

2020 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT: SURFRIDER EUROPE UNVEILS THE KEY FIGURES OF A CHALLENGING YEAR

Surfrider Europe's flagship program since 1995, the Ocean Initiatives are much more than beach clean-ups. By collecting data on the types and quantities of waste collected, Ocean Initiatives allow the association to influence legislation at the European level. Despite a very challenging year in 2020 in terms of mobilization in the field, the results have allowed the NGO to feed its work on marine litter pollution. On the occasion of the launch of the 27th edition of the program, Surfrider Europe takes stock of the past year and unveils the 2020 environmental report.

Which overview for 2020?

The environmental report is published every year to give an overview of the results of the [Ocean Initiatives](#), the association's historic program which is characterized by **awareness raising but also expertise and lobbying work around the issue of marine litter**.

Despite a complicated sanitary context in 2020, the mobilization of volunteers on the ground persevered. In total, more than 45,876 participants were involved in waste collection during the year. **1,522 Ocean Initiatives were organized, a largely satisfactory figure given the health restrictions in place since last March.**

TOP 10 LITTER ITEMS



01

CIGARETTE
BUTTS



02

PLASTIC PIECES
2.5-50 CM



03

POLYSTYRENE
PIECES 2.5-50 CM



04

FISHING: NETS,
TANGLED ROPES,
CORDS



05

PLASTIC BAGS
AND PIECES



06

BOTTLE
CAPS



07

PIECES
OF GLASS



08

COTTON
BUDS



09

FISHING: LINES,
HOOKS, LURES



10

FOOD
CONTAINERS

Thanks to the report forms filled out by the volunteers in the field, the most common waste found is cigarette butts, followed closely by plastic fragments and fishing tackle. Plastic bottles, pieces of glass, sanitary waste and food packaging are also sadly in the top 10 of this 2020 edition. **We also note that 63% of waste collected is single-use items, a figure that reinforces the association's motivation to fight against this scourge.**

An essential field mobilization

The Ocean Initiatives are, above all, for the purpose of data collection. This data allows Surfrider Europe's experts to strategize on appropriate measures to reduce pollution at the source. Waste data gathered constitutes valuable evidence capable of influencing public decision makers in favor of the measures proposed by the association.

Data is collected thanks to the thousands of people who act in the field throughout the year. In 2020, 482 report forms were filled in by volunteers and allowed the environmental report to be produced.

To go further in its fight, Surfrider Europe relies on participatory science to collect data marine litter in Europe. On the occasion of the launch of the 27th edition of the program with the concept [I Collect For](#), the association encourages once again the European citizens to go on the field. To do this, it invites everyone to ask themselves the question: what is your reason to collect for the Ocean?

A personal experience, a desire to make the world a better place or the feeling of having to fulfill a civic duty, everyone has their own reason to act. Each of these reasons together push us to carry out one and the same action: to go into the field and act for the protection of the Ocean. In 2021, still battling the health context and uprise of single-use plastics, the association reinforces its call to action. **Now, more than ever, it is critical to participate in collective action to protect the Ocean.**

Long-term lobbying work

The data collected through the Ocean Initiatives program has already made great strides in reducing marine litter pollution, and more is yet to come. Two high-stakes waste types for 2021 are noteworthy:

- **Industrial plastic pellets:** Serving as raw material for plastic production, pellets are the second largest source of microplastic pollution of the Ocean. Mandatory prevention measures on the loss of pellets, also known as mermaid tears, have been adopted in France via the anti-waste and circular economy law. They should come into force in 2022 and are currently under discussion at the European level.
- **Cigarette butts:** a collection system with extended producer responsibility will be set up this year in France, and at the European Union level by 2023. This is the first time in history that the tobacco industry will pay for the collection of cigarette butts.

For these battles to continue, Surfrider Europe needs new weapons: numbers! The greater the mobilization on the ground, the more data collected will be useful to put laws into motion and stop pollution at the source.

The year 2020 was marked by a global pandemic that led to a massive use of single-use plastic objects and questioned the very access we have to nature. Despite this anxiety-

inducing period, thousands of people remained mobilized and allowed the association to continue its work to fight against marine litter. In 2021, Surfrider Europe calls for a large-scale citizen mobilization to protect the Ocean from waste pollution!

To know more, discover the [entire environmental report here!](#)

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