

# Pick Up Plastic!

## Protect Marine Wildlife

### Data Collection Sheet

(Please photocopy and give one to each collection team)

Name of school/group (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of organiser \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Date of collection \_\_\_\_\_

Location of collection \_\_\_\_\_

Details of collection area (Important: Identify length of beach or riverbank etc. in 100 metre (328 feet) lengths as this helps with the data collection)

Number of people involved \_\_\_\_\_

Time taken in hours for collection \_\_\_\_\_

#### FREE eco-friendly shopping bag

Get a free campaign environmentally-friendly shopping bag for everyone who takes part in your *Pick Up Plastic* operation. Just send us this data collection sheet and a photograph of your clean up team in action.

Please return this completed form to:

IFAW, 8 Belmore Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010.

or fax to (02) 9288 4901

or email to: [info-au@ifaw.org](mailto:info-au@ifaw.org)

#### ITEMS COLLECTED

(Please fill in numbers of each item collected)

##### PLASTIC

Bags \_\_\_\_\_

Caps/Lids \_\_\_\_\_

Fishing gear (line/nets etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Cups \_\_\_\_\_

Bottles \_\_\_\_\_

Food containers/wrappers \_\_\_\_\_

Toys \_\_\_\_\_

Other (small pieces/unidentified etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Total plastic items collected \_\_\_\_\_

##### NON-PLASTIC

Glass (bottles etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Paper \_\_\_\_\_

Clothing \_\_\_\_\_

Metal (drinks cans etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Cigarette butts \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Total non-plastic items collected \_\_\_\_\_

Grand total of items collected \_\_\_\_\_

Number of rubbish bags filled \_\_\_\_\_

GUIDE

# Pick Up Plastic!

## Protect Marine Wildlife

Join our campaign to clean up plastic waste that is destroying our oceans and killing marine wildlife



Supported by:  
**Leonardo DiCaprio**  
Actor and Environmentalist



# How to organise your own clean-up operation

Not only will your clean-up directly help solve the problem it will also be part of a global effort by IFAW to raise awareness of the plastic plague that is harming the environment and animals.

- Do it with a friend
- Do it with a group (your school, friends or family)
- Do it anywhere – beach, riverbanks, lakes, parks, playgrounds etc.

We are focusing on plastic because it makes up nearly 90% of the debris in the oceans.

About four-fifths of marine rubbish comes from land, swept by wind or washed by rain off streets into drains, down streams and rivers, and out to sea.

This guide will give you an outline of how to carry out your clean-up operation.

## Facts about plastic

- A person uses a plastic carrier bag on average for only 12 minutes.
- A plastic bag can take between 400 to 1,000 years to break down in the environment.
- Many marine animals mistake plastic for food and swallow it, with painful and often fatal consequences.
- Plastic 'pellets' (the early form of plastic prior to use in manufacturing products) can contain toxins such as PCBs.
- Plastic exists as tiny particles in every part of the oceans. In some areas there is six times more plastic than plankton.
- Scientists believe that each year hundreds of thousands of seabirds and tens of thousands of marine mammals die after swallowing or being entangled in marine debris.
- About 200 million tonnes (196.8 tons) of plastic is produced in the world each year and it's on the increase. Only about 3% is recycled.
- The mass manufacture of plastic products began just over 50 years ago. Virtually every piece of the plastic produced since then is still in existence.
- Scientists estimate 5% of all the world's plastic has entered the oceans.
- More than 260 species of marine animals suffer from swallowing plastic.
- On just one square foot of beach the number of plastic particles (small plastic pieces) can range from hundreds to thousands.

## Take action against plastic pollution

Because of the amount of plastic waste around the world it cannot be solved by clean-up operations alone, but they are a good way to help combat the problem. Clean-up operations are extremely valuable to help raise awareness, educate and empower people, plus collect data. By taking part in IFAW's *Pick Up Plastic! Protect Marine Wildlife* you will be helping in your country and will be part of a worldwide campaign.

### Where?

It does not matter where you live – your clean-up will help to protect the seas and marine wildlife. It is ideal to organise your collection on a beach, riverbank, or lake shore. However, organising or participating in clean-ups in town is important too, because litter you find in your parks, streets and playgrounds can end up in the ocean. Indeed 80% of all the debris in the oceans comes from land.

### What to pick up?

Although we are focusing on picking up plastic, you should collect all kinds of litter during your clean-up operation. However, the fact is most of it will normally be plastic.

### Who does it?

It is best to do it with at least one other person, so you can share the litter collection and data collection roles. Obviously the more of you the better, so why not get a number of people to help out – your school, group, friends or family.  
*(NB: You may find there are beach clean-ups already run by other groups in your area and you may prefer to join in one of those. You could check this out on the internet.)*

### Data collection

On the back of this guide is a form for you to fill in when you organise your plastic pick up. Send this back to IFAW at the address on the data collection form and we will use it to help us compile data of the plastic plague and raise public awareness about the issue. If possible, send us a photo of your *Pick Up Plastic* operation in action. Anyone sending in a completed data form and photo will receive campaign environmentally-friendly shopping bags for all those who took part.

### Raise public awareness where you live

You can use your clean-up operation to raise awareness about the issue where you live. Write to the letters page of your local newspapers about the issue or telephone a local radio station about what you are doing. Your local press and media may well be interested in doing a story. They may come down to photograph the clean up taking place and interview you about it. You could even ask a local politician or celebrity to take part or launch your *Pick Up Plastic! Protect Marine Wildlife* operation.

## Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Joining our *Pick Up Plastic* operation is a great way to take action against the pollution problem. However, don't forget that in the long term, we all need to 'Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle' to make a real difference. Get others to sign up to our Plastic Bag Pledge.

## Safety first

*(NB: Before starting a collection go through all the points below with everyone participating)*

### DO NOT

- handle large metal drums that could contain poisonous or unknown substances.
- pick up sharp objects
- lift anything too heavy
- walk close to water's edge or any potentially dangerous area
- approach animals
- remove natural items i.e. driftwood, seaweed etc.

### DO

- wear thick protective gloves
- take drinking water with you
- define area to be cleaned in 100 metre lengths
- decide on time limit
- have at least one adult involved
- recycle as much of the rubbish collected as possible
- seek an adult's assistance if you find a syringe
- respect local environment, such as plants.

## Teams of two

Teams of two work well. However if there are enough of you then larger teams may be preferred. For example, with a team of four, you may find you just need one data collector and three of you pick up the plastic and other debris.

**Team of two**  
Debris collector  
Data Collector

**Team of four**  
Debris collectors x 3  
Data Collector

- Refuse what you don't need
- Reduce the number of things you throw away in the rubbish. Purchase items that will last. Use products with packaging as free of toxics as possible
- Reuse items like shopping bags rather than throw them away. Repair products rather than replace them with new ones. Donate unwanted items to charity and to reuse stores
- Recycle bottles, paper, plastics and tins so they can be turned into useful products again.