



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HUGE VOLUNTEER TURNOUT TO CLEAN UP LOCAL REFUGES

On Saturday, September 15th, ninety-two local residents volunteered with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to pick up trash as part of the annual International Coastal Cleanup. Volunteers dispersed onto roads, trails, beaches, and islands and collected 62 bags of trash and other large items. In the end, volunteers donated 276 hours of their precious weekend time to clean up both Pelican Island and Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuges. The equivalent in hours of one full-time employee to clean up the same areas would have taken seven weeks.

Many large and unusual items that didn't fit into bags were collected as well, including a mattress, a toilet seat and a refrigerator door on the beach, and one derelict crab trap. An effort to remove 7 derelict crab traps within the refuge waters will need to be attempted again when the waters visibility is better.

This was the largest cleanup effort the refuge has ever experienced. Volunteer participation tripled over past years and sites within the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge were added due

to the overwhelming volunteer support for our national wildlife refuges.

Thank you to Vero Beach, Sebastian and Melbourne residents for joining us on the wild side and cleaning up our sanctuaries for wildlife.

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