

Emirates
Nature



WWF

LOSE THE LITTER

HANDBOOK

SELF-LED VOLUNTEERING

Welcome to “Lose the Litter” – a self-led volunteering activity under the Leaders of Change programme. In this guide we will go through what is litter, its impact and how we can take action to preserve our environment.

We are aiming to guide and equip you with the tools and knowledge you need to conduct a successful, impactful clean up by yourself. When Leaders of Change conduct clean ups effectively, and eventually include their friends, family, and community, it increases environmental awareness in the society, creating a positive change in behavior and protecting our natural environment.

WHAT IS LITTER?

First, let us start by defining what litter is so you have a better understanding of the problem. The Collins Dictionary defines litter as “rubbish that is left lying around outside”. Litter comes in many forms and can be made up of various materials. For example, this can include plastic bottles, tissue, cigarette butts, aluminum drinks cans, nylon ropes, etc. Litter not only affects the beauty of our environment, but it is a significant problem that impacts nature and wildlife negatively – including us humans!



IMPACT OF LITTER:

Litter can be found on land and in the seas. WWF estimates that at least 11 million tonnes of plastic enter the world’s oceans every year. This can be fatal – for example, over 100,000 marine mammals die every year from marine litter. Moreover, Litter also causes other forms of pollution: for example, when plastic degrades it can release chemicals and/or become microplastic. Some litter, like cigarette butts, can poison our environment through the release of heavy metals and nicotine. Recently, it was found that the average person consumes up to 5 grams of plastic weekly as a result. Plastic contributes

heavily to Greenhouse Gasses emissions as it was estimated in 2019 that plastic contributed to more than 850 million tons of GHGs to the atmosphere, which could increase to 2.8 billion tons by 2050! Thus, we can see that climate change and marine litter are interlinked and understanding the connection between the two would help in establishing solutions to protect our environment. Fossil fuel-based plastic have a direct impact on climate through their greenhouse emissions. On the other hand, the presence of marine litter can undermine the climate resilience of the marine ecosystem.

Borne out of these global issues, “Lose the Litter” was created in order to help our experts better understand the problem with your help, so we can urgently fix it. We will do this by playing our part as individuals in collecting and logging litter as well as working towards informing policymakers and monitoring the effectiveness of those policies in the long run.

By joining the Lose the Litter mission, you will help us by:

- Helping us analyze where, how much and which type of plastic litter is found in nature. This will allow us to determine where plastic litter is coming from, who is responsible for it being there, thereby enabling us to take targeted action to prevent this litter from reaching the natural environment.
- Supporting us in moving towards a circular economy.
- Finding solutions to turn the tide of litter in nature!

This activity contributes to the following goals Emirates Nature-WWF aiming to achieve under Leaders of Change:

GOAL 1

Support us in understanding the source of plastic waste and in the creation of a single-use plastic policy by collecting and removing 2,000 kg of litter across the UAE.

GOAL 2

Help transform the way humans produce, consume, reuse, and behave by identifying, innovating and co-creating solutions for a nature-positive world.

HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE AS A CITIZEN SCIENTIST?

Did you know that as an individual, you can contribute to science and conservation efforts? Citizen science is when the public participate and collaborate to help collect information that contributes to scientific research to increase scientific knowledge. Through citizen science, everyone is given the opportunity to share and contribute to data monitoring and collection programs on a community and global level.

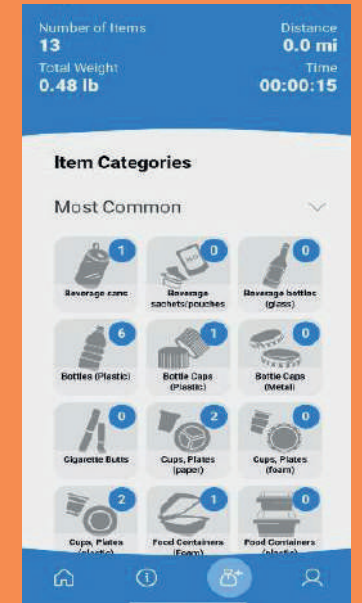
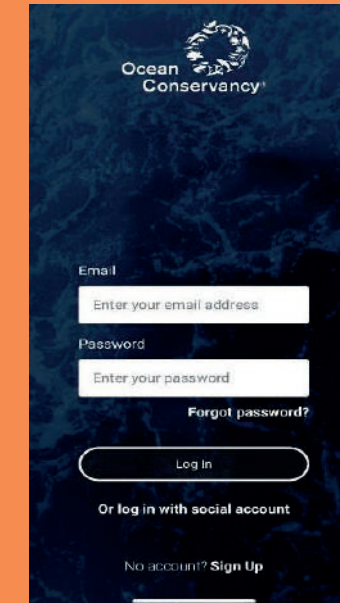
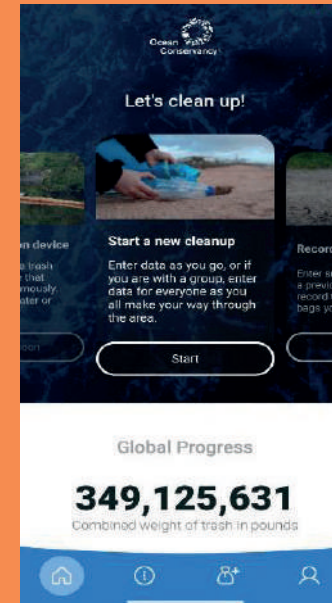
Citizen science has a variety of ongoing research projects, some are complex and require professional input, whereas others are open for contributions from the public. Some of the many projects which are accessible to the public include: iNaturalist, Seek, Clean Swell. This guide will focus on addressing the litter by using Clean Swell!

It is difficult for scientists to collect all the information and analyze all the data by themselves. However, with you as a citizen scientist, you can contribute to recording and analyzing data and be their eyes and hands in the field. An example of this would be in recording data of the litter you find during clean up on various locations.

Ultimately, this data will be used by policymakers to develop policies that would prevent litter reaching out to the ecosystem in the first place. At the same time, while you are practicing citizen science you can communicate behavioral change with your friends and colleagues by refusing to use single used plastic and shift towards a more sustainable option such as reusable water bottles.



USE CLEAN SWELL TO RECORD YOUR DATA!



Clean Swell is an Ocean Conservancy project, encouraging the removal of plastic and junk from shorelines and beaches. The data one collects is uploaded to the Ocean Conservancy's global ocean trash data base, delivering a snapshot of ocean trash on a global scale, and helping researchers and policy makers in developing solutions to address waste problems. To use clean swell effectively, follow the steps:

- Download the app and sign up: for Android users, visit [here](#), for Apple users, visit [here](#).
- Head out to your favorite natural location and start collecting the trash around you.
- Start a new clean up in the app, enter "Emirates Nature WWF" as the name of the project, group name and list the number of people in your group.
- Start recording each item you collect correctly by clicking on the item icon in the app as displayed on the below image.
- Take care to ensure to follow the instructions so that surveys are properly performed and the results are reliable, comparable and reproducible
- Once you are done, complete and end the cleanup by submitting the data.
- Take a screenshot of your clean up report and share it with us at support@enwwf.ae to gain your volunteer hours.
- You can track and check your contribution by clicking on the cleanup history.

Once you have mastered clean swell, you can organize your own clean up events and invite members of your community to take part and be citizen scientists as well.

TIPS TO MAKE YOUR EVENTS EVEN MORE TRANSFORMATIVE

Take your clean up to the next level by leading the change amongst your friends and family and community. With collective action, we can create the change we want to see and save our natural world!

1. FOSTER AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION TO NATURE

There is strong evidence that more frequent contact with nature increases pro- environmental attitudes and behaviour. Learning about the complexity and sophistication of non-human species also helps us value nature more. Not only are we motivated to protect what we love but spending time in nature has the added benefit of boosting our physical and mental wellbeing.

- When communicating with others, focus on the wonder of nature; there is still a lot left to fight for!
- Help deepen others' respect for nature by sharing interesting snippets of information, especially about the sophistication and complexity of wildlife
- Engage the senses and encourage mindful moments. Take time to make the group aware of experiences in the moment, encourage them to: listen to the sounds of nature, the smell of the air, the touch of the wind etc.
- Gamification: make it fun! Encourage camaraderie and foster teamwork by splitting the group into diverse teams

2. HELP YOUR GROUP FIND A NEW PERSPECTIVE

In 1949, Aldo Leopold wrote, "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect". Since then, Ecopsychologists studying connectedness with nature have found this to be true. Challenging our beliefs, sense of self, identity, perceptions and ideas about nature is an opportunity to reinforce the notion that we are part of a system and any change we make affects the system as a whole, positively or negatively.

- Create opportunities to reflect and engage in a structured discussion around the ecosystem, behaviour, causes and solutions. Encourage systems-thinking (how are things connected to one another/us)
- How does beach litter affect you personally? How does it make you feel? What gives you hope?
- Try to work out where an item may have come from. Check best-before dates to estimate time an item has spent at sea
- Tally various brands. Who is responsible? What could we do differently?
- Accountability: what are the causes and solutions?
- Encourage non-judgmental dialogue and active listening
- Encourage everyone to listen to one another, ask clarification questions to make sure you understand and paraphrase what the other has said to ensure understanding (active listening skills)
- Encourage one another to express opinions, experiences and ask questions openly and comfortably
- Praise people for respecting different ideas and opinions even though they may not agree/discussion around the ecosystem, behaviour, causes and solutions.
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3. ENCOURAGE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Focusing on changing our behaviour has potential to go a long way towards shaping an optimistic future for our planet. Research has found that as much as 80 % of the factors influencing behaviour do not result from knowledge or awareness. Rather, it has to do with automatic and unconscious influences on our behaviour such as the impact of social norms, emotions and incentives.

- Make the right thing to do the most convenient (green as default) and set the social norm by being a role model and celebrating, promoting and providing better choices
- Use either reusable or compostable cups, plates, etc.
- Opt for a vegan/vegetarian menu and source locally as much as possible
- Encourage public transport or ride shares
- Make it easy for participants to dispose of waste responsibly
- Provide cues and reminders for participants to act responsibly towards nature such as pre-trip emails and mid-trip reminders.
- Ask participants to publicly pledge a personal change

4. CREATE MOMENTUM FOR THE MOVEMENT

We are faced with a daunting challenge which requires engaging individuals, households, communities, and changing patterns of production and consumption. We need to work together to increase our impact. Taking collective action creates momentum for the movement and taking part in citizen science contributes to understanding of problems and empowers us to become part of the solution.

- Encourage your group to log their data independently and become a Leader of Change
- Share the experience on social media and tag us @EWS_WWF
- Make sure to collect feedback to improve your setup





Emirates Nature-WWF is a non-profit organisation established to conserve the United Arab Emirates' natural heritage and build a future where people and nature thrive. The organization was founded in 2001 under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Ruler's Representative in the Al Dhafra Region and Chairman of the Governing Board of the Environment Agency—Abu Dhabi, as a legacy of the late Sheikh Zayed's vision for the United Arab Emirates. For two decades, Emirates Nature—WWF has been a prominent and active partner in environmental conservation in the MENA region. We work in association with WWF, one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organisations. As a local conservation organisation and volunteer platform, we empower, convene and mobilise civil society, government and business to support the UAE's sustainability agenda and deliver transformative impact at scale for the benefit of people and planet alike.

For more information about Emirates Nature-WWF, please visit emiratesnaturewwf.ae