

Community South Coast Beach Clean-ups Compared 2010 and 2011 Events

After the success of the first combined community group south coast beach clean-up in 2010 it was decided to make it an annual event. On 17 September 2011 volunteers again converged on the Wellington South Coast beaches to pick up rubbish.

The same 12 meeting locations were used, each with a coordinator to ensure all parts of the coast were covered. There was a sausage sizzle at Lyall Bay afterwards courtesy of Island Bay Butchers and Kilbirnie PAK'nSAVE where people had a chance to compare experiences.



- 1: VUW Coastal Ecology Lab
- 2: Island Bay Divers
- 3: Friends of Taputeranga MR
- 4: Blue Wellington
- 5: Te Raekaihau Coast Care
- 6 Community Group
- 7: Lyall Bay Coast Care
8. NIWA
- 9: Moa Point residents
- 10: F&B Places for Penguins
- 11: Breaker Bay residents
- 12: Wellington Underwater Club

Although there was only time to sort through 25% of the rubbish this year it gave a useful comparison with the more comprehensive audit done in 2010. Coordinators also recorded information on rubbish collected at individual sections of the coast. This information enabled us to compare the findings of 2010 and 2011.

What our rubbish ‘archaeologists’ found:

- There were the same number of volunteers both years (about 200) but there were only 460kg of rubbish in 2011 compared with 960kg in 2010 (52% reduction). The difference was mostly due to fewer large (and heavy) items in 2011. Over half of the 960kg in 2010 was from a number of larger items including televisions, car parts, broken chairs, paint tins and rusty metal. This year’s collection included an old BBQ, a car battery, a car tyre and a chair.
- In terms of the smaller items there were 91 bags in 2011 compared to 136 in 2010 (33% reduction). In both years the main items were food related (e.g. plastic bottles, aluminium cans, wrappers, coffee cups and straws). These appear to be derived from littering on land rather than coming in from the sea.
- Most sites had fewer bags of rubbish this year but there were a couple of sites with more bags (see table below).
- Even though Lyall Bay Coast Care (LBCC) do a monthly rubbish clean-up at site 7, there was a similar amount of rubbish collected there as other sites this year. This may be because locals pick up rubbish at various places during the year.
- In 2011 there were only 3 bags collected at Moa Point compared to 24 collected in 2010 and we think this difference is because in 2010 we might have cleaned up a lot of accumulated rubbish.

Site number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11/12
2010 bags	17	15	11	5	7	6	20	10	24	15	6
2011 bags	9	8	15	7	7	7	10	13	3	10	2

Table: Number of bags removed from each site (see map above) in 2011 compared to 2010.

- At the eastern Lyall Bay site the group recorded the number of cigarette butts. They collected 885 butts from the 600m of coast alongside the airport runway.

Thank you to Sustainable Coastlines and PDP workers for sorting through the rubbish. We also thank Wellington City Council for providing gloves and bags and for removing the rubbish.



It was another satisfying event. We had fun and hopefully raised awareness. Rubbish in the oceans harms marine life from ingestion and toxins. Cigarettes are particularly harmful as they take years to degrade in sea water, are packed with toxic chemicals and can swell in the stomachs of animals.



We encourage people to use the tip facilities at Happy Valley instead of dumping at the beach and to dispose of rubbish and extinguished cigarette butts in bins provided. We will also be passing this information on to the Council.

For more information contact southcoastcare@gmail.com.

Note: this is not an organisation. The annual event is a collaborative community group effort.



Photos (top to bottom anticlockwise): Volunteers at Island Bay; at Houghton Bay; with the combined rubbish pile in 2010; and 2011; at eastern Island Bay; 2011 rubbish.

Thank you everyone for your enthusiastic participation – see you next year!