

SAV2

Hawaii's beaches used as 'ashtray'

SB-9/7/94

■ A national survey raps the islands for its huge harvest of cigarette butts

BY PETE PICHASKE
Phillips News Service

WASHINGTON — Cigarette butts fouled Hawaii's beaches more than anything else among the 91 tons of items volunteers picked up last year.

"Hawaii has a litter problem," said Kathryn O'Hara, director of the Center for Marine Conservation's Pollution Prevention Program. "That indicates high beach use.

"People have to realize that Hawaii is not a big ashtray."

The center released the results of its 1993 International Coastal Cleanup here yesterday, an effort involving 158,000 volunteers in 35 states and U.S. territories.

The cleanup is held every year, in part to draw attention

to the problem of litter on the world's beaches. Besides posing an eyesore and polluting the water, the trash can be fatal to marine animals who eat it.

In Hawaii, especially large proportions of bottles and cigarette butts indicate that littering by visitors on the beach is more of a problem in the islands than elsewhere.

"Hawaii always has a real significant cleanup effort," said O'Hara. In 1992, the cleanup in Hawaii attracted 7,800 volunteers who picked up 65 tons of debris.

O'Hara said litter obviously left behind by beach visitors and fishing-related debris were the main sources of beach pollution in the islands. Other states, for example, had more of a problem with such items as medical waste or sewage.

"What's really a problem is that Hawaii has some of the endangered species that are most adversely affected by de-

SEE TRASH, PAGE A-6

Help out next month

Volunteers will hit the beaches in Hawaii on Oct. 8 to pick up trash. Call 586-8444 to volunteer. During last October's cleanup:

■ **All over:** 9,885 volunteers collected 91 tons of items while combing 193 miles of beaches on Oahu, Maui, Molokai, Hawaii and Kahoolawe. Only four states had more volunteers and only six collected more trash.

■ **Ash trash:** Cigarette butts were the most common item found. A total of 176,932 butts were collected, accounting for 31 percent of the debris. Other common items were glass, plastic, paper and foam plastic pieces.

■ **Underwater:** Some 600 volunteer divers cleared trash from 15 underwater sites.

Source: John Yamauchi of the Hawaii Litter Control Office; and the Center for Marine Conservation.

FROM PAGE ONE . . .

TRASH: 1,600 tons of it litter nation's beaches

FROM PAGE A-1

bris," O'Hara said. Marine animals such as the Hawaiian monk seal and green sea turtles eat the trash unknowingly, she said, and it can kill them.

The news wasn't all bad, though. "We're seeing a decline in the percentage of plastics picked up and a decline in the fishing debris," said center President Roger McManus. "That suggests much better awareness of the problem. We're making progress."

But McManus said the 1,600 tons of trash cleared from the beaches nationwide indicated that the problem remains.

During last year's cleanup, 9,885 volunteers combed 193 miles of beaches on Oahu, Maui, Molokai, Hawaii and Kahoolawe. Only four states had more volunteers and only six collected more trash. California led the way with 256 tons of

“

We're seeing a decline in the percentage of plastics picked up and a decline in the fishing debris. That suggests much better awareness of the problem. We're making progress.

”

Roger McManus
President,
Center for Marine Conservation

trash collected, followed by Texas, North Carolina, Florida, New York, Louisiana and Hawaii.

Cigarette butts were the most

common item found during the Oct. 16 cleanup in Hawaii. A total of 178,932 butts were collected, accounting for 31 percent of the debris. Other common items were glass, plastic, paper and foamed plastic pieces.

Last year's beach cleanup in Hawaii involved 600 volunteer divers who cleared trash from 15 underwater sites, according to John Yamauchi of the Hawaii Litter Control Office, who coordinated the cleanup.

Volunteers will hit the beach in Hawaii Oct. 8 this year, Yamauchi said. Call 586-8444 to volunteer.

Among items found in last year's cleanup were a barbecue grill on Maui, a motorcycle seat, foam mattress and a headlight on Kauai, a vacuum hose and sprinkler head on Hawaii, and a portrait, state road sign, cooking pot, rug and seven loaves of bread on Oahu.