

PRESS RELEASE



*****For Immediate Release*****

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THOUSANDS OF BEACH SWEEPS VOLUNTEERS CLEAN NJ BEACHES AND WATERWAYS

Clean Ocean Action's Annual Fall Beach Sweeps – Saturday, October 25

Coastal New Jersey – Today, close to 3,000 volunteers hit the beaches to participate in Clean Ocean Action's 29th Annual Fall Beach Sweeps at over 70 sites from Essex County to Cape May County. Volunteers removed and catalogued each piece of debris, helping to document ongoing pollution issues. Robust crowds were reported up and down the coast.

Devoted volunteers traveled from all over New Jersey as well as New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland to participate in the Beach Sweeps this year. Many volunteers came as teams from local businesses, corporate and grassroots organizations, school and church groups, and families, all with personal ties to the Shore and some with decades of Sweeps participation.

“The marine life this past summer was spectacular—whales, dolphins, sea turtles and birds and fish—all cruised by the coast. They are extremely vulnerable to marine debris through ingestion and entanglement. Through the Beach Sweeps, volunteers are giving back to the ocean and they are also the reason why the Beach Sweeps is a success each year. For residents and visitors alike, the Beach Sweeps create a real sense of community pride in the Shore’s overall marine health,” said **Cindy Zipf, Executive Director of Clean Ocean Action**. “We urge all those who volunteer to continue the conversation in their households and their community so that we can prevent pollution at the source,” continued Zipf.

The data recorded today will be combined with data collected in the spring at the April 26th Beach Sweeps, then analyzed and presented in an annual report produced by Clean Ocean Action. The Beach Sweeps annual report identifies pollution problems and educates citizens on the quantities and types of marine debris. Legislators will receive the cumulative data and use it to implement stricter

litter bans and enforce laws to protect the marine environment. The 2013 Clean Ocean Action Beach Sweeps Annual Report can be downloaded at cleanoceanaction.org.

“Whether a first time participant or a Sweeps veteran, today’s volunteers witnessed first-hand how their lifestyle can impact the environment downstream from where they live or work,” said **Catie Tobin, Marine Science Education Coordinator**. “We can only hope that this eye-opening and empowering experience translates into changed behavior so that eventually the Beach Sweeps are no longer needed.”

Clean Ocean Action Beach Captains, lead volunteers who direct the entire group of participants at each Beach Sweeps location, are essential to the program’s success. They are the heart and soul of Beach Sweeps. These dedicated volunteers coordinate and manage all of the volunteers the day of the event, answer questions from the volunteers about ocean pollution and serve as Clean Ocean Action representatives.

"We had a diverse group of people and everyone was very willing to help out picking up trash and filling out the data cards, which are especially important," said **Oceanville Beach Captain Steve Fiedler of Go Green Galloway**.

Erin O'Neill, Marine Academy of Science and Technology Beach Sweep Student Coordinator said, "Today what you pick up is only a fraction of what is in the marine environment. The ocean accounts for 75% of the world's surface and we are only cleaning the shoreline of New Jersey today. This is a life time commitment and I'm honored to help Clean Ocean Action with this event."

Volunteers of all ages participated in the Sweeps. **Beach Captain Frank Konze, a 13-year-old Hazlet Middle School student and member of Hazlet Boy Scout Troop 137**, said, "I had volunteered with my family before for Clean Ocean Action, and wanted to be a captain to tally the findings and get a group together to help. I love being from New Jersey and helping our state."

Suzanne Forbes, Corporate Communications, Environmental Administrator of Wakefern Food Corporation (Shoprite) said, "Use reusable bags because it keeps bags of any type out of landfills and off the beaches. Our stores and facilities have been active in environmental and community initiatives for more than three decades, long before it became fashionable. We have always considered resource conservation the 'right thing to do'."

Shoprite brought over 500 reusable bags for all volunteers.

On Sandy Hook alone, Beach Sweep volunteers picked up: 268 plastic forks, spoons and knives; 2651 plastic caps and lids; 760 cigarette filters; 4137 plastic pieces; 277 plastic shopping bags; 52 pens; 2099 plastic straws; 27 syringes; and 304 tampon applicators.

In addition to logging standard debris counts for various plastics, glass and lumber items, Sweeps participants also logged the strange objects that make their way to the beach from various nonpoint sources. Some of the ridiculous items catalogued today included: fireworks; a piece of car door; an 8' by 4' piece of fiberglass from a boat; a rusty anchor; a trunk of metal tiles; a bike handle; a bag of mice; chicken bones; a lego castle; men's underwear; a bikini; and pom-poms.

With gratitude, Clean Ocean Action thanks Aveda, Bank of America, ShopRite and Kohl's for their 2014 Beach Sweeps Statewide Sponsorship. The Fall Beach Sweeps are made possible by support from many generous sponsors.

Clean Ocean Action's mission is to improve the degraded water quality of the marine waters off the New Jersey/New York coast. Clean Ocean Action will identify the sources of pollution and mount an attack on each by using research, public education and citizen action to convince public officials to enact and enforce measures which will clean up and protect the Atlantic Ocean.

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