

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Tens of Thousands of Volunteers Help Pick Up Litter  
(while Marine Animals Pack their Bags)  
at 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day**

*Presented by the California Coastal Commission*

**Results with 70% of cleanup sites reporting**

*San Francisco* - Tens of thousands of Californians have turned out to take part in the 32<sup>nd</sup> California Coastal Cleanup Day, the state's largest annual volunteer event, organized by the California Coastal Commission.

They gathered hundreds of tons of trash at beaches and inland waterways, cleaning up over 900 sites in 54 of California's 58 counties, the largest collection of sites in the cleanup's history. Cleanups took place up and down the coast, from the Oregon to Mexico border and as far inland as Lake Tahoe. California's event is part of the International Coastal Cleanup organized by Ocean Conservancy.

**With 70% of the cleanup sites reporting,**

**the statewide count stands at 52,191 volunteers.**

**Those volunteers picked up 541,431 pounds of trash  
and an additional 53,156 pounds of recyclable materials,  
for a total of 594,586 pounds or 297 tons.**

"Once again Californians displayed their love for the coast today," said Coastal Commission Chair Steve Kinsey. "It's inspiring to see such enthusiasm for the annual cleanup across the state, particularly on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Coastal Act."

This year the Coastal Commission highlighted the problem of cigarette butt litter to raise awareness of the harm they pose to the environment and motivate proper disposal. Forty percent of all the debris picked up today will likely be cigarette filters, according to data from past cleanups. These filters, which are made of a form of plastic called cellulose acetate, do not biodegrade and can leach toxic chemicals, including dozens of known carcinogens, into the environment for up to ten years. No matter where a cigarette butt may be littered, it stands a good chance of ending up as debris along the coast. Up to 80 percent of the trash on the California coast originates on land and travels to the ocean through storm drains and creeks.

### **Marine Animals Pack their Bags:**

Every-day debris and plastic items weren't the only things found on Coastal Cleanup Day. Volunteers also picked up a number of "unusual" items during this year's cleanup. The Winners of the **2016 Most Unusual Item contest are:**

- **Northern California:** A backpack full of crabs found at Tunitas Creek Beach in Half Moon Bay.
- **Southern California:** A live fish in a suitcase filled with water found in San Diego County. The fish was returned to the creek to live another day.

The Coastal Commission also continued an effort, initiated during the 2010 Coastal Cleanup, to reduce the event's environmental footprint. The commission asked volunteers to bring their own reusable bag or bucket and reusable gloves to the event, rather than using the single-use disposable plastic items available at every site. In addition, reusable buckets were available at a number of cleanup sites. As a result, the commission was able to order almost 150,000 fewer trash bags over the past three years. The latest reports show that 16,851 volunteers brought at least one reusable item from home for use during this year's cleanup.

Coastal Cleanup Day could not happen without the support of public and corporate partners . Sponsors help to fund the event and often provide additional benefits. Lead sponsor Crystal Geyser Natural Alpine Spring Water donated water for volunteers, Rubio's offered all volunteers coupons for free tacos, and other long-time sponsors like Oracle provided volunteer support. Along with the 60+ non-profit and local government organizations that help organize and run the cleanups around the state, the program's strong team of partners helped make the 2016 cleanup another huge success.

Those who were unable to make it to the beach for Coastal Cleanup Day can still participate in COASTWEEKS, a three-week celebration of our coastal resources that takes place across the United States. The Coastal Commission has a calendar of COASTWEEKS events on its [website](#). To get involved with COASTWEEKS, or to find out how you can become a Coastal Steward throughout the year, please contact the Commission at (800) COAST-4U or visit our website at [www.coast4u.org](http://www.coast4u.org).

*California Coastal Cleanup Day is presented by the California Coastal Commission with lead sponsorship from Crystal Geyser Natural Alpine Spring Water by CG Roxane. Additional support comes from NOAA, CalOES, Oracle, Rubio's, Union Bank, the Whale Tail<sup>®</sup> Specialty License Plate, and See's Candies.*

*California Coastal Cleanup Day 2016 is coordinated by the California Coastal Commission, with help from the California State Parks Foundation, and the Ocean Conservancy. This event is made possible by the hard work of hundreds of local non-profits and government agencies throughout the state and tens of thousands of volunteers annually.*

*The Commission is committed to protecting and enhancing California's coast and ocean for present and future generations. It does so through careful planning and regulation of environmentally-sustainable development, strong public participation, education, and effective intergovernmental coordination. The Coastal Cleanup Day Program is part of its effort to raise public awareness of marine and coastal resources and promote coastal stewardship.*

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