

ACTIVITY 1 Plastic Cleanup



Hosting a plastic cleanup is an effective way of sharing the enormity of plastic pollution. Your WMBD cleanup can be fun and help to protect birds!

Planning Your Cleanup

Pick a location. Choose a location that has easy access, sufficient parking, and is in need of a cleanup.

Identify the property owner and obtain permission. Landowners may be private, city, or a national park or wildlife refuge. It is important to have the proper permissions before you begin to plan your event.

Choose a date and a time. Check with cooperating partners to determine an appropriate time to schedule your event.

Determine how garbage will be picked up and disposed of properly. Talk with your city's waste disposal company or learn where the city dump is located, when it is open, and how much it costs to dispose of garbage.

Limit the number of participants, especially if this is your first cleanup and you have limited assistance. We recommend a first-time event have no more than 30-50 participants.

Visit your site before hosting the activity to be sure that no hazards are present.



Address Safety Issues

SAFETY COMES FIRST! Keeping your staff, volunteers, and participants safe is absolutely crucial.

Require volunteers to sign a waiver of liability for your own protection and to emphasize the importance of safety.

Examine your cleanup location. Is it close to a road or dangerous machinery? You may need to mark restricted areas where your volunteers should not collect plastic. If the site is near vehicles and/or roads, provide bright or reflective clothing, or safety vests, and/or set boundaries.

Familiarize yourself with plants and animals at the site that could pose potential safety hazards. For example, is poison ivy or oak present? Could venomous snakes be present?

Most sites will have items that could be hazardous if not handled correctly, such as injured or dead wildlife, sharp items including broken glass, toxic materials such as cleaning products and batteries, and other items such as hypodermic needles. **Only participants with the required safety equipment and who are trained and experienced should remove these items.**

Require participants to wear appropriate clothing during the cleanup, including closed-toed shoes and the recommended gloves.

Note any boundaries that volunteers should be aware of. Be sure participants don't wander onto private property, into areas where they could become lost, or areas where they could become separated from the group.

Never burn plastic or other trash, which can result in toxic smoke and potentially spread fire. Work with your city or other partners to ensure that you can properly dispose of the garbage.

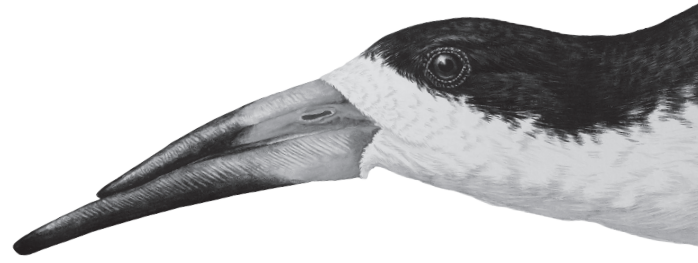
Recruit Participants:

Identify your target audience and the number of people you want to participate. The more people you invite, the more help you will need organizing and managing your cleanup. The age of your participants will also affect its organization. For example, you may want more supervision if you are working with youth.

RECRUITING TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

- **Work with a group you already know.** This may include scouts, a senior group, an environmental or bird club, or a neighborhood.
- **Ask participants to RSVP** so that you can be sure your numbers don't exceed your capacity to safely manage the activity.
- **Recruit local** conservation organizations and clubs.
- **Make and distribute event fliers** around your community and/or neighborhood to increase participation if your event is open to the public.
- **Incorporate your activity** into other WMBD events.
- **Unless you are working with a youth group,** determine the minimum age at which children may participate without an adult supervisor.

Plastic Cleanup (continued)



Plan Day-of-Event Timing

Develop a detailed schedule of the cleanup to organize the day and ensure you complete all of your activities.

The schedule should include the following times:

1. Setup before participants arrive.
2. Instructing participants and distributing materials, equipment, and data forms.
3. Cleanup start and finish.
4. Gathering equipment from participants.
5. Pickup of garbage by the city, natural area, or other partner.

Have Fun!

There are a number of ways to make your event more fun, but they will require planning ahead.

Give rewards. You can acknowledge the team that has the heaviest bag, the team that collects the most garbage, and the team that finds the most interesting or unusual item.

Take plenty of photos and post them on social media.

Have a dinner or other wrap-up after the cleanup to celebrate your accomplishments.

Day of Event

Event setup

1. Arrive before the participants.
2. Set up sign-in, water, snack, and shade stations.
3. Place signage to identify stations, such as First Aid and Registration.
4. Organize the supplies (gloves, garbage bags, and data forms) so that they are easy to distribute. Place gloves into one container, garbage bags into another, and data forms on clipboards with a pencil into a third.
5. Put up any boundaries required for hazards or restricted areas.
6. If your community recycles, plan to have participants separate their items into bags for recycling and bags for trash.

End of Day

1. Properly dispose of all garbage and recyclables.
2. Inspect the site to ensure that all of your supplies and equipment have been removed.

After the Event

1. Thank the cleanup volunteers and sponsors.
2. **Compile Data.** If you have an event coordinator, have him/her gather volunteer data forms, compile the data, and submit online.
3. Enter your cleanup data at www.migratorybirdday.org/events and select the **Submit Cleanup Data**.
4. When naming your cleanup event, please precede the name with WMBD-, such as WMBD-Clear Creek.
5. As with the cleanup data, if there is a coordinator, the bird observations should be compiled. Submit your bird observations to eBird, using the account: **EFTA_Birdday** The password is: **WMBD2019DMAM**

OBJECTIVES

- **To engage your community**, hands-on, in an action that helps to protect birds.
- **To demonstrate** plastic pollution in our environment.
- **To motivate** participants to reduce their plastic use.

NEED CLEANUP SUPPLIES?

Visit www.migratorybirdday.org/shop to purchase a Family or Group Cleanup Kit

AGES

8 years – Adult
Younger children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian

MATERIALS

- Protective gloves
- Garbage bags
- Data form

TIME

3 - 6 hours