OCEAN CLEANUP CONTINUES REMOVING TRASH WORLWIDE FROM AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT FROM THE NETHERLANDS

April 2026

The Ocean Cleanup Initiative based in the Netherlands continues to break records by removing trash from aquatic environments. In 2025 they removed over 25 million kilograms of trash, bringing their total haul to over 45 million kilograms. This massive haul is the result of years of research, data-driven decision-making, and commitment to implementing responsible solutions adapted to local contexts.

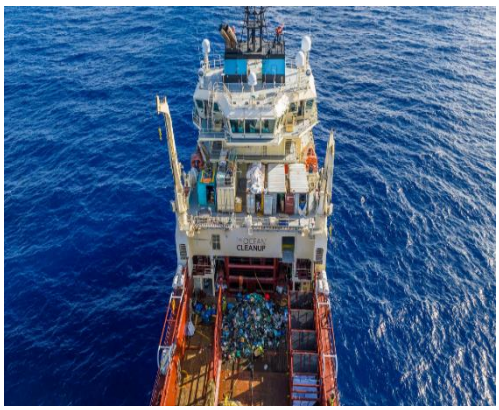
The Ocean Cleanup website published an article summarizing the main results achieved by the initiative in 2025. A major focus of the organization has been to ensure that all its processes are optimized, and its ocean and river technologies operate as efficiently as possible. Reaching the goal of removing 90% of all floating plastic from the ocean by 2040 requires a comprehensive solution. One that includes not only the extraction of legacy plastic from the ocean, and the interception of plastic waste in rivers, but also the targeted removal of pollution already present in nearshore environments through coastal sweeps, as well as leveraging its research in marine pollution to inform international policy. This research continues to set new standards, and to involve citizen scientists keen to participate in the world's largest cleanup, which continues to grow in scale. At the United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice in 2025, the organization announced the next step towards reaching the goal of the 30 Cities Program, which will tackle up to a third of all plastic pollution entering the ocean from some of the world's most polluting urban areas. Its focus on efficiency and responsible solutions also extends to waste management.

The organization has continued to work closely with local authorities, partners, and communities in the countries where its systems are deployed to create long-lasting impact.

Boyan Slat (27 July 1994) is a Dutch inventor, founder and CEO of Ocean Cleanup; an organization developing and scaling technologies to rid the world's oceans of plastic. Today, the Ocean Cleanup is actively cleaning up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and has deployed Interceptors in some of the world's most polluting rivers to prevent plastic from reaching the ocean in the first place.

The *Ocean Cleanup* is the non-profit Foundation based in the Netherlands, with a team consisting of more than 150 professionals from different backgrounds and areas of expertise; all bound together by one vision: to rid the world's oceans of plastic. Every year, hundreds of thousands of tons of plastic enter the oceans, primarily from rivers. And the plastic floating in the oceans does not go away by itself. To effectively solve the problem, it is necessary to both halt the flow of trash from rivers and to remove legacy plastic from the oceans at the same time.

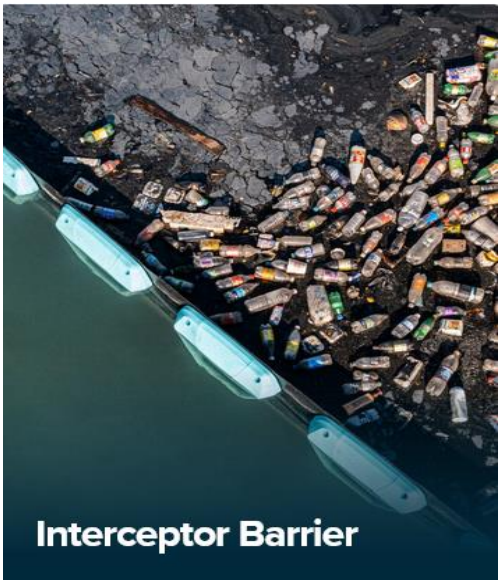
The *Ocean Cleanup* has developed technologies to rid the world's oceans of plastic. Plastic accumulates in huge subtropical oceanic areas called gyres, which are massive circular currents that trap floating plastic for decades. There are five gyres in our oceans. The most polluted and best-studied is the infamous Great Pacific Garbage Patch, located in the North Pacific Ocean, between Hawaii and California. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is estimated to be twice the size of Texas, or nearly three times the size of France or Thailand. Around 100 million kilograms of plastic float in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which contains 1.8 trillion pieces larger than 0.5 mm. About 92% of the floating plastic *mass* in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch consists of larger objects. Only about 8% of the mass consists of microplastics. However, these larger objects are continually fragmenting into smaller pieces, which are much harder to clean up; the longer the problem exists, the worse it gets.



The Ocean Cleanup is actively working in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, developing a technology that could passively collect plastic waste from the Pacific Ocean. The heavy work is delegated to ocean currents, while an artificial, floating coastline actively captures the plastic. Marine life and fish can swim under the floating barriers placed in a V-shape. The barriers carry the collected plastic to a central point where ships are able to remove the plastic from the water, and transport it to the mainland for recycling. The harvested plastic is then brought back to shore for recycling. The Foundation has also launched its first product, The Ocean Cleanup Sunglasses, using plastic collected from the Ocean in 2019, and it has partnered with companies that use their ocean plastic in their products.

The *Ocean Cleanup* is also working in 1,000 rivers, or 1% of the world's rivers, that account for 80% of the plastic flowing into the ocean from land. The initiative has developed a toolkit of Interceptors to tackle these rivers and the 30 Cities Program scales up this strategy to include urban areas and cities with multiple polluted waterways. Not only will this lead to a larger impact, but it will also make it easier to develop large-scale waste management solutions and increase opportunities for collaborations with local stakeholders. This program is expected to reduce the amount of plastic flowing into the ocean from rivers globally by up to a third and to provide an opportunity for local communities, whose health and livelihoods are impacted by plastic pollution, to reclaim their environment.

The aim of The *Ocean Cleanup* Initiative is to remove 90% of floating ocean plastic by 2040. The organization plans to do this by cleaning up the plastic already floating in the ocean and by stopping the sources of plastic flowing into our oceans.



The Foundation highlights that the records it has set throughout 2025 were made possible thanks to the continued support of its partners. Together, they are turning the tide on plastic pollution. Their collective attention is now on 2026, to deliver even more deployments, trash removed, and positive impact.

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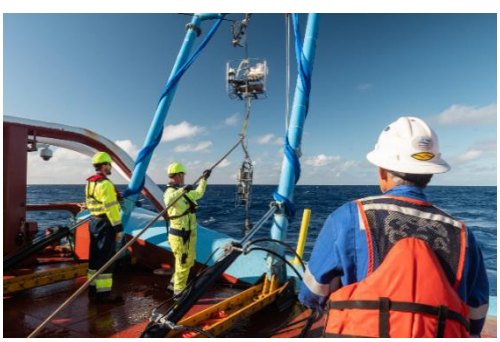

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