



## WHY DO WE CLEAR LITTER FROM OUR RIVERS?

Packaging and waste are essential parts of life, despite efforts to reduce “the bag”, but when not disposed of properly, it is unsightly, damaging to wildlife and, ultimately, a threat to our very existence. Here are 10 reasons why we should remove and keep litter out of our waterways:

1. Litter attracts more litter.
2. If we can't manage litter in our rivers how can we manage the more complex issues and problems? It's the tip of the iceberg, a barometer of the health of our river and of whether people feel rivers are a conduit for rubbish and poisons.
3. Clearing rubbish gets people out to parts of the catchment they otherwise might not see. Such exercises are valuable in enthusing people in river management.
4. It is unsightly, particularly when hung up in trees and wrapped around roots and stones.
5. Broken glass and other sharps can make swimming, wading or other uses of the river highly dangerous.
6. Unused contents can attract vermin.
7. It can damage fish, animals and birds. Small pieces can be ingested and kill wildlife.
8. The chemicals released on breakdown can be poisonous or even change the gender of fish or other wildlife causing untold damage. Containers often have residual chemicals that may be poisonous
9. When it breaks down the miniscule particles of ground plastic can be ingested by plankton and bacteria and thus may be built into the basic building blocks of life with unknown consequences.
10. When eventually swept out to sea much of it will be deposited around our coasts or join those vast areas in the sea such as 'The Great Garbage Patch', which is said to cover 26 million square km with plastic and other junk calculated to weigh 100 million tons.

The Wye catchment has roughly 1,000 miles of bank length. We plan to clear all of it. On such exercises, volunteers usually take out several bags of rubbish from every mile of bank.

River users (anglers, walkers, boat enthusiasts, sightseers, naturalists, farmers and industry) can all contribute to clean up the mess and **Keep It Clean** in future.

So please help us.

The Wye and Usk Foundation