

Trash talk

Animals are hurt or killed by our trash every day — animals like this albatross who died with a stomach full of garbage. Perhaps he thought the bottle caps and other bits of plastic were food and ate them. Or perhaps his mother thought the same and fed them to him as a baby. Either way, the result was deadly.

Some people just don't see the harm in littering. After all, what's one cigarette butt or candy wrapper going to do? The truth is even a single piece of litter can be very dangerous. So, when you see garbage lying on the ground in the park, at school or on the beach, take action! Remember: every litter bit hurts.

Get off your butt!

Cigarette butts scattered on the ground eventually end up in waterways. In fact, they are the most common item found along shorelines. Animals swallow cigarette filters, which can cause blockages and severely injure or kill them. Cigarette butts are also full of harmful chemicals and toxins that can make animals sick.

Want to help?

- ✓ Put on some gloves and clean up butts you see on the ground.



Tempting traps

Food containers such as bottles and jars often become death traps when left lying around. Unsuspecting animals try to get at the food scraps inside. Once trapped, animals can starve to death. They can also be injured as they frantically try to free themselves. A lucky few are found before it's too late and taken to a wildlife rehabilitation centre to recover — often from deep neck wounds.

Want to help?

- ✓ Recycle as many plastic products as you can.
- ✓ Buy things with less packaging.
- ✓ Avoid products that come in plastics you cannot reuse or recycle.

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION



This turtle was rescued just in time.

Entangled and strangled

Six-pack rings look harmless, but birds, fish, turtles and other wildlife get tangled up in the open loops. They can be strangled or, in the water, they can drown. Six-pack rings can also wrap tightly and painfully around animals, preventing them from feeding or moving properly.

Want to help?

- ✓ Cut up the rings before you throw them away or — even better — recycle them, if possible.



Bag gags

Plastic bags are light and easily blown by the wind. Not surprisingly, they are picked up by shoreline cleanup crews in the tens of thousands. Many plastic bags eventually end up in the ocean where marine animals mistake them for food. They can choke animals or cause life-threatening blockages.

Want to help?

- ✓ Don't litter plastic bags and pick up any you see.
- ✓ Bring your own cloth bags when you go to the grocery store.
- ✓ Ask for paper bags instead — and don't forget to recycle them!
- ✓ Ask your local grocery store to promote cloth bags.

* The top five items picked up in the 2011 Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup:

1. Cigarette butts (351,238)
2. Food wrappers (110,018)
3. Plastic bags (71,200)
4. Caps and lids (65,220)
5. Plastic drink bottles (39,308)

The party's over

Whether released accidentally or on purpose, helium balloons drift on air currents for many kilometres. Once they burst or deflate, they come down. They usually end up in waterways. Balloon strings and ribbons can entangle wildlife, strangling them or painfully cutting into a leg. When swallowed, the balloons themselves can cause animals to choke or lead to fatal blockages.

Want to help?

- ✓ Choose air-filled balloons instead of helium ones. Say "No!" to balloon releases.



WILDLIFE RESCUE ASSOCIATION

