



13th ANNUAL SOUTHEAST FLORIDA REEF CLEANUP



SUMMER 2024 REPORT

Matt Ringstad

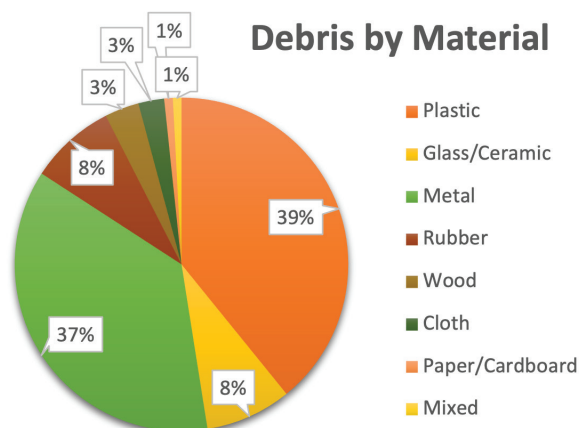
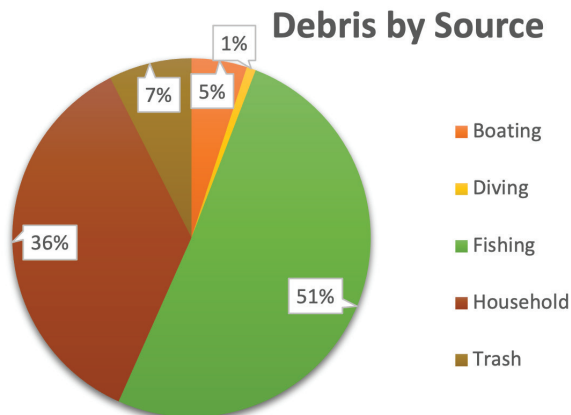
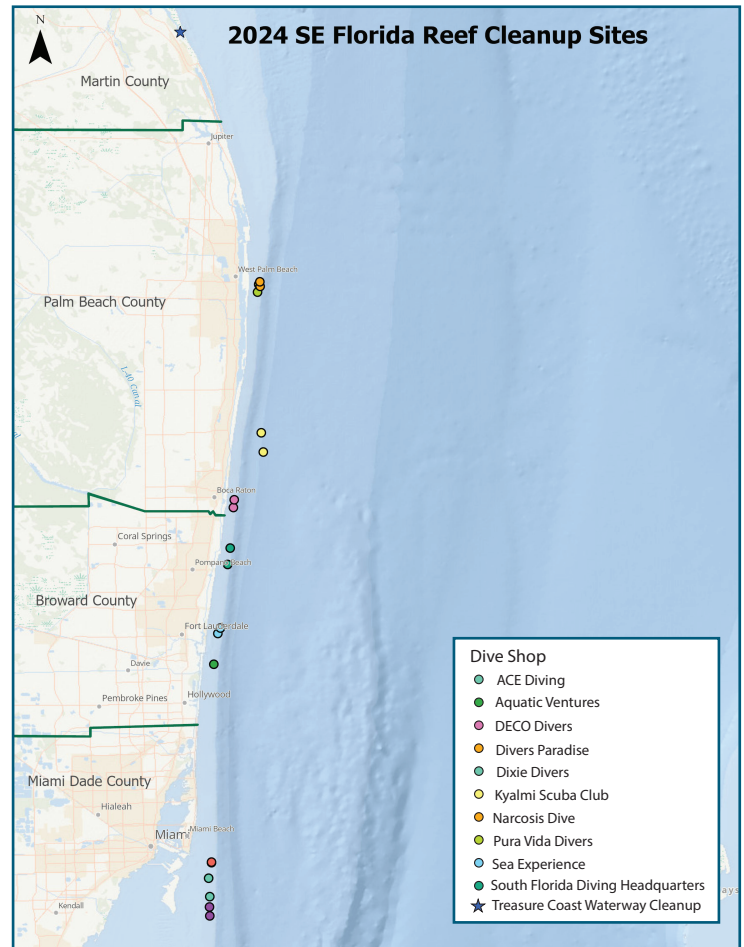
DEP Coral Reef Conservation Program

Overview

The Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) coordinated the 13th Annual Southeast Florida Reef Cleanup in July and August 2024. A total of 135 volunteer divers partnered with 10 local dive shops to conduct 20 dives across 17 reef sites in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties (see map). In Martin County, CRCP sponsored the 17th Annual Treasure Coast Waterway Cleanup at Peck's Lake.

History: Annual Southeast Florida Reef Cleanups

Since 2012, SEFCRI and CRCP have partnered with local dive shops to remove marine debris from Florida's Coral Reef through the Annual Southeast Florida Reef Cleanup. This event is part of SEFCRI's Marine Debris Reporting and Removal Program, which raises awareness about the impacts of marine debris. In addition to organizing yearly reef cleanups, this program encourages local divers to remove debris during every dive and report it to the Southeast Florida Action Network (SEAFAN).



Report Marine Debris to SEAFAN.net

SEAFAN is a citizen science marine incident reporting and response program dedicated to improving the protection and management of southeast Florida's coral reefs. Any community member can help by reporting marine debris and other incidents online at SEAFAN.net, by calling the hotline at 866-770-7335 or by using the QR code for access to the report form.



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2024 Cleanup Highlights

13th Annual Southeast Florida Reef Cleanup

- 17 reef sites
- 135 participants
- 440 pounds of debris removed

17th Annual Treasure Coast Waterway Cleanup

- 25 cleanup sites
- 936 volunteers
- 4,320 pounds of debris removed

Summary: Reef Cleanups

Participating divers removed approximately 498 items of debris weighing at least 440 pounds. Cleanup sites were chosen based on areas that are known to accumulate debris or areas of high boater activity. All types of debris were collected, including lounge chairs, dive/snorkel masks, clothing, glass bottles, plastic bags and an abundance of fishing monofilament, hooks and weights. These items are not only hazardous to marine life, but can smother, tangle or cause damage to corals and other reef organisms. A breakdown of debris removed by source and material from Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties is shown in the charts below.

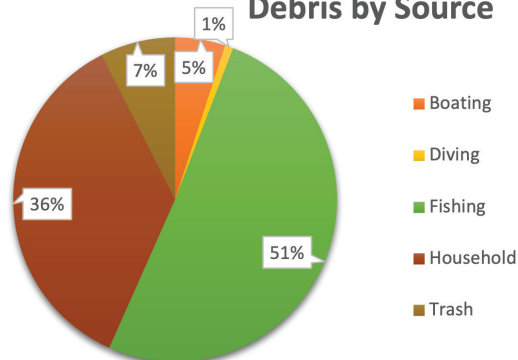
Many local dive shops and community non-profit groups organize frequent beach, mangrove and underwater cleanups. If you are unable to attend one of these cleanups, we encourage conducting your own DIY cleanup and reporting it to SEAFAN. A DIY cleanup can be as easy as bringing a trash bag anytime you visit the beach or go out on the ocean to collect any debris you come across. Once you complete your DIY cleanup, report the results to [SEAFAN.net](https://seafan.net).

The sponsored Annual Treasure Coast Waterway Cleanup occurred at 25 sites across Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River counties. Volunteers and divers who participated removed over 19,000 individual items with a total weight of 2,320 pounds of debris from the shore and water.

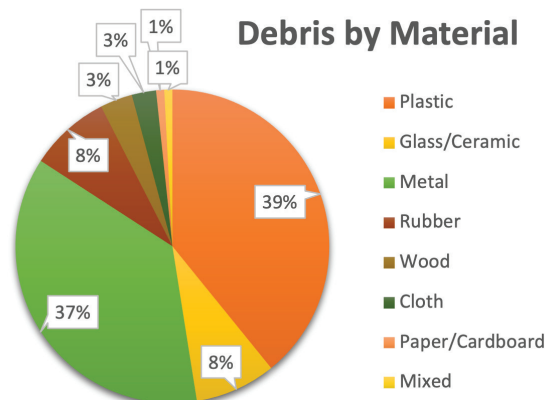
Some of the items removed by participating divers

included microplastics, dive gear, clothing, metal cans and bottles, toys, fishing hooks and fishing poles, cigarette butts and balloons. Some of the more unique items removed were a 20-inch television and a boomerang.

Debris by Source



Debris by Material



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

DECO DIVERS

