

SAVE THE BAY®

NARRAGANSETT BAY

It's Not Okay to Trash the Bay

2024 INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP / RHODE ISLAND REPORT & CALL TO ACTION



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 2024 International Coastal Cleanup and provides tips on how you can help reduce the problem of marine debris. Join us!

The 2025 International Coastal Cleanup will take place September-November 2025. Sign up at 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.



2024 RHODE ISLAND CLEANUPS

2,733 VOLUNTEERS

21,662 POUNDS OF TRASH

114,914 PIECES OF TRASH

711

170

727

347

778

VOLUNTEERS PER COUNTY

- 170 BRISTOL COUNTY
- 347 NEWPORT COUNTY
- 711 PROVIDENCE COUNTY
- 727 KENT COUNTY
- 778 WASHINGTON COUNTY



"I was totally blown away from the amount of trash we removed at one of my very first cleanups at Collier Point Park. We were able to get over 1,000 pounds of trash away from our shorelines and streets and completely transform this site. As a cleanup leader and volunteer coordinator, seeing how impactful a coastal cleanup can be has shown me how important and necessary they truly are. I can not emphasize enough how transformative these cleanups have been for myself and communities across Rhode Island."

Ly Fastner, Beach Captain

All data represents early results taken between September and November 2024. 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](https://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.

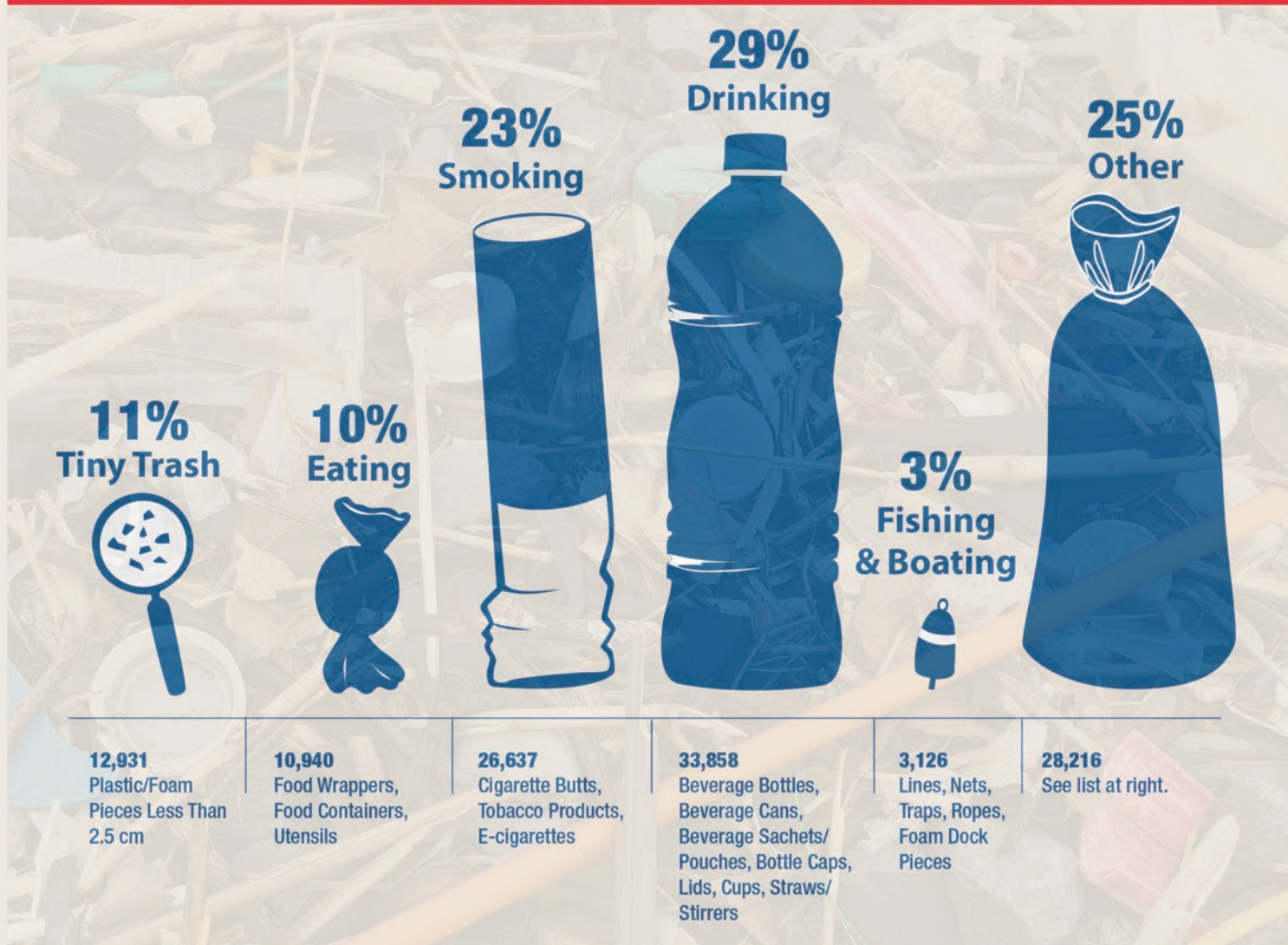
Not all public areas have trash cans. Bring an empty garbage bag and take your trash home to dispose of it there.

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



SINGLE USE FOOD & BEVERAGE WASTE REMAINS A PROBLEM

Single-use food and beverage waste continues to plague Narragansett Bay and its watershed, threatening the health of this vital ecosystem. Plastic utensils, cups, straws, and packaging often escape proper disposal, finding their way into waterways where they break down into harmful microplastics. These pollutants endanger marine life, disrupt natural habitats, and compromise water quality. Despite efforts to reduce single-use waste, its persistence highlights the urgent need for sustainable alternatives, robust waste management systems, and community-wide action to protect the Bay's delicate balance. Visit [SAVEBAY.ORG/ISSUES](https://www.savebay.org/issues) to learn more about how Save The Bay is working to address the issue of single-use containers 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



AIR PODS



BED FRAME



DOOR

ELECTRIC SCOOTER



PAINT ROLLER



NO SWIMMING SIGN

REALTY SIGN

TV



ALL TRASH ITEMS COLLECTED

Cigarette Butts	24,920	21.69%
Plastic/Foam Pieces	12,931	11.25%
Other Waste (metal, paper, etc.)	8,199	7.13%
Food Wrappers (candy, chips, etc.)	8,036	6.99%
Beverage Bottles (plastic)	6,539	5.69%
Other Plastic Waste	6,399	5.57%
Bottle Caps (plastic)	6,251	5.44%
Beverage Bottles (glass)	4,599	4.00%
Beverage Cans	4,476	3.90%
Other Bags (plastic)	3,205	2.79%
Straws/Stirrers (plastic)	3,155	2.75%
Bottle Caps (metal)	2,728	2.37%
Fishing Lines, Nets, Traps, Ropes, etc.	2,521	2.19%
Grocery Bags (plastic)	1,589	1.38%
Cups, Plates (plastic)	1,576	1.37%
Lids (plastic)	1,551	1.35%
Construction Materials	1,469	1.28%
Tobacco Products (lighters, cigar tips, wrap)	1,443	1.26%
Food Containers (plastic)	1,143	0.99%
Cups, Plates (foam)	1,116	0.97%
Foam Packaging	1,085	0.94%
Clothing	1,079	0.94%
Cups, Plates (paper)	1,073	0.93%
Food Containers (foam)	889	0.77%
Utensils (plastic)	872	0.76%
Strapping Bands	675	0.59%
Beverage Sachets/Pouches	674	0.59%
Foam Dock Pieces	605	0.53%
Gloves & Masks (PPE)	563	0.49%
Paper Bags	548	0.48%
Toys	484	0.42%
Other Plastic Bottles (oil, bleach, etc.)	464	0.40%
Balloons	307	0.27%
E-cigarettes	274	0.24%
Footwear (shoes/slippers)	260	0.23%
Tampons & Applicators	225	0.20%
Syringes	199	0.17%
Cotton Bud Sticks (swabs)	158	0.14%
Diapers	146	0.13%
Electronic Waste (phones, batteries)	132	0.11%
6-Pack Holders	120	0.10%
Condoms	111	0.10%
Tires	98	0.09%
Appliances (refrigerators, washers, etc.)	27	0.02%

Total Pieces of Trash

114,914

VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

The success of Rhode Island's beach cleanup efforts depends on volunteers 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!

"On a personal note, I had the most extraordinary experience in October at the cleanup on Prudence Island. From meeting Bruce and Ly, to taking the STB boat over, to stepping foot for the first time on the island and joining the coolest, most eclectic group of volunteers, what an awesome day!"

Michelle Vitale, Beach Captain



"Every volunteer who came to help clean up vowed to pass on the importance of keeping the beaches clean and educating their friends to do the same. Clearly for the smokers out there, do they realize that cigarette butts are litter?"

Salli Frattini, Beach Captain

GET INVOLVED.

BE A BEACH CAPTAIN: Learn how to organize a cleanup in your community. Visit 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

SIGN UP FOR OUR ALERTS: Stay informed and learn about policies that can help address marine debris in our Bay and watershed.

➤ Learn more at savebay.org/advocacy



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!

➤ Learn more at 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: AAA NORTHEAST

There are many great companies who donate to support the ICC, and many who volunteer. But there's only one who donates, volunteers, and provides us with an incredible beach captain like Michelle Vitale too! When AAA first started organizing cleanups with us for their team members, they realized that having a beach captain cleanup leader on staff could enable them to organize even more. Michelle Vitale stepped up and trained as a Save The Bay leader, quickly becoming one of our most amazing, reliable leaders! Michelle led 12 cleanups with Save The Bay in 2024, enabling 361 volunteers from AAA and the general public to clean up 2,573 pounds of trash from the shores!



EVENT SPONSORS:

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Nucar Rhode Island
Pods Swimming
REXEL Energy Solutions
Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Foundation
Sunflower Design
Water Scents

Your organization can get involved, too! If your organization holds cleanups and you'd like to contribute to Rhode Island's International Coastal Cleanup effort, we can help you get started!

Learn more at
savebay.org/icc

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