



## **Multi-Materials Stewardship Board Releases Coastline Litter Audit Report**

The Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB) released today a report outlining the findings of a Coastline Litter Audit performed in 2019. The audit was performed to quantify and categorize waste that is present on Newfoundland and Labrador's coastline, as well as to study sources of marine debris.

The audit included 30 sites throughout the province covering an area of 13,500 square metres. To provide a more complete profile for Newfoundland and Labrador, litter was classified in the report by size, type of material, type of site, type of beach and major category. Data also drew regional comparisons and highlighted beaches in Newfoundland and Labrador with the highest and lowest litter counts (See backgrounder below).

In total, 3,251 pieces of waste were discovered, 69% of which was made of plastic material. Of the 1,755 pieces of waste classified as large, 54% was categorized as other miscellaneous materials that could not be identified. The next greatest categories for large waste were fishing gear (14%) and beverage containers (8%). It was also found that cobblestone beaches contained 10 times more large waste than sandy beaches. Of the 1,496 pieces of waste classified as small, the top categories included hard plastic (27%), cigarette butts (21%) and metal (11.5%).

The data from this study was analyzed together with the data from the 2016 MMSB Roadside Litter Audit to build on the province's litter profile. Based on this information, it is estimated that over 200 pieces of litter per capita exist on roadsides and coastlines in the province.

The audit is also one of few in the world to examine the count and composition of waste on the wrack line (where the ocean ends at high tide), as well as a middle section that typically consisted of vegetation and the roadside. It was found that the middle section accounted for the most waste (48.57%), followed by roadside (29.96%) and the wrack line (21.47%). The findings suggest that since no items of any size or type were more plentiful along the coastline than the roadside the main sources of waste on coastlines are likely land-based.

MMSB has shared the findings and recommendations of the audit with key stakeholders, including communities, organizations and government partners. The mobilization of the report is intended to help inform public policy related to plastics, coastline waste and marine debris. The report also encourages communities and organizations to build strategies to prevent, mitigate and clean-up litter in Newfoundland and Labrador.

To read the complete Coastline Litter Audit, please visit [mmsb.nl.ca](http://mmsb.nl.ca).

## Quotes:

“The Coastline Litter Audit provides valuable information on the extent and nature of litter on our province’s coastlines. It is a reminder to us all that litter is a problem and is diminishing the natural beauty of Newfoundland and Labrador. We all have a responsibility to protect our environment. We have had great success with the ban on single-use plastic bags and I look forward to working with partners to identify opportunities specific to our coastlines.”

Honourable Derek Bennett

Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Municipalities

“While governments and businesses have important roles to play in the prevention and clean-up of litter, individual efforts can have a significant impact. Based on the data from this report as well as the 2016 Roadside Litter Audit, if every person in Newfoundland and Labrador picked up one piece of litter a day, we could clean up the province’s roadside and coastline litter in just eight months.”

Derm Flynn

Chair of the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board

“The study of marine debris is critical for ensuring the sustainability of the fishing industry, as the health and viability of ocean resources is dependent on the condition of the marine environment. This year, the FFAW has worked with harvesters to undertake the retrieval of discarded fishing gear by way of the federal government’s Sustainable Fisheries Solutions & Retrieval Support Contribution Program, or Ghost Gear Project. We look forward to continuing the Project into 2021, and reports such as this will help to measure its success moving forward.”

Keith Sullivan

President, Fish Food and Allied Workers Union

## Learn More:

- [Coastline Audit Report](#)
- [Roadside Litter Audit](#)

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**Backgrounder:**  
**Beaches with Lowest and Highest Litter Counts in Newfoundland and Labrador**

The following lists of beaches with the lowest and highest litter counts were compiled using results from MMSB's Coastline Litter Audit, which reviewed 30 sites total across Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Highest Litter Count Sites**

1. Newman's Cove, Discovery Region
2. St. Shott's Beach, Eastern Region
3. Port au Choix, Northern Peninsula
4. Rocky Harbour, Western Region
5. Topsail Beach (CBS), Eastern Region
6. Middle Cove Beach (Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove), Eastern Region
7. Point Lance, Eastern Region
8. Placentia Boardwalk, Eastern Region
9. St. Philip's Beach (Portugal Cove-St. Phillips), Eastern Region
10. Ferryland Beach, Eastern Region

**Lowest Litter Count Sites**

1. Pinware River Provincial Park, Labrador
2. Forteau, Labrador
3. Shoreline Heritage Walk (Bay Roberts), Eastern Region
4. Musgrave Harbour, Central Region
5. Bellevue, Eastern Region
6. Salmon Cove Sands, Eastern Region
7. Lumsden Beach, Central Region
8. Sandy Cove Beach (Lord's Cove), Burin Peninsula
9. Ragged Beach (Witless Bay), Eastern Region
10. Burgeo, Coast of Bays