

Pollution



“Last year 689 volunteers took part in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Beachwatch project and collected 1056kg of litter - this is about the same weight as 20 people!”

What can I do to help?

- Whenever you visit the beach, remember to put your rubbish in a litter bin or take it home with you - and recycle it.
- Only flush toilet paper down your toilet. It's designed to break down. Anything else might get past the water treatment works, into our rivers and sea, and end up on our beaches.
- Encourage other people not to leave litter.



Litter grabbers

Beachwatch volunteers looking after the AONB

Lots of rubbish

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Photographs by Peter Evans, Chris Whitewick, Marine Conservation Society and SCH AONB.
Cartoons: Sally Seagull © Simon Reid



“Hi I’m Sally seagull; I live on the coast in Suffolk. Did you know that litter left behind by people can hurt me? Help me and my friends by holding on to your litter and balloons and taking them home.”

Litter and pollution can affect wildlife both at sea and on land. It is also dirty and unpleasant and spoils the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Danger to wildlife

Animals can get tangled up in and choke on items of litter such as string from balloons, plastic bags or fishing line.

Once it is in the sea, litter can travel a very long way, hundreds or even thousands of miles. Litter from the UK has been found in tropical seas, having been accidentally eaten by turtles. Plastic can-holders can get stuck around birds’ necks and bodies. Fish and other marine animals often get stuck in nets that have been lost by fishermen.

Things to do:

How far can litter travel?
Use an atlas to work out how far away it is from the UK to Hawaii to see how far litter can travel.



Wildlife enjoying the water at Pin mill

Clean water essential for wildlife



“Both litter and pollution can travel great distances across the sea; a sweet wrapper dropped at Felixstowe beach could end up as far away as Hawaii!”

When a beach has become covered in litter, people are less likely to visit the beach, which is not good for business in local villages and towns. It can also be dangerous for people as broken glass and sharp plastic can hurt us.



Nylon netting

Nets left behind by fisherman at Southwold

Pollution

If large amounts of chemicals such as oil are leaked into the sea, this is called pollution. It can have damaging effects on both wildlife and the surrounding area. Birds and other animals like seals and fish can get covered in oil and be poisoned.



Plastic nets

“Oil and chemicals could get stuck to my feathers and I would not be able to fly”

Plastic can holder

Get arty:

Make a Poster

Make a poster from bits of litter collected nearby to show how it is bad for the environment and wildlife! If it was your job to keep our beaches clean, what would you do?

Lorry loads of rubbish found!

What can you do?

The Marine Conservation Society in 2010 discovered that beach litter has increased by 110% since 1994. They discovered over a third of all litter found on beaches had been dropped by people visiting the coast. The rest of the litter had come from fishing, shipping and sewage.

Plastics that don't rot away



Litter left behind by people on the beach

Drinks cans

Top 5 items of beach litter found on the coast

1. Pieces of plastic
2. Plastic wrappers from crisps, sweets and lollies
3. Fishing line from anglers
4. Plastic rope
5. Plastic bottle caps and lids

Wooden pallets and driftwood

This is what is working!

- Volunteer schemes like Beachwatch
- More bins near beaches
- Adverts to ask people to take litter home
- New laws to make businesses manage their waste better

Metal and rubber left behind by people



Amy our Beachwatch volunteer scales loads of litter at Trimley

Out and about:

Join Beachwatch

Get your school to join Beachwatch, like other schools in Suffolk, by calling the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Unit. It's lots of fun and good exercise!



Cormorant tangled up in a plastic can holder