



Trash on the beach is more than just ugly and unsanitary; it is a threat to the health of our oceans. Marine animals consume bits of plastic, leading to injury and death. Plastic bags and discarded fishing line can fatally entangle wildlife. And plastics are accumulating in the ocean at an alarming rate.

But thanks to volunteers around the world, the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup has become a beacon of hope, leading and inspiring action in support of our oceans. Save The Bay is proud to coordinate Rhode Island's contribution to the International Coastal Cleanup. Our Ocean State volunteers join others all over the world to say that the solution to trash and plastics in our waters begins with us. From simply being responsible with our trash, to participating in and leading cleanups, to calling our legislators in support of policy action on marine debris, we can all make a difference.

This report highlights the results of Rhode Island's 2023 International Coastal Cleanup and provides tips on how you can help reduce the problem of marine debris. Join us!

The 2024 International Coastal Cleanup will take place September-November 2024. Sign up at [SAVEBAY.ORG/VOLUNTEER](https://savebay.org/volunteer).

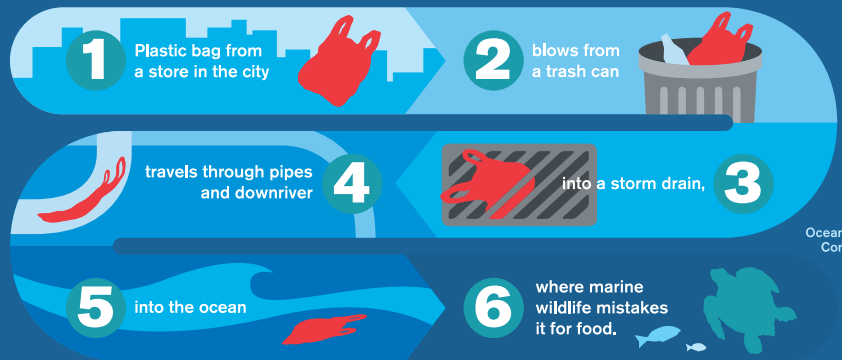
DID YOU KNOW?

Even miles from the water, litter finds a way to our Bay.

While plenty of trash is carelessly left by people on the shore, that's not the only way trash makes its way to our oceans! Beach trash also originates in our inland cities and towns, where litter left on the ground is carried to our waterways.



The Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup is the largest global volunteer effort on behalf of the ocean. Over 1 million volunteers worldwide work together to clean up beaches and shorelines in all corners of the world.



2023 RHODE ISLAND CLEANUPS


2,830 VOLUNTEERS

772



22,480
POUNDS
OF TRASH

597

351

132,912
PIECES
OF TRASH

508

602

VOLUNTEERS PER COUNTY



“After my mother passed away, we started volunteering more as a family. Volunteering with Save The Bay to lead shoreline cleanups has provided us with a special way to bond while making a positive impact on our environment.”

- Victoria Quill, Beach Captain

All data represents early results. Numbers may increase when the final international report is published in the summer. For more International Coastal Cleanup data and reports from around the world, visit COASTALCLEANUPDATA.ORG

HOW YOU CAN HELP REDUCE MARINE DEBRIS IN NARRAGANSETT BAY



CONTAIN YOUR BUTTS.

Cigarette filters are NOT biodegradable. Use a container for your butts so they don't reach waterways and the ocean.



CARRY IT OUT.

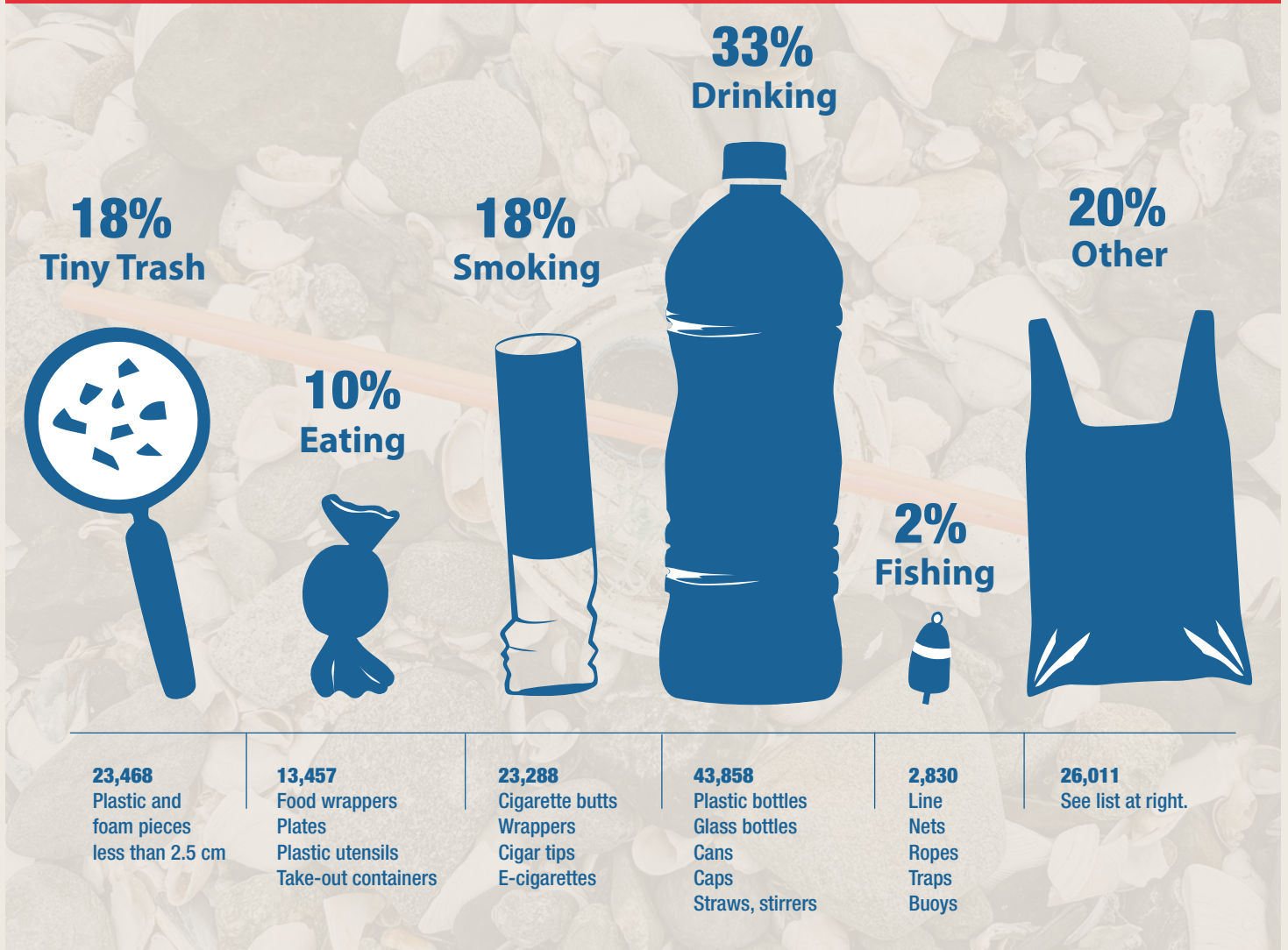
Not all public areas have trash cans. Bring an empty garbage bag and take your trash home to dispose of it there.

TOSS IT IN.

Trash tossed out on streets and sidewalks, even far from the shore, ends up in storm drains and washes into the Bay. Use trash cans.



TOP TRASH COLLECTED



FOAM FLOATS TO THE TOP!

For the first time in the history of ICC in Rhode Island, cigarette butts were NOT the number one item picked up in 2023. Plastic/foam pieces have pulled out ahead. Some of this is good news—smoking rates have decreased over time—however, disposable plastic use has increased, and the plastic that enters the Bay and ocean every year does not go away. It accumulates and breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces. These small plastic and foam bits can be seen on every beach and in every wrack line. Microplastics are found throughout the water column, in sediments, and the gills and digestive tracts of the seafood we humans eat. Visit [SAVEBAY.ORG/ISSUES](https://savebay.org/issues) to learn more about how Save The Bay is working to address the issue of plastics in our Bay.

PICK UP AFTER YOUR DOG.

Pet waste contains harmful bacteria that contaminate our waters and seafood and make humans sick.



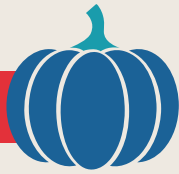
SET AN EXAMPLE.

When you go to the beach, take a trash bag with you and pick up surrounding trash you see. People are less likely to litter on a clean beach.

SHOUT IT OUT.

If you see friends and family members littering, let them know it is NOT OK to trash our Bay.

UNUSUAL ITEMS



PUMPKIN

MAGIC 8 BALL

TOILET SEAT

MINION TOY

BROOMSTICK

BAG OF POTTING SOIL



ALL TRASH ITEMS COLLECTED

Plastic/Foam Pieces	23,468	17.66%
Cigarette Butts	21,165	15.92%
Food Wrappers (candy, chips, etc.)	10,205	7.68%
Bottle Caps (plastic)	9,508	7.15%
Beverage Bottles (plastic)	8,193	6.16%
Other Plastic Waste	6,738	5.07%
Beverage Bottles (glass)	5,497	4.14%
Straws, Stirrers (plastic)	4,937	3.71%
Other Waste (metal, paper, etc.)	4,846	3.65%
Beverage Cans	4,489	3.38%
Other Bags (plastic)	3,872	2.91%
Bottle Caps (metal)	2,898	2.18%
Fishing Lines, Nets, Traps, Rope, etc.	2,830	2.13%
Cups, Plates (plastic)	2,254	1.70%
Lids (plastic)	2,107	1.59%
Grocery Bags (plastic)	2,002	1.51%
Tobacco Products (lighters, cigar tips, etc.)	1,887	1.42%
Cups, Plates (foam)	1,426	1.07%
Cups, Plates (paper)	1,425	1.07%
Foam Packaging	1,347	1.01%
Construction Materials	1,244	0.94%
Food Containers (plastic)	1,167	0.88%
Utensils (plastic)	1,084	0.82%
Beverage Sachets/Pouches	1,001	0.75%
Food Containers (foam)	1,001	0.75%
Clothing	813	0.61%
Other Plastic Bottles (oil, bleach, etc.)	646	0.49%
Paper Bags	599	0.45%
Strapping Bands	556	0.42%
Toys	550	0.41%
Tampons and Applicators	465	0.35%
Gloves and Masks (PPE)	434	0.33%
Balloons	372	0.28%
Foam Dock Pieces	302	0.23%
Syringes	294	0.22%
Condoms	267	0.20%
Footwear (shoes, slippers, etc.)	250	0.19%
E-cigarettes	226	0.17%
Diapers	162	0.12%
6-Pack Holders	123	0.09%
Cotton Swabs	85	0.06%
Tires	75	0.06%
Electronic Waste (phones, batteries)	69	0.05%
Appliances (refrigerators, washers, etc.)	23	0.02%
Other Tobacco (packaging, etc.)*	10	0.01%
Total Pieces of Trash	132,912	

“During a public cleanup at Providence’s Public Street right-of-way in October, six enthusiastic, determined volunteers braved wind, cold temperatures and rain to clean the entire area in just 45 minutes! They made a huge difference and had a good time. It is amazing to see the spirit and passion of our volunteers!” ~ Michelle Vitale

VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

The success of Rhode Island's beach cleanup efforts depends on their generosity of time and love for our environment. Thank you to all our volunteers and volunteer Beach Captains who lead dozens of other participants at each cleanup location!

"As part of my Covid lockdown mental wellness routine, I walked many miles of Rhode Island's incredible shoreline. It didn't take very long to see the scope of damage done in the form of plastic and other consumer waste. I thought, 'Wouldn't it be so cool to get a group of people together and make a tiny dent in this mess?' What DID take too long was realizing this is what Save The Bay has been doing for many years, so I was super excited to become a Beach Captain and take part in this year's ICC. There's something truly wonderful about a group of like-minded people getting together to do something good like this, and I'm totally on board for taking part in more cleanups next year!"

- Michael Schlaker



"Save The Bay is a fin-tastic organization! The satisfaction of seeing the community come together, get excited about caring for our planet and our waterways is inspirational. I love watching volunteers compete to see who has the heaviest bag or the most unique find. We make the work fun and do good at the same time!"

*- Rhode Island State Mermaid
Jessie Jewels*

GET INVOLVED.

BE A BEACH CAPTAIN: Learn how to organize a cleanup in your community. Visit [SAVEBAY.ORG/VOLUNTEER](https://savebay.org/volunteer) or email volunteer@savebay.org for the dates and times of upcoming Beach Captain trainings.

VOLUNTEER FOR A CLEANUP: Save The Bay holds beach cleanups from April through November. Bring your family, a group of friends, or just yourself — and remember, we can accommodate team sign-ups, too!

➤ Sign up at [SAVEBAY.ORG/VOLUNTEER](https://savebay.org/volunteer)

USE THE CLEAN SWELL APP: Lead your own small cleanup on your favorite shoreline spot anytime! Download the Clean Swell app, take a bag with you to the beach, record the litter you pick up in the app, and take the trash home with you when you leave. The app tracks your efforts, and you can even share your results on social media! Your data becomes part of the Ocean Conservancy's global ocean trash database! [OCEANCONSERVANCY.ORG/CLEANSWELL](https://oceanconservancy.org/cleanswell)



PARTNERSHIPS MAKE IT POSSIBLE

Our generous partner organizations and sponsors host cleanups, organize teams of volunteers, provide supplies, and more. Thank you to all our partners for making this year's International Coastal Cleanup a success!



PARTNER ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT: NARRAGANSETT BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE (NBNERR)

NBNERR's mission is to preserve, protect and restore coastal and estuarine ecosystems of Narragansett Bay through long-term research, education and training. NBNERR's reserve includes 4,453 acres of terrestrial and submerged land on Prudence, Patience, Hope and Dyer islands. In 2022 and 2023, Save The Bay partnered with NBNERR to hold volunteer cleanups on Prudence, Patience and Dyer Island, using our landing craft, the Rosemary Quinn to transport volunteers and remove years of accumulated trash. We worked closely with them to organize the cleanups, and establish a procedure for cleanups and trash disposal for the future. Over the course of two years, this valuable partnership led to the removal of 3,123 pounds of trash from these islands!

"The RI Turnpike and Bridge Foundation is glad to support the needs of vital organizations like Save The Bay. Their efforts—including organizing our International Coastal Cleanup effort—and mission are worthy of support."

*- Stephen C. Waluk,
Chairman of the Board*



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