

PH tops participation in intl coastal cleanups

0

BY JOSEPH SENGA ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2018 GREEN BUSINESS

The Philippines ranked first among the Top 25 countries that participated in international coastal cleanup activities around the globe, according to the Ocean Conservancy 2018 Report.

Over 200,000 volunteers from the country joined the International Coastal Cleanup in 2017 gathering more than 230,000 kilograms of trash from beaches and waterways or equivalent to over 1,200 kilometers.

In 2017, environmental group Haribon Foundation collected at least 83 sacks of Styrofoam waste and 85 sacks of rubber and cloth waste (shoes, slippers and bags) and 57 sacks of plastic waste (utensils, straws, plastic bags, wrappers, diapers and bottles).

Almost 5 million pieces of tiny trash were collected from the world's oceans in 2017. Globally, cigarette butts remain to top the world's coastal trash, increasing in number from 1.8 million pieces in 2016 to over 2.4 million in 2017.

On the average, cigarette butts take at least 10 years to rot while plastic products will need five centuries to a thousand years to decompose.

In the Philippines, nearly 1 million food wrappers were found in shorelines last year making it the most common coastal trash in the country today. Other items in the list were plastic grocery bags, straws, stirrers and takeaway containers.

"Larger items tend to break into smaller pieces called microplastics until they become small enough for many wildlife to mistake them for food," Haribon Foundation said.

According to the foundation, bits of plastics are commonly mistaken for food which kills turtles, birds and fish.

"It is with great concern that many of the fish that we now eat also contain plastic and the toxins that accumulate with them," Haribon said.

Many of the smaller wastes are either thrown out to the shores or end up into the sewer drains on the streets, which lead to different bodies of water.

Join a city coastal cleanup

This National Cleanup Month, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) invites organizations and individuals to join thousands of volunteers in the International Coastal Cleanup weekend this Saturday from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Five congregation sites around Metro Manila include SM by the Bay in Pasay City, the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Eco-Tourism Area (LPPCHEA), Malabon, Navotas and Polytechnic University of the Philippines' Sta. Mesa campus.

Other environmental groups such as Haribon also organize year-round coastal clean-up drives in LPPCHEA, which is also globally esteemed as an important resting and feeding stop for almost 5,000 migratory birds.

“Through our cleanup activities, we hope to bring people closer to the waste problem at hand so that we can stem it from the source,” said Haribon.

To join Haribon's conservation activities, simply visit their Facebook page [fb.com/goharibon](https://www.facebook.com/goharibon) or e-mail partnerships@haribon.org.ph.

With reports from KITTY AMANTE-GAMBOA

<https://www.manilatimes.net/ph-tops-participation-in-intl-coastal-cleanups/440782/>