

Background

In December 2020, 7 RVRC students collaborated with PAssion WaVe@Jurong Lake to conduct a Kayaking Cleanup session at Jurong Lake.

This project aims to raise awareness of the litter our waterways by allowing the participants to **experience the picking up of trash firsthand** and **physically observing the amount of trash** that they could gather in 90 minutes.

The trash data were also utilized to survey the amount of debris in Jurong Lake.

Objectives

- To gather baseline data on the amount and type of debris found in Jurong Lake.
- To analyse the distribution of debris in Jurong Lake
- To communicate the findings to relevant stakeholders
- To educate stakeholders on the issue of debris

With the kayaking equipment kindly provided by PAssion WaVe@Jurong Lake, 85 participants from RVRC took part in the clean up efforts.

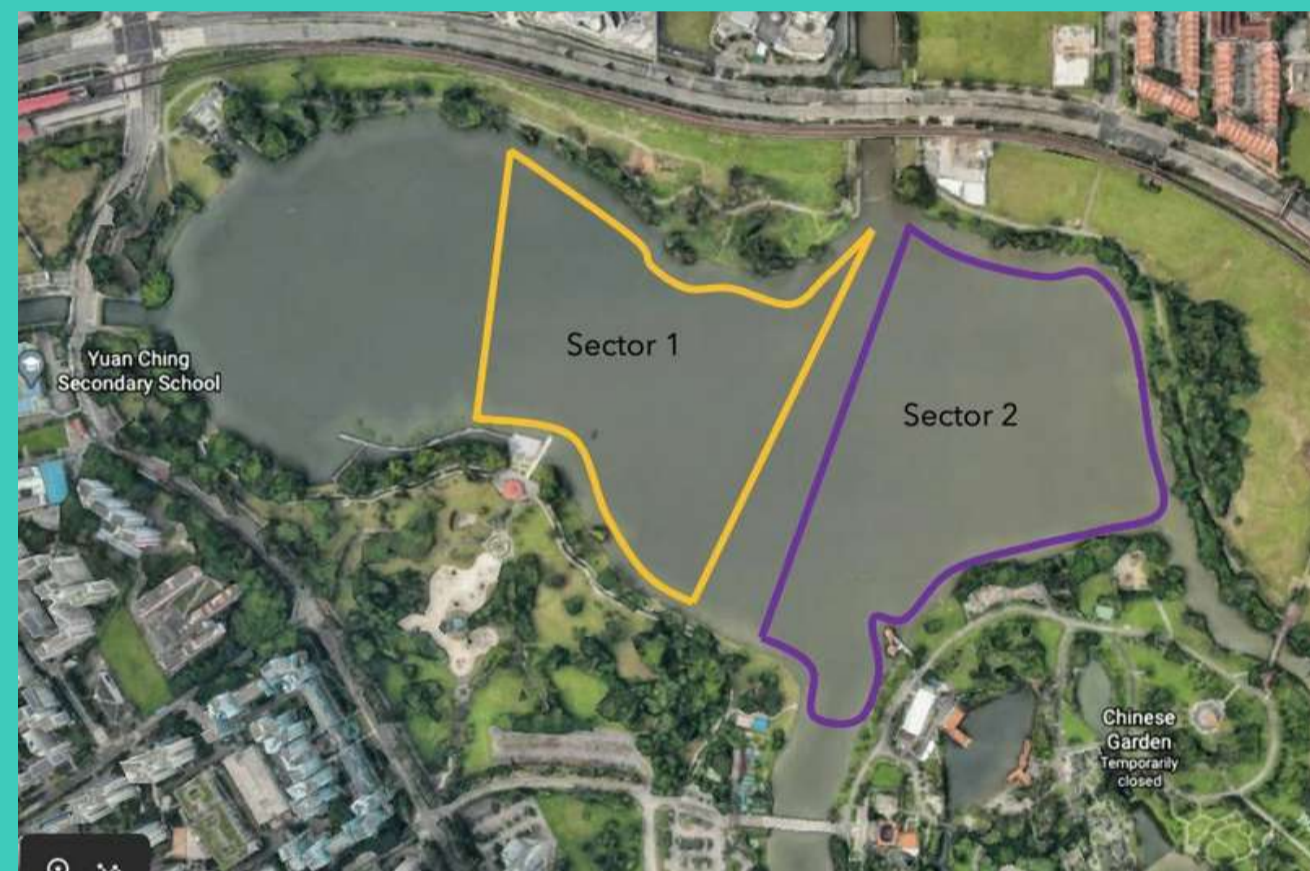


Students with the collected debris

Debris Collection Process and Data Summary



Preparing to launch off our kayaks



Map of Jurong Lake showing area of cleanup



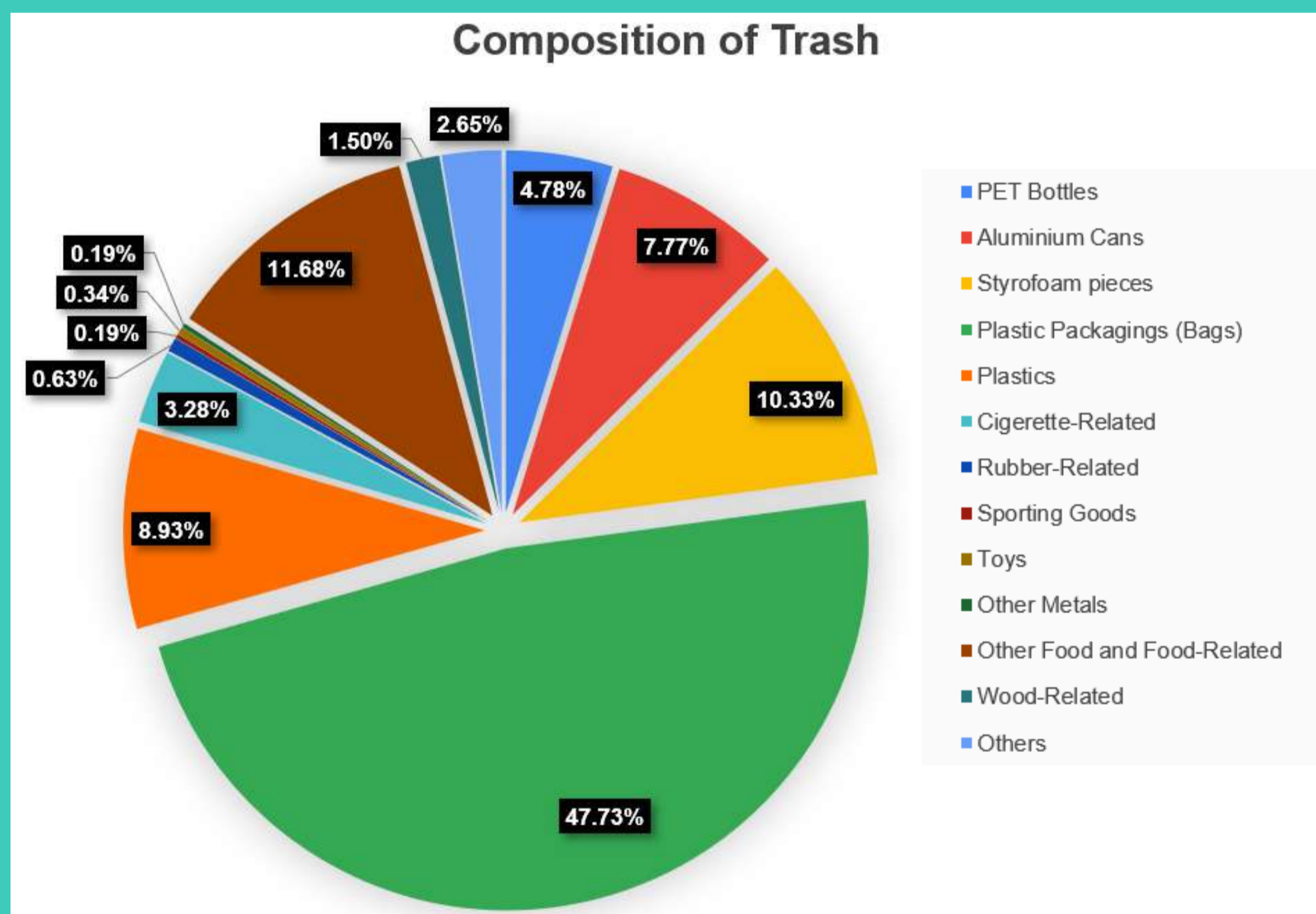
Sample of debris collected



Collecting debris in kayaks



Sorting of marine debris for counting



Composition of Marine Debris Collected

Results

The main pollutant in our waters were single use plastics derived mainly from the plastic packaging.

This is consistent with the top ten marine litter collected by International Coastal Cleanup Singapore in 2019.

Reflections

It was only when I was out on Jurong Lake, picking out individual trash pieces while floating on the calm waters in my kayak, did I truly feel the severity of the waste we generate. Clearing a stretch of the lake from trash only to be greeted the next day by more trash on the same stretch made me realise that this problem is one that will continue unless individual's perspectives change. We need to experience first-hand how our trash may end up in our ecosystems and how that affects the health of said ecosystem. I'm thankful I had the opportunity to do so and with that I take the responsibility to pass on this experience with others. ~ Jaspal Singh, Year 2

Working with PA not only made me more aware of the waste-pooling in our water-sources, but also the amount of dedication required to maintain it. Despite having several days of cleanups (some back-to-back), the amount of trash in the watercourse never seemed to diminish. Instead, we always seem to be finding more and more, highlighting the amount of waste actually being absentmindedly discarded without thought. By seeing first-hand the true scale of the issue, it undoubtedly left a greater impact on myself and my fellow peers. ~ Benjamin Png, Year 3

On the surface, Jurong Lake looks clean and pristine, but it is only when one looks beyond the initial appearance can we know about the trash that lies beneath. Attending a cleanup session seemed fun at first, but attending multiple cleanup sessions really highlighted the massive amount of trash that seemed never ending. That one plastic bag that was dropped might seem insignificant, but if everyone thought the same way, that would amount to 5.7million pieces of trash. Being present to actually see the amount of trash being accumulated daily really highlighted the importance of how these small actions can make an impact on the large scale. There are many issues hidden in plain sight, and one only has to take the initiative to look beneath the surface. ~ Keziah Kew, Year 3