



# 2015

## South Africa - International Coastal Cleanup

Northern, Western and Eastern Cape Provinces



Plastics | SA



# SOUTH AFRICA - INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP

## Northern, Western and Eastern Cape



CLEAN-UP AT MOSSEL BAY.

The 19<sup>th</sup> International Coastal Cleanup was held in the same year that the second African Summit on Marine Debris was held in South Africa and the establishment of the South African Network on Marine Debris started its long arduous journey. Marine Debris is gradually receiving more attention on the African continent, but we still have a long way to go.

1996 Saw the first ICC cleanup in South Africa in the province of Kwazulu Natal and in the following year, the other three coastal provinces in South Africa followed suit. In 1997 850 volunteers participated in the 3 Cape Provinces.

The total number of volunteers that participated in the 2014 cleanups was 13 072 (3078 at audited clean-ups and 9994 at non-audited clean-ups). The good weather and tide conditions this year, saw these numbers soar! Even more than in the past, clean-ups took place in areas with none or little area cleansing done by local authorities.



NAVY CLEANUP AT SALDANHA.

# 2015 International Coastal Cleanup: Northern, Western and Eastern Cape Provinces of South Africa

After the International Coastal Cleanup, the reports and data provide an assessment of the scale of debris pollution affecting the South African aquatic environment. A positive outcome of the 2015 cleanup is the use of site data in creating awareness and educating as well as pro-actively reacting to addressing the material of concern within that specific area.

For instance, Whale Coast Conservation in the Overberg is confronting the issue of cigarette butts by the placement of receptacles to capture the discarded material and to make it socially unacceptable to discard the material. Nationally, data from 2015 cleanups indicates that cigarette butts are the second most prolific item collected. Shark Conservancy, in the same area, is focusing on material that originates from the local Abalone farming industry and is focusing their extension work within this industry to ensure better stewardship of the material such as cable ties etc.

## Northern Cape

*Audited cleanups = 474*

*Non-audited cleanups = 288*

**Total: 762**

## Western Cape

*Audited Cleanup = 2 538*

*Non-audited cleanups = 6 876*

**Total: 9 414**

## Eastern Cape

*Audited Cleanups = 1 481*

*Non-audited cleanups = 4 484*

**Total: 5 965**

**Total  
volunteers**

**16 141**



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Statistics obtained from conceivably the largest citizen scientist program in South Africa is providing a sound view of the state of marine debris in South Africa. 19 Years of data provides a historical look at the change in debris over the short, medium and long term as well as confirmation that the situation is not improving (with a few variances).

This data is also supported by the seventh survey of South African beach macro and meso-litter which was conducted from June to August 2015 by Profs. Peter Ryan and Colleen Moloney. Beaches were sampled from south of the Olifants River on the border between the Northern and Western Capes to Cape Vidal in northern KwaZulu-Natal - in total 38 beaches in the Western Cape, 26 in the Eastern Cape and 18 in KwaZulu-Natal.

In their survey plastic accounted for the vast majority of litter in both size classes: 93.8% of macro-litter and 98.7% of meso-litter. Among macro litter, plastic packaging and one-use applications were the most abundant type of identifiable litter, accounting for 84.1% of the total, followed by fishery and shipping wastes (5.5%), other plastic user items (3.2%), cigarette butts (2.8%) and glass (1.4%), with other non-plastic litter types each contributing less than 1% of the total number of large litter items. Industrial pellets remained the most prolific meso-litter items (53.9%), but their concentration was greatest in accumulation sites (Woody Cape at the east end of Algoa Bay and Olifantsbos in the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve), indicating that the majority of pellets at these sites were 'legacy' pollutants from Port Elizabeth and Cape Town respectively.

Cleanups have allowed for greater awareness and monitoring of the problem. Thanks to the ongoing commitment of organisations such as Ocean Conservancy, The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Plastics|SA and the Department of Environmental Affairs, who have added their weight behind ensuring that more people in Africa and specifically Southern Africa, are familiar with the issue of marine debris.

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Some interesting observations via the data collected:

- Baby diapers, although not at alarming numbers yet, are growing in numbers at both river and beach cleanups.
- Inhalers are now found at more and more beach cleanups and are not just restricted to the Metropole cleanups.
- There was an increase in the number of candy and chips wrappers/packaging collected during this year's cleanup. This was reported by monthly clean-ups.

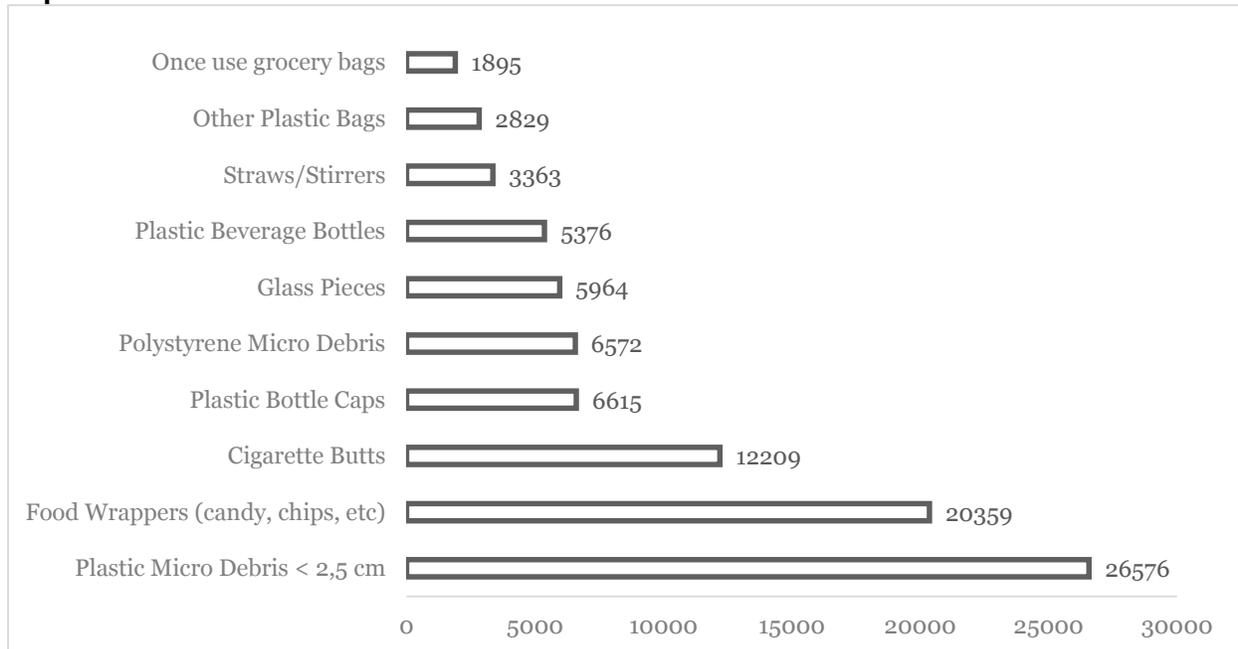
**109 160 Items** were collected via the audited cleanups.

### People, Kilograms and Kilometers

Land Cleanups	
Number of people	<b>11 648 Non-audited cleanups and 4 493 audited cleanups. Total: 16 141</b>
Weight of debris cleaned	<b>&gt;5, 3 Tons*</b>
Distance cleaned	<b>&gt;77 Km*</b>
Number of bags filled	<b>1 292*</b>
Underwater Cleanups	
Number of people	<b>65*</b>
Weight of debris cleaned	<b>170 Kg*</b>
Distance cleaned	<b>1000 Meters*</b>
Number of bags filled	<b>26*</b>

*\*Does not include non-audited cleanup data.*

### Top ten items collected in 2015



## Sponsors

Without the commitment of our partners listed below, these initiatives would not have been possible. In a tough economy, where companies find themselves having to rethink supporting projects such as these, it

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was great to see that not only did they continue with their support but also increased their support in some cases.

- **Pick 'n Pay**
- **Kelpak**
- **Brand SA**
- **Tuffy Manufacturing**
- **Department of Environmental Affairs, Branch Oceans and Coasts**
- **Packaging SA**
- **Plastics|SA Sustainability Council – PETCO (PET Recycling Company), POLYCO (Polyolefin Recycling Company, SAVA (SA Vinyls Association) and PSPC (Polystyrene Packaging Council of SA)**
- **National Recycling Forum members - the Glass Recycling Company, ROSE Foundation, Collect-a-Can, Paper Recycling Association of SA, TetraPak**

## CONCLUSION

Monthly cleanups by volunteer groups have become part of the landscape of volunteering in South Africa and it is motivating to see this energy ensuring cleaner urban areas where debris can become an eyesore if left to local authorities.

In 2016, we will be holding our 20<sup>th</sup> International Coastal Cleanup. On the one hand, it is sad to celebrate it but the sustainability of the event shows just how important it has become in addressing and counteracting the problem.

**Thanks to each and every volunteer for caring and giving up your valuable time to make our seas a cleaner and safer environment for all.**



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Plastic pollution has now become a global concern as plastic debris has reached every ocean of the world with adverse effects on marine organisms, human livelihoods and the economy.

By understanding what is out there, we can work together on finding long-term solutions to the problem of marine debris - not only along our own coastline, but the entire African coast. To this end, Plastics|SA will continue to strengthen the excellent work done through the South African Network on Marine Debris and as a signatory of the Global Declaration of the Plastics Associations for Solutions on Marine Litter.

Sustainability is one of six core functions of Plastics|SA, providing leadership to the industry on sustainability issues, thus we are involved in a number of clean-up and recycling initiatives. Last year, Plastics|SA set the pace for the recovery, recycling and diversion of plastics from the country's landfill sites with its aspirational vision named *Zero Plastics to Landfill by 2030*.

According to Plastics|SA's most recent recycling survey, plastic diverted from landfill increased by 12.8% from 2013. Thanks to the 280,000 tons of plastics that were collected and recycled last year, 47,000 South Africans found an informal form of income and employment.

**Plastics SA is committed to achieving this aspirational vision.**