

Personal protective equipment and single-use food packaging litter found more frequently on shorelines in Canada

Report by Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup identifies top 'Dirty Dozen' litter categories

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Single-use food and beverage items, personal protective equipment (PPE) and cigarette butts are among the most common types of litter found on Canadian shorelines, according to the 2021 Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup's 'Dirty Dozen' list. The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, one of the largest direct action conservation programs in Canada, today released its 'Dirty Dozen' list along with its 2021 Impact Report.



Proportion of litter found by Shoreline Cleanup volunteers in 2021

Each year the program releases its 'Dirty Dozen' list, using citizen science data collected from shoreline cleanups across the country to determine the 12 most frequently found items. This year, for the first time in the shoreline cleanup's history, PPE was added as a category to volunteer data cards. Volunteers picked up 11,450 PPE items, mostly face masks, from shorelines as part of the 2021 cleanup.

“

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Laura Hardman, Director of Plastics, Ocean Wise

“For the first time in 28 years of shoreline cleanups personal protective equipment, or PPE, was included as a category on volunteer-reporting cards, having been

reported regularly as the top find without a category in 2020. And indeed, PPE ended up making its way onto the 'Dirty Dozen' list,” said Laura Hardman, Director of Ocean Wise’s plastic initiative. “This serves as a powerful reminder that our actions have direct consequences for our

environment. The best way to stop the threat of pollution to our ocean is to prevent our waste from getting there in the first place.”

“We all have a role to play in ending plastic pollution,” says the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

“Through the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, Canadians are coming together to remove litter from our communities and collect important data that helps the Government of Canada take informed decisions to reduce plastic pollution. Local initiatives like this are critical in moving Canada towards a zero plastic waste future.”



Single-use food and beverage items—including food wrappers, beverage cans, bottle caps, plastic bottles, coffee cups and straws— are the largest offenders, up 5 per cent from last year’s cleanup. This follows a 12 per cent increase from 2019 to 2020. The Government of Canada’s proposed ban on harmful single use plastics and commitment to reduce plastic pollution and move toward a circular plastics economy offers hope to reverse this rising trend.

The 2021 Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup saw 19,508 participants complete 1,998 cleanups across the country. Volunteers covered 2,219 km of Canadian freshwater and marine shoreline, including 237 new cleanup sites. In total, participants hauled in 31,522 kilograms of trash.

“Our goal is to inspire Canadians to join us in stopping plastics from entering our oceans and restoring our shorelines one cleanup at a time,” said Lasse Gustavsson, President and CEO of Ocean Wise. “Thanks to the efforts of thousands of volunteers, our shorelines are cleaner, and we have valuable data from citizen scientists to help us keep our ocean clean, healthy and flourishing.”

“Wildlife depend on healthy ecosystems and too often litter and other pollutants cause harm,” says Megan Leslie, WWF-Canada’s president and CEO. “By cleaning shorelines, volunteers are keeping those hazards out of important freshwater and marine habitats and playing an important role in helping nature thrive.”

Since its start in 1994, the shoreline cleanup has had a total of 972,000 participants and is aiming to reach its one millionth volunteer this year. Register for 2022’s Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup today at ShorelineCleanup.org.

[Visit here to read Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup's 2021 impact report.](#)

[Visit here for images of the 2021 Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup.](#)

[Visit here for social media assets from the impact report.](#)

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup®

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, presented by Loblaw Companies Limited and Coca-Cola Ltd., is one of the largest direct-action conservation programs in Canada. A conservation partnership by Ocean Wise and WWF-Canada, Shoreline Cleanup aims to promote understanding of shoreline litter issues by engaging Canadians to rehabilitate shoreline areas through cleanups.

Ocean Wise®

Ocean Wise is a globally focused conservation organization on a mission to protect and restore the world's oceans. Through research, education, direct-action conservation and field projects, we empower communities to take action for ocean health. We're focused on tackling three major ocean challenges: overfishing, ocean pollution and climate change. Ocean Wise is headquartered in Vancouver, British Columbia with staff and initiatives across Canada. ocean.org

WWF-Canada

WWF-Canada is committed to equitable and effective conservation actions that restore nature, reverse wildlife loss and fight climate change. We draw on scientific analysis and Indigenous guidance to ensure all our efforts connect to a single goal: a future where wildlife, nature and people thrive. For more information visit wwf.ca.

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