Pick Up Plastic!
Protect Marine Wildlife

Join in 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 Organize 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 trash 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 in the War on 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 again 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 organize your collection on a beach, riverbank, or lake shore. However, organizing 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.

Data Collection
On the back of this guide is a form for you to fill in when you organize your Plastic Pick Up. Use it to help your class 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.

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
(Note: 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 waste 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 trash. 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.
Pick Up Plastic!
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Data Collection Sheet
(Please photocopy and give one to each collection team)

Name of school/group (if applicable)
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Name of organizer __________________________________________________________
Address ______________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Postal code __________________________ Telephone __________________________
Email __________________________ Date of collection _________________________
Location of collection __________________________

Details of collection area (Important: Identify length of beach or riverbank etc. in 100 metre lengths as this helps with the data collection)
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Number of people involved __________________________
Time taken in hours for collection __________________________
Other observations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEMS COLLECTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Please fill in numbers of each item collected)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLASTIC</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bags ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caps/Lids ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing gear (line/nets etc.) ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cups ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottles ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food containers/wrappers ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toys ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (small pieces/unidentified etc.) ______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total plastic items collected ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NON-PLASTIC</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass (bottles etc.) ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal (drinks cans etc.) ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette butts ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non-plastic items collected _________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total of items collected ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of garbage bags filled ________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FREE Reusable Shopping Bag
Get a free reusable shopping bag for everyone who takes part in your Pick Up Plastic operation. Just send us this data collection sheet and a photo of your clean up team in action.

IFAW.org
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A Better World for Animals and People