



Mississippi Coastal Cleanup

Since 1988, thousands of volunteers have gathered each fall to remove millions of pounds of trash from Mississippi's coastline, waterways, and barrier islands. Additionally, these volunteers help collect data that are used to categorize the major sources of marine debris entering the coastal environment.

Mississippi Coastal Cleanup is a partnership between the Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force. It is a part of the International Coastal Cleanup and is one of the largest volunteer efforts in all of Mississippi.

The 2017 **Mississippi Coastal Cleanup** was held November 18, and volunteers covered over **200 miles** of Mississippi's coastline, waterways, and barrier islands. During the cleanup event, **1,763 volunteers** picked up **1,336 bags** of trash. The weight of trash collected was an astonishing **26,178 pounds**—that's **13 tons** of marine litter!

A detailed summary of the trash items collected during the 2017 cleanup is shown in Table 1. Plastic was the most common material collected—more than 77 percent of all pieces collected were plastic. Some

of the commonly found trash items included cigarette butts, plastic bottles, straws, and food wrappers. These materials can be extremely harmful to wildlife on land, in the air, or in the water. During this year's cleanup, a live bird was found entangled in discarded fishing line. The Wildlife Care and Rescue Center was notified and ensured the bird was released safely.

The **2018 Mississippi Coastal Cleanup** will be held **October 20**. Additionally, the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup program will be leading a July 5 beach cleanup. **Please visit mscoastalcleanup.org if you're interested in volunteering, sponsoring, or learning more about cleaning up our coast!** Also, be sure to check out our *Citizen's Guide to Protecting the Mississippi Gulf Coast from Marine Debris* publication to learn more about local marine debris issues and how to prevent them.



The **Mississippi Coastal Cleanup** would not be possible without the support of our sponsors. We would like to thank Chevron Pascagoula Refinery | Team Waste | The Shed Barbeque & Blues Joint | Mississippi Department of Marine Resources | Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality | NOAA | Ocean Conservancy | Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant | USM Foundation | WLOX News | WXXV 25 | Biloxi Shuckers | Port of Gulfport | The Nature Conservancy | Domino's | Ship Island Excursions | Smoothie King | and Hotel & Restaurant Supply.

Table 1. Marine debris collected during the 2017 Mississippi Coastal Cleanup.

CLEANUP SUMMARY

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| Number of trash bags filled | 1,336 |
| Weight of trash collected (pounds) | 26,178 |
| Distance cleaned (miles) | 200 |
| Number of volunteers | 1,763 |

COMMONLY FOUND ITEMS

TOTAL #

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Cigarette butts | 48,155 |
| Food wrappers | 12,384 |
| Take-out containers (plastic) | 2,625 |
| Take-out containers (foam) | 3,369 |
| Bottle caps (plastic) | 10,573 |
| Bottle caps (metal) | 4,095 |
| Lids (plastic) | 5,468 |
| Straws/stirrers | 5,212 |
| Forks, knives, and spoons | 1,398 |

COMMONLY FOUND ITEMS

TOTAL #

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Beverage bottles (plastic) | 19,412 |
| Beverage bottles (glass) | 5,989 |
| Beverage cans | 6,526 |
| Grocery bags (plastic) | 5,171 |
| Other plastic bags | 6,790 |
| Paper bags | 3,284 |
| Cups and plates (paper) | 2,945 |
| Cups and plates (plastic) | 3,120 |
| Cups and plates (foam) | 4,285 |

PACKAGING MATERIALS

TOTAL #

| | |
|---|-------|
| 6-pack holders | 316 |
| Strapping bands | 938 |
| Tobacco packaging/wrap | 2,773 |
| Other plastic/foam packaging | 6,399 |
| Other plastic bottles (oil, bleach, etc.) | 3,921 |

PERSONAL HYGIENE

TOTAL #

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Condoms | 329 |
| Diapers | 118 |
| Syringes | 205 |
| Tampons/tampon applicators | 179 |

FISHING GEAR

TOTAL #

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Fishing buoys, pots, and traps | 460 |
| Fishing net and pieces | 1,124 |
| Fishing line (1 yard = 1 piece) | 4,405 |
| Rope (1 yard = 1 piece) | 2,110 |

OTHER TRASH

TOTAL #

| | |
|---|-------|
| Appliances (refrigerators, washers, etc.) | 312 |
| Balloons | 620 |
| Cigar tips | 3,552 |
| Cigarette lighters | 777 |
| Construction materials | 4,318 |
| Fireworks | 2,012 |
| Tires | 611 |

TINY TRASH

TOTAL #

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| Foam pieces | 22,662 |
| Glass pieces | 13,130 |
| Plastic pieces | 32,688 |



Publication 3188 (02-18)
MASGP-18-004

By Eric Sparks, PhD, Assistant Extension Professor, Coastal Research and Extension Center; Amanda Sartain, Extension Program Assistant, Coastal Research and Extension Center; and Beth Baker, PhD, Assistant Extension Professor, Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture.

Copyright 2018 by Mississippi State University. All rights reserved. This publication may be copied and distributed without alteration for nonprofit educational purposes provided that credit is given to the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

Produced by Agricultural Communications.

We are an equal opportunity employer, and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. GARY B. JACKSON, Director