

The annual International Coastal Cleanup organized by the Ocean Conservancy is the world's largest volunteer effort to collect information on the amounts and types of marine debris. In 2009, 498 818 volunteers from 108 countries and locations collected 3 357 tonnes of debris from over 6 000 sites (Ocean Conservancy 2010) (**Figure 6**). Plastic bags, the second most common item removed, have much greater potential impact than the number one item (cigarettes/cigarette filters).

Rank	Debris item	Number
1	Cigarettes / cigarette filters	2 189 252
2	Bags (plastic)	1 126 774
3	Food wrappers / containers	943 233
4	Caps, lids	912 246
5	Beverage bottles (plastic)	883 737
6	Cups, plates, forks, knives, spoons	512 517
7	Beverage bottles (glass)	459 531
8	Beverage cans	457 631
9	Straws, stirrers	412 940
10	Bags (paper)	331 476
Top 10 total debris items		8 229 337

Figure 6: Top ten marine debris items removed from the global coastline and waterways during the 2009 International Coastal Cleanup. The list shows that plastic is part of the overall marine litter problem, but it does not include some less common and potentially more hazardous plastic items such as discarded fishing nets. *Source: Ocean Conservancy*