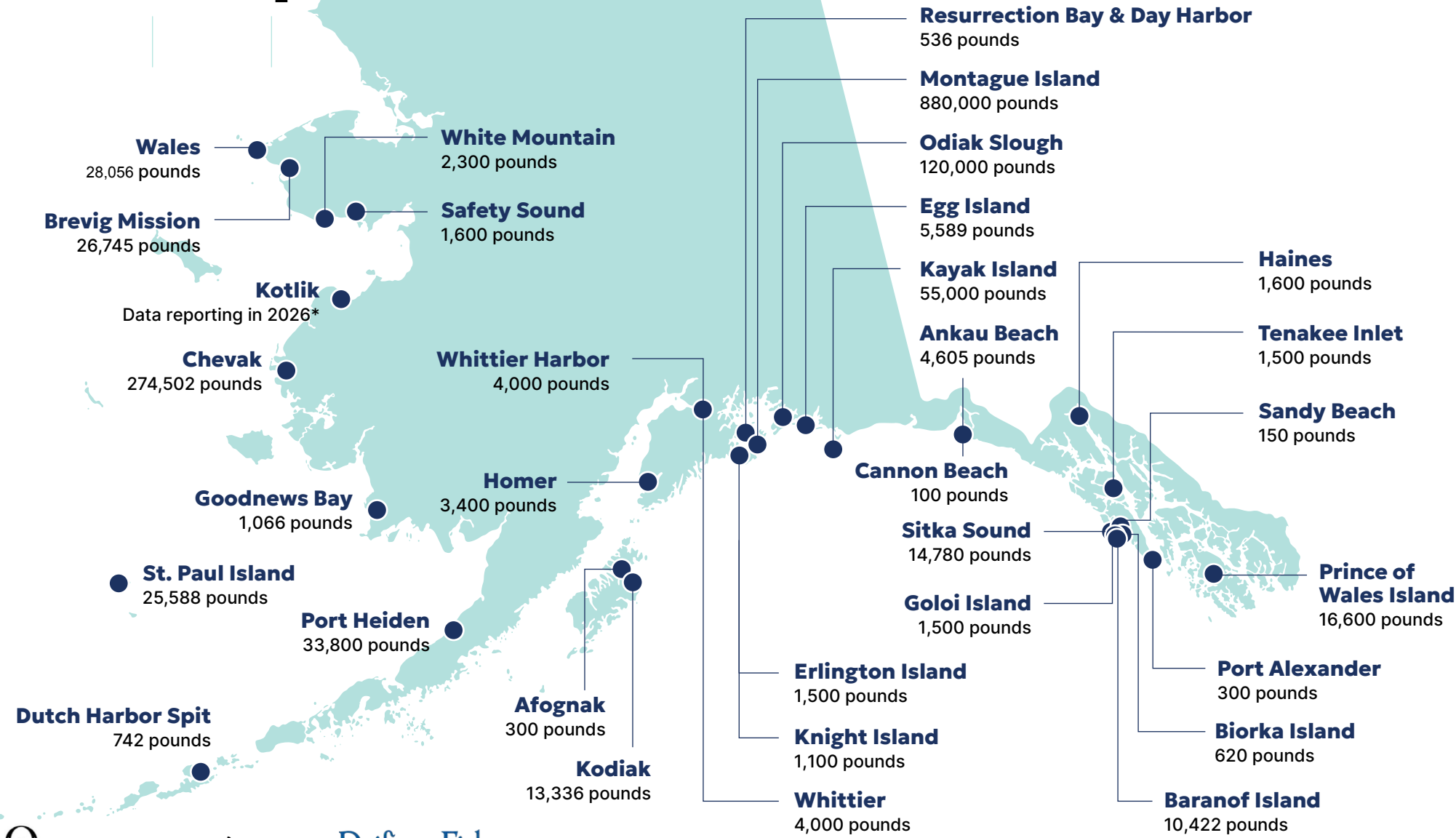


1,659
people involved



25
lead entities, with many more partners supporting

**Project completed in 2025 but sorting postponed due to Typhoon Halong.*



Partners

- Alaska Sea Grant
- Aleut Community of St. Paul Island
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Chevak Traditional Council
- Chichagof Conservation Council
- Dive Alaska
- Douglas Indian Association
- Drifters Fish
- F/V Axel
- Gulf of Alaska Keeper
- Island Trails Network
- Kawerak, Inc.
- Native Village of Afognak
- Native Village of Goodnews Bay
- Native Village of Port Heiden
- Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation
- Ocean Conservancy
- Ocean Plastics Recovery Project
- Organized Village of Kake
- Prince William Sound Stewardship Foundation
- Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska
- Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance
- Ridgeline Aviation
- Sitka Sound Science Center
- Takshanuk Watershed Council
- Tongass to Tides Science Academy
- Yakutat Tern Festival
- Yakutat Tlingit Tribe
- Zender Environmental Health and Research Group



Photo Credit: Caitlin Blaisdell
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