International Coastal Clean-up Day 2022



Every September presents a special opportunity to join millions of volunteers across the globe and participate in World Clean-up Day.

Founded by Linda Maraniss and Kathy O'Hara, International Coastal Clean-up day was first celebrated in 1986 after President Proclamation No. 470 declared it to be observed on the third Sunday of every September. The day serves as a way to raise awareness about the growing problem of increased pollution levels on beaches globally. After approaching different environmental groups and activists, Maraniss and O'Hara quickly gathered support and held an official clean-up. However, cleaning up waste from the beach areas was not the only aim of the exercise. An important element of International Coastal Clean-up Day is the documentation and study the type of trash collected, its potential sources and the expected impact that could have on the ocean and marine areas. This data is then be passed onto local governments and/or be used to support lobbying efforts. Since its inception, International Coastal Clean-up Day has seen over 6 million volunteers clean up coastal areas in over 191 countries. In 2018, a major milestone was achieved and almost quarter billion tonnes of trash has been removed from the marine environments.

UNESCO has declared the 2020s as the 'Ocean Decade' with an intention to educate about the different ways in which the oceans can be cleaned. Cleaning up litter on beaches and coastal areas has several benefits including protecting marine flora and fauna, protecting fisheries as well as improving the economy through improving the aesthetics and safety of tourist areas. Additionally, the cleaning of litter that washes up on coastal areas prevents the waste from re-entering the marine environment. Waste in the marine environment, especially plastics can enter the food chain and have impacts on human health.

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) is committed to the protection of our shared patrimony;

the Caribbean Sea and all the coastal areas that it touches. This commitment has been formalised through the creation of the Caribbean Sea Commission as well as the specific actions and initiatives undertaken under Strategic Objective C of the 2022-2028 ACS Plan of Action. This objective seeks specifically to reduce environmental risks, biodiversity loss and promote the restoration, preservation, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and other natural resources through through the better governance of the Caribbean Sea. This objective will be pursued through the implementation of four (4) strategies including the promotion of the sustainable management of land waste.

In honour of this important day, the ACS is pleased to support regional initiatives for Coastal Cleanup across the Greater Caribbean, including the numerous clean-up activities across the beaches of the host country of the ACS Secreteriat; Trinidad and Tobago. ACS joined in the International Coastal Clean-up Event organised by International Coastal Cleanup Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Planning and Development, Institute of Marine Affairs, Environmental Management Authority and the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for the Caribbean.

The staff of the ACS would like to take this opportunity to encourage all readers to join a local clean-up drive or organize a coastal clean-up activity with local communities. Additionally, as clean-up efforts go hand in hand with waste minimisation efforts, the ACS also encourages reducing the use of single use plastics and waste materials that are known to pollute our beaches.

Through collective action we can all make a significant impact.