



Reef Check
MALAYSIA

2022

**INTERNATIONAL
COASTAL CLEAN-UP
REPORT**



A MESSAGE FROM:

Our Programme Manager

It was heart-warming to see so much interest for the International Coastal Clean-up Day (ICC) in Malaysia this year after our Covid-19 restrictions were lifted. The last physical ICC coordinated by Reef Check Malaysia was conducted in 2020 when the restrictions were slightly relaxed. In 2021, in light of the pandemic, Reef Check Malaysia held a 4-week #ICCfromHome campaign. The weekly challenges include learning about what we throw away, not using single-use plastic bags, combating food waste, and sorting our waste at home for recycling.

After the Covid-19 lockdowns, we are proud of fellow Malaysians who came out in forces to clean-up our environment for this year's ICC campaign. This shows that there is growing awareness on the issue of marine debris.

Theresa Ng
Programme Development Manager

The ICC campaign may have ended this year but the effort to address waste in our environment should continue. Reducing consumption and separating our recyclables at source should become part of our daily habits.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, items made from plastics were most commonly found during our clean-ups. Plastics do not degrade easily and can be floating around our oceans for decades before ending up on our shores. It is time to think about how to eliminate and replace unnecessary, single-use plastics in our lives.





Lang Tengah Island clean-up led by LTTW

WHAT IS ICC?

The International Coastal Clean-up Day (ICC) is a nationwide event that happens every year in September. This annual volunteer effort was started by Ocean Conservancy in 1986 and has continued until today. Reef Check Malaysia (RCM) started coordinating ICC in Malaysia in 2018 and received positive responses from volunteers each year.

This year, we saw more than twice the amount of volunteers we had in 2020 joining us for #ICCMY2022. with large corporates, independent organizations, various educational institutions, dive shop operators and passionate individuals among the mix. These events are mostly ran independently by organizers themselves with our guidance.

Organizers would pick a suitable location, seek permission from relevant authorities and gather supplies leading up to the event. We ensure that health and safety protocols are adhered to and that the trash collected were disposed responsibly.

WHY ICC?

Aside from the direct benefits to the environment, beach clean-ups also raise awareness about marine debris. Volunteers experience first-hand the types of trash collected and are presented visually with the composition of trash collected. This is in line with our commitment to highlight the severity of plastic pollution and how it can affect us. Having multiple large scale beach clean-ups also encourage dialogue among the public.

#ICCMY2022

This year we saw 9,316 dedicated volunteers coming together to remove 25.5 tons of marine debris, consisting of 305,956 items from 400km of coastlines across Malaysia.



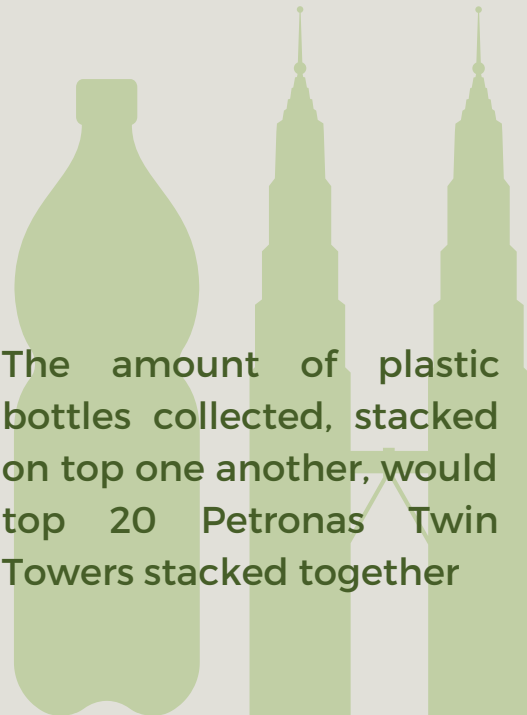
ICC 2022 AT A GLANCE

35,039 plastic and foam pieces less than 2.5cm were collected

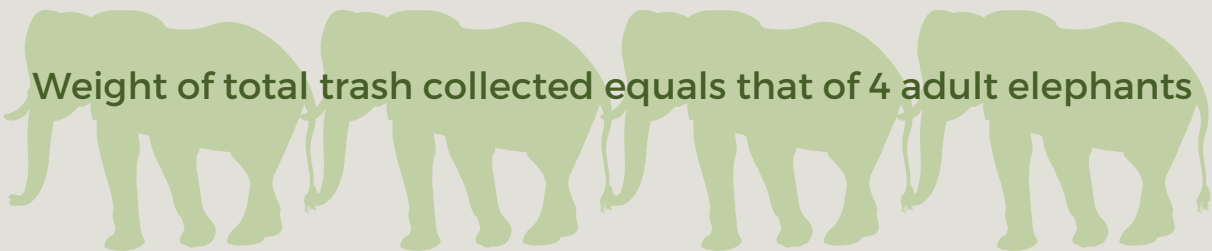


Up to 90% of trash collected were plastic and its derivatives

The amount of plastic bottles collected, stacked on top one another, would top 20 Petronas Twin Towers stacked together



Weight of total trash collected equals that of 4 adult elephants



THE MAIN CULPRITS

Commonly found items

These are the top 6 most commonly found items, all of which are plastics. Together they account for 66% of all the trash collected in September 2022. The numbers below represent the total amount collected for each item.





Clean Swell App

The Clean Swell App developed by Ocean Conservancy offers a pragmatic solution to capture important data on the trash collected. It is designed to be used in real-time so the data recorded is accurate and consistent. Aside from the key metrics like weight and distance, the app offers a breakdown of trash categories. This allows us to have a detailed record of the types and amount of trash collected.

Volunteers were asked to record the data collected with the Clean Swell App which will be uploaded to an online database available to the public



Timba-Timba Island clean-up by local community

Global data available from TIDES online database:

<https://www.coastalcleanupdata.org/>





Pantai Jeram clean-up led by Jolene

THE SCIENCE BEHIND:

Why Do We Collect Data?

The data collected by ICC volunteers contribute to the world's largest database on marine debris. Scientists build upon ICC data to conduct research and increase our understanding on plastic pollution. Last year, trash data from ICC volunteers were featured in 27 peer-reviewed scientific journals worldwide, showing its importance.

These resources also support plastic abatement policies. As one of the top plastic polluters in the world, these findings apply pressure to local corporates and policymakers to take action against plastic pollution. RCM contributed to the National Marine Litter Policy and Action Plan 2021 - 2030 supported by the data we have from ICC.





THROWBACK TO:

ICC 2020

This year we have more than twice the number of participants and collected more than double the amount of trash in weight compared to 2020. This is definitely a welcoming sign for ICC and we will aim to top this year's record in 2023.

Tiny Trash, Big Problems

As stated previously, plastics alone account for up to 90% of the total trash collected. This highlights the magnitude of plastic pollution in Malaysia. The high number of tiny trash collected suggests that plastics breakdown over time and eventually form microplastic.

These are ingested by marine animals, making its way up the food chain and (more often than not) end up back on our plates. ICC is one step in the right direction of improved plastic waste management and awareness. We hope to receive continued support from the public in the coming years.



Semporna clean-up by local community

INSIDE STORIES:

People On The Ground



The ICC2022 is a much needed reminder to all of us about how important it is to keep our beaches free from plastic pollution. Let us all celebrate this day by continuing to help clean our beach and waterways in any way we can.

-Pn Shahariah (UiTM lecturer)



We are privileged to join volunteers around the world to play a part in advocating the protection and preservation of the marine environment.”

-Puneet Mishra (Head Country Management of DKSH)

I enjoyed being a part ICC 2022. I am surprised by the amount of garbage produced on Pulau Redang. It was very fulfilling to part of this event and definitely hope to participate next year.

-Sindi (RedangAboatTime)



The International Coastal Cleanup Day has become an annual cleanup event that we at Lang Tengah Turtle Watch conduct at a larger scale by also engaging the members of the public, thus instilling awareness of marine pollution and its impact on marine life.

-Seh Ling (LTTW)





THE BIGGER PICTURE:

What's Next?

Marine pollution requires a multi-pronged solution with international collaboration. We want to highlight that our contributions to ICC 2022 is part of a worldwide initiative and it is having a positive impact. In 2021, ICC volunteers from all around the world collected more than 2.5 million kilograms of trash. That's equivalent to 25 adult blue whales, the largest animal on earth! As proud as we are about our achievements this year, more must be done to address the marine debris crisis.

Logically, the best way to tackle this problem would be to stop it at its source and preventing it from reaching our oceans in the first place. We have worked extensively on trash/ sewage management on small islands in the past and it is always going to be a challenging task with so many stakeholders involved. Nevertheless, we remain optimistic that this pressing issue will garner more attention in the future with continued support from the public.

GOLD SPONSOR:



RCM would like to thank TechnipFMC for being our ICC Gold Sponsor. Together they mobilized 385 members of staff to clean-up Pantai Pengkalan Balak and Pantai Tanjung Balau on September 10.



BRONZE SPONSOR:



Pantai Teluk Likas clean-up led by DKSH



Pantai Pasir Panjang clean-up led by DKSH



Pantai Geting clean-up led by DKSH



Pantai Queensbay clean-up led by DKSH

Our Bronze Sponsor - DKSH cleaned 8 beaches in Selangor, Penang, Melaka, Johor, Kelantan, Pahang, Sabah & Sarawak.



Pantai Klebang clean-up led by DKSH



Pantai Telok Cempedak clean-up led by DKSH



Pantai Batu Layar clean-up led by DKSH



Pantai Bagan Lalang clean-up led by DKSH

SHOUTOUT TO:

Our Partners



**RIDICULOUSLY
COMFORTABLE**

Special thanks to REEF for their in-kind sponsorship



GLIMPSE



OF MALAYSIA





Tanjung Aru clean-up led by Shangri-La KK



Pantai Batu Laut clean-up led by BAI x DDM



Pulau Gaya clean-up led by Gaya Island Resort



Semporna clean-up by local community



Semporna clean-up by local community



Pulau Kapas clean-up led by GAYA



Pantai Pulau Sayak clean-up led by S&P Global



Pantai Tanjung Piai clean-up led by Kolej Yayasan Saad Melaka



Panta Minyak Beku clean-up led by TARC



Pantai Sri Purnama led by Politeknik PD



Pantai Remis clean-up led by CCI France Malaysia



Pantai Cermin clean-up led by The Beach School



Pantai Remis clean-up led by MPKL



Pantai Sekawang clean-up led by The Beach School



Pantai Stulang clean-up led by EcoWorld



Pantai Remis clean-up led by Eco World



Pulau Masjid clean-up led by Tze Ping



Laguna Park clean-up led by Taylor's University



Pantai Santubong clean-up led by Politeknik Kuching



Semporna clean-up led by Scuba Junkie SEAS



Pulau Mabul clean-up led by Scuba Junkie SEAS

APPENDIX:

ICC 2022 Malaysia Trash Audit

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ITEMS	% OF TOTAL
Cigarette butts	55528	20.54%
Food wrappers (candy, chips, etc.)	17294	6.40%
Food containers (plastic)	6434	2.38%
Food containers (foam)	8043	2.97%
Bottle caps (plastic)	15773	5.83%
Bottle caps (metal)	1694	0.63%
Lids (plastic)	2946	1.09%
Straws/stirrers (plastic)	12159	4.50%
Utensils (plastic)	3421	1.27%
Beverage bottles (plastic)	46187	17.08%
Beverage bottles (glass)	5250	1.94%
Beverage cans	5079	1.88%
Grocery bags (plastic)	17691	6.54%
Other bags (plastic)	13238	4.90%
Cups, Plates (paper)	6688	2.47%
Cups, Plates (plastic)	6484	2.40%

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ITEMS	% OF TOTAL
Cups, Plates (foam)	4488	1.66%
Beverage sachets/pouches	3790	1.40%
6-Pack holders	116	0.04%
Other plastic bottles (oil , bleach...)	1889	0.70%
Strapping bands	2617	0.97%
Foam packaging	3355	1.24%
Condoms	40	0.01%
Diapers	1090	0.40%
Syringes	42	0.02%
Tampons & applicators	47	0.02%
Gloves & masks (PPE)	3122	1.15%
Cotton bud sticks (swabs)	253	0.09%
Lines, nets, traps, ropes, etc.	2954	1.09%
Foam dock pieces	1373	0.51%
Appliances (refrigerators, washers...)	51	0.02%
Construction materials	923	0.34%
Tires	112	0.04%

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ITEMS	% OF TOTAL
Balloons	625	0.23%
E-cigarettes	217	0.08%
Tobacco products (lighters, cigar tips, wrap...)	2238	0.83%
Clothing	1226	0.45%
Electronic waste (phones, batteries)	323	0.12%
Footwear (shoes/slippers)	2095	0.77%
Paper bags	804	0.30%
Other plastic waste	4694	1.74%
Other waste (metal, paper...)	6885	2.55%
Toys	1098	0.41%
TOTAL	270376	100.00%
Special item: Plastic/ foam pieces less than 2.5cm	35039	100.00%