



Plastic Polluters Brand Audit: Canada Results

Who were the top 5 corporations found to be contributing to branded plastic pollution through the 2019 Canada brand audits?

2019	2018
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Nestlé2. Tim Hortons3. Starbucks4. McDonald's Corporation5. The Coca-Cola Company	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Nestlé2. Tim Hortons3. PepsiCo.4. The Coca-Cola Company5. McDonald's Corporation

Of the approximately 240 producers identified in the audit, the top 5 corporations account for 39 per cent of the total waste collected: Nestlé (~12%); Tim Hortons (~11%); Starbucks (~8%); McDonald's (~4.2%); and The Coca-Cola Company (~4.1%).

What are brand audits?

Over the past few years, brand audits have gained popularity as a tool to determine the corporations responsible for plastic pollution. Brand audits involve collecting trash found in the environment or communities, and categorizing and counting the branded plastic. This categorization can include identifying the type of plastic, the brand and the manufacturer.

Did Greenpeace lead all the brand audits conducted in Canada?

The 2019 cleanups and brand audits were completed in partnership with various groups. Some completed their own cleanup and audit, some completed the cleanup for Greenpeace to audit and some were rapid cleanups and audits. A growing number of organizations and community groups have added brand audits to their annual cleanup initiatives and submit those results directly through the Break Free From Plastic platform.

How many locations were audited across Canada, and globally?

Greenpeace collected data from nine audited locations in Canada, and these locations included green spaces in Toronto, Grimsby and Montreal, and shorelines in Halifax, Fredericton, Covehead (Prince Edward Island), The Broken Group Islands (B.C.), Vancouver, and Victoria.



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Globally, over 400 different brand audit events in more than 50 countries were conducted by members of the global Break Free From Plastic movement. In 2018, 239 cleanup-audits were conducted in 42 countries. The global results will be released in the coming weeks.

What were the top 10 plastic items most commonly found and how does it compare to the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup top 10 results?

Brand Audit Results

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup Results

1. Cigarette butts	11. Tiny plastic or foam
2. Bottles and caps	12. Cigarette butts
3. Food wrappers	13. Plastic beverage bottles
4. Cups and lids	14. Food Wrappers
5. Straws and stir sticks	15. Plastic Bottles Caps
6. Tampon applicators	16. Paper materials
7. Foam pieces	17. Plastic Bags
8. Bags	18. Miscellaneous Packaging
9. Cutlery	19. Straws & Stirrers
10. Food packaging	20. Foam materials/Polystyrene

Our data shows that even in remote areas, bottles were the most common plastic item found.

What kind of plastic was found?

The largest number of distinguishable plastic items collected were associated with smoking materials (cigarette butts and packaging), followed by food-related products and packaging. Fishing and aquaculture gear, household products and personal care products accounted for the remaining plastic collected. In Canada, food packaging makes up almost half of the plastic waste we generate.¹

Are the most commonly found product types typically recycled in various municipalities?

Many products collected during cross-Canada cleanups and brand audits are theoretically recyclable in that they are made of a type of plastic that can be recycled if it is diverted for recycling and then the municipality has the facilities to process it. However, not all types of plastic are recycled in each municipality and therefore something produced by a company could be diverted in one region and not in another. Because there are so many types of plastics, and overall our recycling system is broken, very little of the single-use plastics produced are actually being recycled. Bottles are one of the most commonly recycled plastic products, and yet are among the most commonly found in cleanups in both urban and remote shoreline areas.

¹ http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2019/eccc/En4-366-1-2019-eng.pdf



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Were bioplastics or other bio-based products found in cleanups?

Bioplastics and bio-based single-use plastic alternatives were found in this year's cleanups and audits. The items included: paper straws, dog waste bags, paper cups, wood cutlery, plastic bottles containing partial bio-based material, bioplastic cutlery, bioplastic lids, bioplastic straws, bioplastic shopping bags, and compostable take out containers. None of the items were found to be broken down with the exception of some paper products that were starting to break apart. Because many of these items require industrial composting facilities to break down, they were contributing to pollution in their found state. More information about the problems associated with bio-based alternatives can be found in our recent report on False Solutions.²

What other well-known corporations were commonly found in the brand audits?

PepsiCo/Frito-Lays	Loblaw Companies Ltd./President's Choice
New World Natural Foods	Walmart/Great Value
Costco Wholesale Corporation/Kirkland	Solo
Danone (Danone, Evian, Naya Water)	Kelloggs
Eska	Welch's
Heinz	Booster Juice
Sobeys/Big 8	Clif Bar
Bic	
General Mills Inc. (Betty Crocker, Larabar, Nature Valley, Yoplait...)	

What were other notable findings from the brand audits?

Cigarette butts - which contain plastic - remain a major contributor to plastic pollution, with 8816 cigarette butts recovered, most of which were collected in Vancouver and in Montréal.

Plastic bottles remain a major contributor to the plastic pollution crisis in our oceans. In the remote cleanups of the Broken Group Islands in B.C., 1358 plastic bottles were collected. Overall, 2117 bottles and caps were collected. In Vancouver alone, over half of the food wrappers were collected (408), ranging from fully intact packaging to smaller, weathered fragments. Tampon applicators remain a significant pollution problem in Halifax with 235 collected along the audited shoreline. Foam pieces, large and tiny, continue to be found across all cleanup areas. Despite reduction claims by various companies, straws continue to be a significant contributor to pollution, with major contributions from the top polluter restaurant chains. Coffee cup lids were often found in broken pieces, particularly those associated with Tim

² <https://storage.googleapis.com/planet4-international-stateless/2019/09/8a1d1791-falsesolutions2019.pdf>



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Hortons. Fishing and aquaculture gear including line, netting, buoys, elastics, and other pieces of gear including styrofoam chunks, is a persistent pollution challenge in the ocean and on shorelines.

What were the 2018 global results?

The top 10 corporations found to be contributing to branded plastic pollution according to the global cumulative results, were:

1. The Coca-Cola Company
2. PepsiCo.
3. Nestlé
4. Danone
5. Mondelez International
6. Procter & Gamble
7. Unilever
8. Perfetti van Melle
9. Mars Inc.
10. Colgate-Palmolive