



The Trash Bag

Volunteers Working for Litter-Free Beaches

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The Pacific isn't the only ocean collecting plastic trash

A swirling 'soup' of tiny pieces of plastic has been found in the Atlantic Ocean, and something similar may be present in other ocean areas as well.

By Kristen Chick

The Christian Science Monitor/ June 18, 2009 edition

When Sylvia Earle began diving in 1952, the ocean was pristine. These days, things are different.

"For the past 30 years I have never been on a dive anytime, anywhere, from the surface to 2-1/2 miles deep, without seeing a piece of trash," says the renowned oceanographer and former chief scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "There's life from the surface to the greatest depths – and there's also trash from the surface to the greatest depths."

Dr. Earle's experience illustrates the rising tide of plastic accumulating in the world's oceans.

And while the Pacific Ocean has garnered much attention for what some call the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch" – a vast expanse of floating plastic deposited in the middle of the ocean by circulating currents – the problem doesn't stop there.

New research shows that plastic has collected in a region of the Atlantic as well, held hostage by converging currents, called gyres, to form a swirling "plastic soup." And those fragments of plastic could also be present at

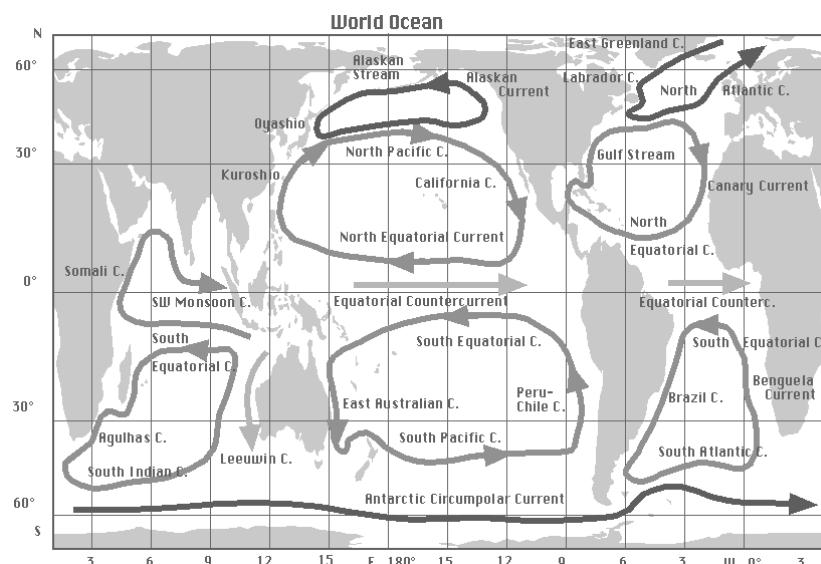


Diagram courtesy of Algalita Marine Research Foundation

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the other three large gyres in the world's oceans, says Kara Lavender Law, a member of the oceanography faculty at the Sea Education Association (SEA) in Woods Hole, Mass., which conducted the study.

But don't call this region the garbage patch of the Atlantic. Law, who has sailed through the plastic accumulation in the Pacific gyre as well, says the term "plastic soup" is more accurate for both areas. "There's no large patch, no solid mass of material," she says.

Marcus Eriksen, director of education at Algalita Marine Research Foundation in Long Beach, Calif., agrees. The idea of a garbage "patch" or "island" twice the size of Texas, a favorite term in the media for the now-infamous spot in the Pacific, feeds misconceptions, he says. "It's much worse. If it were an island, we could go get it. But we can't," because it's a "thin soup of plastic fragments."

The plastic floating in the ocean comes mostly from land. Dumping plastic at sea has been prohibited by an international convention since 1988, but about 80 percent of the plastic in the ocean flows from rivers, is washed out from storm drains or sewage overflows, or is blown out to sea from shore by the wind.

According to the UN Environment Program, the world produces 225 million tons of plastic every year.

Law says that analyses of the density of the plastics picked up in SEA's research show that much of it potentially comes from consumer items made of polyethylene and polypropylene plastics, which includes plastic shopping bags, milk jugs, detergent bottles, and other items "common in our everyday lives."

Those post-consumer products eventually break down into small pieces – most of the fragments caught in SEA's plankton nets are about the size of

a pencil eraser. Fish, birds, and sea mammals can mistake those tiny pieces for food and eat them. Fish and birds caught in regions with high plastic concentrations have been found to have numerous bits of plastic in their stomachs.

One of the puzzling aspects of SEA's study is that it does not show an increase in concentration of plastics during the 22 years of sampling.

"That's one of the main questions we're trying to answer with the data set," says Law. "I believe the evidence shows there has to be more going into the ocean. The question is, why don't we see an increase in this region where we collect."

It's possible that the plastics have broken down into such small pieces that they pass through the plankton nets, she says, or that bacteria or organisms growing on the pieces could cause them to sink. And some of the trash could escape to other areas of the ocean on wayward currents.

When it comes to stemming the tide of plastic waste, there is no easy answer. Most experts agree that cleaning up the tiny pieces already swirling in ocean currents thousands of miles from land is impossible. Instead, the focus should be on prevention.

Law says that education is key. It's important to raise awareness of what happens to the plastic that millions of people throw away every day. "There's a perception that if you put it in a recycle bin, it will end up being recycled, but it's not clear that's always the case."



Ossabaw Island Cleanup

By Philip Grainey

Our cleanup on Ossabaw's north end last month brought a record number of fifty volunteers to a Clean Coast event and a giant haul of over 1500lb of marine debris!

Weather conditions were near perfect as our large group met at Delegal Creek Marina in the Landings. Fortunately, we had a great response from our skippers and fielded 7 boats for the event. Three boats were provided by Tybee Light Power Squadron members – Dennis & Lisa Cusanelli, Kevin & Elke Quinn and Ron Lynch. Rob Littman brought his big Grady White again, newcomers Steve & Dilys Patterson met us at Isle of Hope in their brand new boat and Julie & Jerry McLean drove the Whaler generously loaned to us by Joe Powers. Sincere thanks to all these fine guys & gals for their major contributions to our event.

Our flotilla swept out of Delegal Creek, through Hell Gate and across Ossabaw Sound to anchor in Bradley Creek, where we set up base camp and our volunteers spread out to cover the beach and marshes.

At Bradley Point we surprised a five foot Gator which quickly avoided us and moved off into the adjoining marsh – an unusual sight on a beach!

Our haul included another misplaced navigation buoy which we added to our growing collection at the Landings Dumpster!

High-Fives to Cindy Stevens and Theresa Wiegand who did a fine job feeding the ‘five thousand’.

Another great day out on the water, another skiff-full of dangerous and unsightly debris put in its proper place, another fifty folks enjoying the pristine beauty of our fabulous barrier islands, another day in the annals of Clean Coast!

(Opposite page) Alligator sunning itself on the beach on Ossabaw Island.

Photo by Kelly Whaley.

**Special Thanks to
Forrest Dixon for Replacing Clean Coast's
Dilapidated Beach Canopy.**

To our Ossabaw Cleanup Boat Captains:

Dennis & Lisa Cusanelli
Rob Littman
Ron Lynch
Julie & Jerry McLean
Steve & Dilys Patterson
Kevin & Elke Quinn

To our Food Captains:

Cindy Stevens & Theresa Wiegand

And to Joe Powers for the Loan of His Boston Whaler.

Clean Coast can earn a donation every time you search the Internet and shop online!!!

GoodSearch & GoodShop



Search the web with Yahoo-powered GoodSearch.com and they'll donate about a penny to your cause each time you search!

Shop at more than 600 GoodShop.com merchants including Amazon, Best Buy, Toys R Us, and others, and a percentage of each purchase will go to your cause!

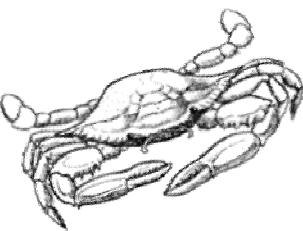


Photos of Ossabaw Cleanup by Kelly Whaley.

Clean Coast Charters

Did you know that you can now hire the Clean Coast skiff for a half day excursion to Little Tybee or Wassaw Islands? The price is \$170 round trip for a maximum of six passengers. All proceeds go to Clean Coast. Prices vary for other destinations—call for details.

For more information and to book a trip contact Phil Grainey at philipgrainey@cleancoast.org or 912-961-6190.



HOGANS' MARINA IS CRABBING FOR A CLEAN COAST

AUGUST 15TH

Entry Fee \$45 per Boat

1st – 2nd – 3rd Place Prizes

**To Be Given to the Boat with the
Highest Total Weight of a Dozen Crabs
&**

**The Largest Crab from Point to Point
(One Crab Entry per Boat)**

Weigh-in 2:00 p.m.

Registration Ends 7:00 a.m. August 15th

RAFFLES – FOOD – LOTS OF FUN

All Proceeds Will Go To Clean Coast.

For More Information or Entry Form

Come by Hogans' Marina

Or Call 912-897-3474



International Coastal Cleanup

By Karen Grainey

September 19th is the date of the 24th Annual International Coastal Cleanup. Clean Coast will be participating by cleaning up the beach on the north end of Wassaw Island and recording what we find on data cards which we will send to the Ocean Conservancy,

Thousands of people in 104 countries will be doing the same thing. The Ocean Conservancy will analyze and publish this data from around the world so that policy makers will know where the trash is coming from.

Here are a few highlights from the 2008 event:

Top 10 Marine Debris Items

Rank	Debris Item	Number of Debris Item	% of Total Debris Items
1	Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters	3,216,991	29%
2	Bags (Plastic)	1,377,141	12%
3	Food Wrappers/Containers	942,620	8%
4	Caps, Lids	937,804	8%
5	Beverage Bottles (Plastic)	714,892	6%
6	Bags (Paper)	530,607	5%
7	Straws, Stirrers	509,593	4%
8	Cups, Plates, Forks, Knives, Spoons	441,053	4%
9	Beverage Bottles (Glass)	434,990	4%
10	Beverage Cans	401,412	4%
	Top 10 Total	9,507,103	83%
	Total Debris Items Worldwide	11,439,086	100%

Sources of Marine Debris

Medical/Personal Hygiene: 1%

Ocean/Waterway Activities: 5%

Shoreline & Recreational Activities: 61%

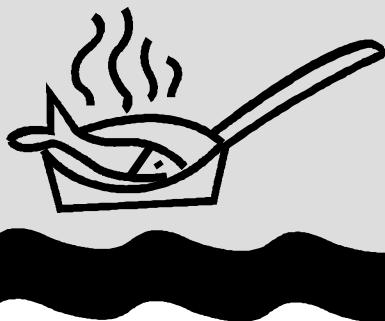
Smoking-related Activities: 31%

Dumping Activities: 2%

Total Marine Wildlife Found Entangled in Marine Debris : 443

Source: Ocean Conservancy/ 2008 International Coastal Cleanup—<http://www.oceanconservancy.org/pdf/>

Autumn Fish Fry



Saturday, September 26
from 3 p.m. to 7p.m

Landings Harbor Marina Park

General Public Welcome!

Fried Fish Plate with Slaw, Roll,
Dessert and Beverage \$15

Kids 9 and Under \$3

LIVE MUSIC • COUNTRY GAMES
• SILENT AUCTION

Bring the Family!
Reservations Required
Call 912-961-6190
Or

Send email to mailbox@cleancoast.org

Proceeds Benefit Clean Coast.

Sponsored by Savannah Area
Applebees Restaurants

Upcoming Cleanup on Wassaw Island

By Karen Grainey

You may have noticed that though our cleanups are typically on Saturdays, the August 16th cleanup is on a Sunday. This is to accommodate the Caretta Research Project (CRP) folks who have offered to assist.

CRP is one of the longest running marine turtle monitoring projects in the United States. Founded in 1972 as a cooperative effort involving the Wassaw Island Trust, the Savannah Science Museum, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, its primary purpose is to monitor loggerhead sea turtle nesting on Wassaw Island and to protect the nests and hatchlings.

From May through September, volunteers pay \$650 to spend a week on the island helping project biologists Kris Williams and Mike Frick patrol the beach each night looking for nesting females or emerging hatchlings.

Lucky for us, the CRP uses all-terrain vehicles to patrol the seven mile long island, and on August 16th will use these vehicles to transport Clean Coast volunteers and to haul full trash bags back to the skiff. Marine debris is harmful to sea turtles, so the CRP is just as interested as we are in cleaning up the trash on the beach.

This trip will leave from Delegal Marina at 9 a.m. and we will meet the CRP volunteers on the south end beach for what promises to be a very productive morning.



Loggerhead Turtle Facts

- Loggerheads are air-breathing reptiles, scientific name *Caretta caretta*.
- The common name refers to the turtle's large head and blunt jaws.
- Loggerheads are the most common sea turtles in Georgia.
- Their food consists of mollusks, crabs fish and other marine animals.
- They have been on Earth for millions of years.
- Adults grow to an average weight of 200 pounds.
- Hatchlings are two inches long.
- Nesting occurs from May through August. Hatching may extend through October.
- Females will nest from 1 to seven times within a nesting season at 14 day intervals.
- The nest cavity is 18 - 22 inches in depth.
- Each nest contains about 100 to 126 eggs.
- Incubation period of the eggs in their sandy nest is 55 - 60 days.
- Status: On list of threatened species since 1978.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Use this form to become a member or to renew your membership.
Please indicate category of membership :

Student or Senior Citizen (\$15) _____

Individual (\$25) _____ Family (\$35) _____

Special Categories:

Sustaining (\$100) _____ Patron (\$500) _____

Life (\$1000) _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE

Home: _____ Work: _____

Fax: _____ Cell or Pager: _____

Email: _____

BEST TIME TO CONTACT: _____ a.m. _____ p.m.

DO YOU OWN A BOAT SUITABLE FOR OUR TRIPS? _____

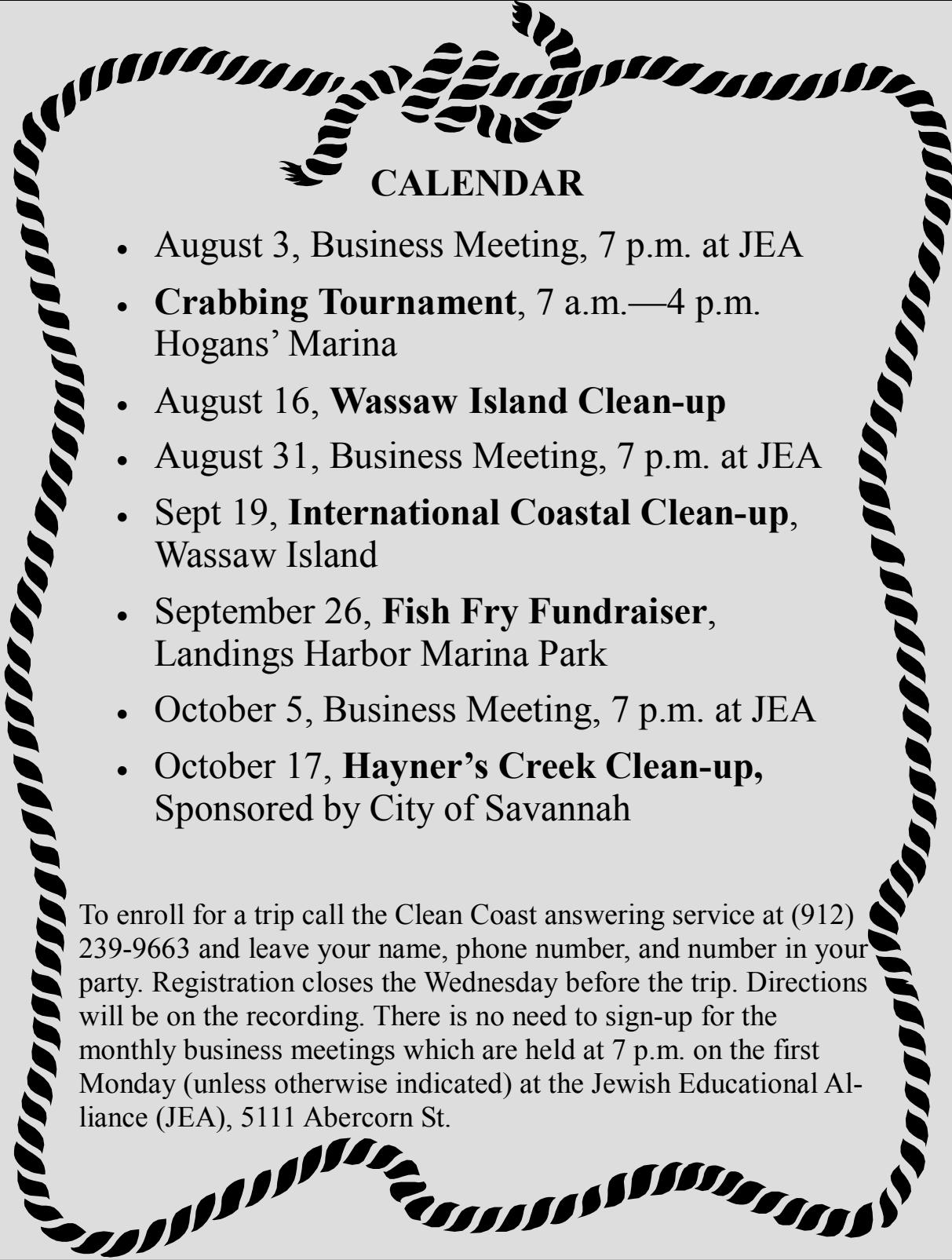
IF YES, HOW MANY CAN IT CARRY? _____

HOW MANY LIFEJACKETS ARE ABOARD? _____

Dues and contributions to Clean Coast are tax-deductible. Make checks payable to Clean Coast, Inc., add our IRS No. 58-1984908 to the check, and mail it to Membership Chairman , 216 E 58th St., Savannah Ga 31405-3436. ≈ CC

Threats include loss or degradation of nesting habitat from coastal development and beach armoring; disorientation of hatchlings by beachfront lighting; excessive nest predation by native and non-native predators; degradation of foraging habitat; marine pollution and debris; watercraft strikes; disease; and incidental take from channel dredging and commercial trawling, longline, and gill net fisheries. There is particular concern about the extensive incidental take of juvenile loggerheads in the eastern Atlantic by longline fishing vessels from several countries.

Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, <http://www.fws.gov/northflorida/SeaTurtles/Turtle%20Factsheets/Loggerhead-Sea-Turtle.htm>



CALENDAR

- August 3, Business Meeting, 7 p.m. at JEA
- **Crabbing Tournament**, 7 a.m.—4 p.m.
Hogans' Marina
- August 16, **Wassaw Island Clean-up**
- August 31, Business Meeting, 7 p.m. at JEA
- Sept 19, **International Coastal Clean-up**,
Wassaw Island
- September 26, **Fish Fry Fundraiser**,
Landings Harbor Marina Park
- October 5, Business Meeting, 7 p.m. at JEA
- October 17, **Hayner's Creek Clean-up**,
Sponsored by City of Savannah

To enroll for a trip call the Clean Coast answering service at (912) 239-9663 and leave your name, phone number, and number in your party. Registration closes the Wednesday before the trip. Directions will be on the recording. There is no need to sign-up for the monthly business meetings which are held at 7 p.m. on the first Monday (unless otherwise indicated) at the Jewish Educational Alliance (JEA), 5111 Abercorn St.

Officers and Board Members 2009/10

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