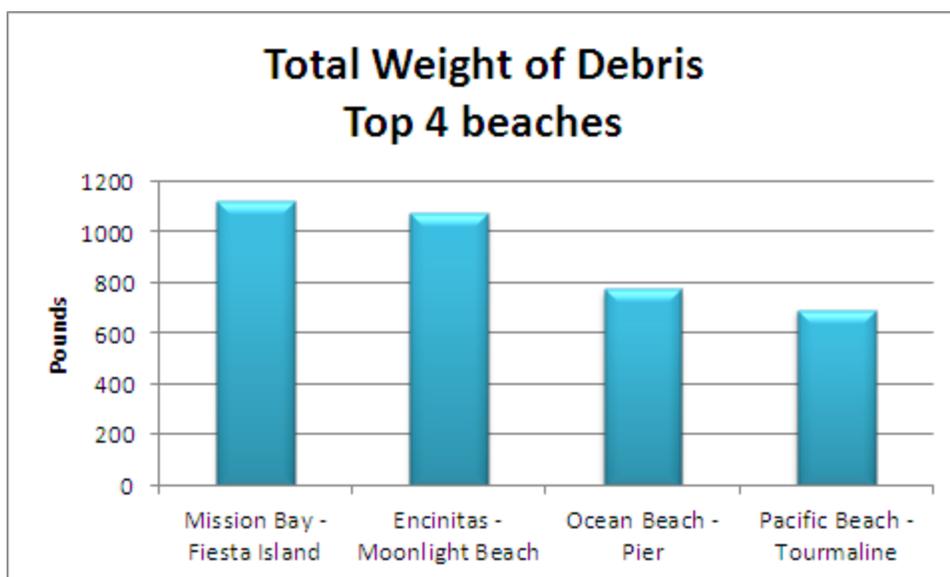




San Diego County Beach Cleanup Data Report 2014

San Diego Coastkeeper and the Surfrider Foundation San Diego County Chapter partner each year to conduct a series of public beach cleanups, averaging four per month, in order to address the issue of trash in our oceans and on our beaches. In addition to these cleanups, both organizations also host special cleanup events, and empower individual volunteers to host their own. These events combined have led to the removal of over 62,500 pounds of trash from our beaches and waterways since 2007. In 2014, the program grew in many ways, including increases in volunteerism, total weight of trash removed, and the total item count. This year 7,013 volunteers removed 207,804 items of trash, weighing 10,455 pounds total, from along the coastline. In 2013, 6,489 volunteers removed 9,544 pounds of trash. While we applaud the increase in volunteers, we are still troubled by the amount of debris being collected.

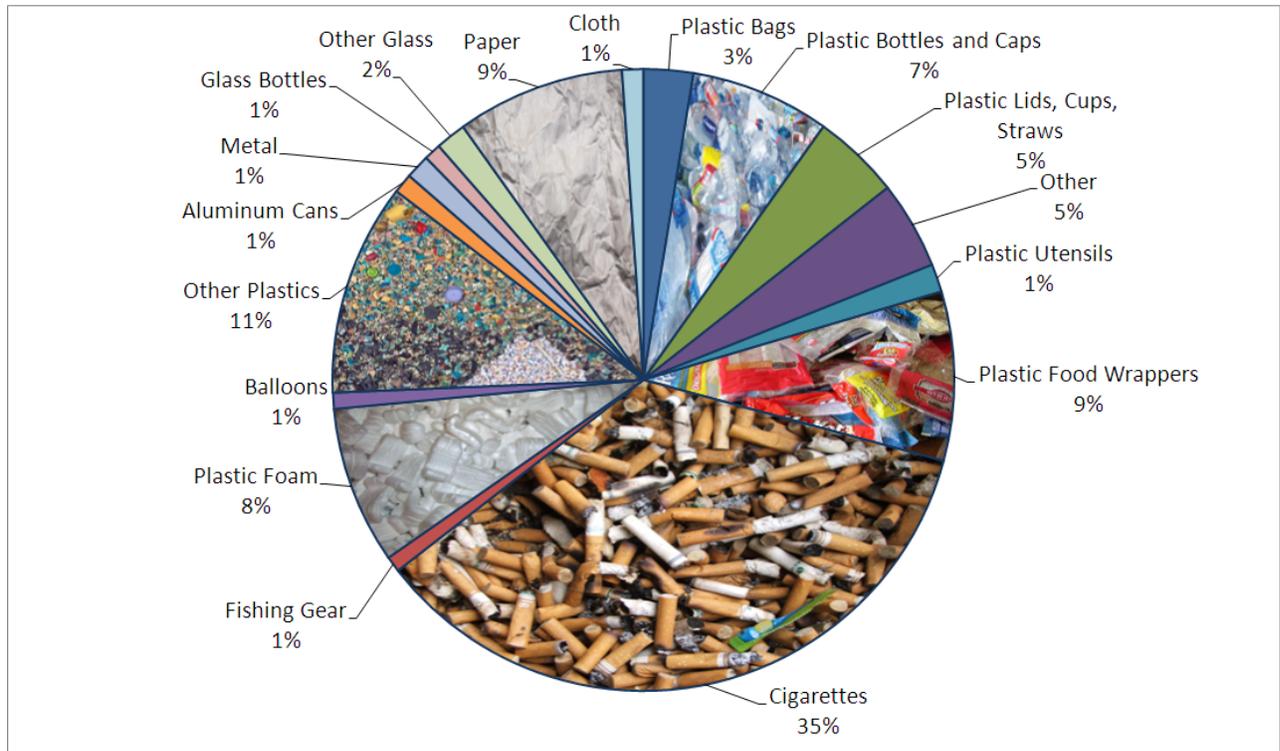


Last year, Cardiff State Beach topped the charts with most trash collected per volunteer with an average of 4.06 pounds of trash per volunteer. The beach fared far better this

year, with just .30 pounds found per volunteer. The beach with the most trash collected per volunteer in 2014 was Fiesta Island with 3.43 pounds of trash per volunteer. Fiesta Island also had the most trash removed overall with 1,127 pounds total, and the highest average pounds removed per cleanup.

Most Trash per Volunteer Effort

Year	Name of Beach	lbs/vol
2007	Ocean Beach - Sunset Cliffs	4.39
2008	Oceanside - Buccaneer Beach	5.8
2009	Ocean Beach- Sunset Cliffs	6.06
2010	Pacific Beach - Tourmaline	4.97
2011	Ocean Beach Pier	3.57
2012	Mission Beach	3.8
2013	Cardiff State Beach	4.06
2014	Mission Bay - Fiesta Island	3.43



46% of debris collected was plastic.

The percent plastic found in the total items collected this year stayed roughly the same this year as last. This count however, does not include cigarette butts, which contain a plastic foam filter. Including cigarette butts, that percentage jumps 81 percent. Plastics are particularly damaging to the marine environment, as they do not biodegrade, and are easily ingested by wildlife. Many of the plastics collected were pieces less than one inch in diameter, and much of it was non-recyclable expanded polystyrene foam, or “styrofoam.”

50,706 more items were collected in 2014 than 2013.

2014 saw an increase in the total number of items removed, likely due in part to the increase in volunteers collecting beach trash compared to last year. Item counts include trash of many sizes, from the tiniest shards of plastic food wrappers, to the largest 150-pound discarded I-beam, and everything in between. The amount of trash on our beaches continues to be staggering, and there is plenty of trash for volunteers to find, even with more volunteers participating.

Cigarette butts topped the list in 2014.

Yet again, cigarettes and cigarette butts were the most prevalent type of debris found at

our beach cleanups. In 2013, volunteers removed 58,236 cigarette butts from our beaches, and this year that number rose to 75,069. Littered butts continue to be a major concern for the health of San Diego County beaches. Cigarette butts are non-biodegradable and leach toxins into the water, poisoning marine life. They also move with ease through the City’s stormwater system, meaning a cigarette butt need not be dropped directly at the beach in order to find its way there eventually.

Intact plastic bags continue to be one of the less common items.

The total number of fully intact plastic bags found was 5,489, representing 3% of the total items collected. In 2013, volunteers collected 4,418 plastic bags, also representing 3% of the total items collected. Though this is 1,071 more plastic bag than we collected last year, this year’s total is still significantly lower than 2012’s total of over 7,500 bags. This may indicate a decrease in the use of plastic bags, the success of regional bag bans, or an increase in recycling or proper disposal. Due to their disproportionately dangerous impacts on marine wildlife, limiting plastic bag should continue to be encouraged. It should be noted that the thin nature of plastic bags mean they are easily broken down into smaller pieces, and these small pieces would be counted as other plastics. It is likely that plastic bags are a larger environmental problem than our stats are showing.

Top 3 items of concern: Cigarette Butts (75,069)
Plastic Wrappers/Pieces (23,477)
Plastic Foam (17,438)

