

Participant information pack

Wildlife aware beach cleans

with Bird Aware Solent



Removing litter from beaches is a great way to support wildlife which lives on the coast.

Since this activity may cause disturbance, help keep birds and other wildlife protected by following the Bird Aware Coastal Code:



Check with your beach clean coordinator about potentially sensitive wildlife areas including:

Resting birds

Shingle beaches, spits and islands, as well as manmade structures like jetties are used by resting birds. They may be very well camouflaged.

Feeding birds

Mudflats and saltmarsh habitats are essential feeding grounds. Birds will mostly be found near the water line.

Nesting birds (April to September)

You might find areas of beach are roped off or marked with signs where birds are nesting on the ground. Avoid cleaning in their vicinity.



Seals

Look out for seals that are 'hauled out' or resting on land, especially during breeding season: June to August for common seals and November to January for grey seals.



Vulnerable marine or coastal plants

Take care of marine plants on beaches and in more sheltered locations which support highly specialised plants. Take care where you place your feet to avoid damaging vegetation



Larger bits of rubbish and debris may have become wildlife habitats

Check very carefully before removing or moving, keeping in mind that tiny animals may be hidden in crevices.



Leave natural items on site

Items such as shells, feathers, cuttlefish bones and plants enrich a habitat.



Check with your coordinator if unsure

For example check with before removing material that has anything growing on it.



Avoid turning things over and digging for litter

Only remove visible litter.



Strandlines (high water marks) are important habitats for many small creatures

Walk beside rather than on strandline material - it's a vital feeding area for birds.



Tip

If it's essential to clear litter on the strandline, pick a time **JUST** after the tide has turned to go out as it's likely to be less damaging to wildlife.



Looking out for wildlife

Always remember the Bird Aware Coastal Code:

Look out for birds, move further away if they become alert, keep dogs alongside you and follow instructions on signs.

If birds fly away from an area, avoid cleaning that patch of ground as they might return.

If you are lucky enough to see seals during your beach clean-up, remember to:

▼ Remain vigilant to seals becoming alert to their presence

Look out for signs such as:

- seals lifting their heads/becoming alert
- seals becoming restless or shifting around
- seals moving into the water: flushing or stampeding into the water.

▼ Move slowly away if there is any change in the seals' behaviour.



Share your findings

Some things you find on the coast may be of interest to researchers. Consider contributing your valuable data to the following projects:

- ▼ **Mermaids purses**
[Great Eggcase Hunt and The Shark Trust](#)
- ▼ **Dead birds**
Report to the Defra helpline: 03459 33 55 77
- ▼ **Nurdles (pellets of plastic)**
[Great Nurdle Hunt](#)
- ▼ **2 Minute Beach Clean app**
Search for **BeachClean** in the app store
- ▼ **Species of note**
[Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust](#)
[Sussex Biodiversity Record Office](#)
- ▼ Use the Marine Conservation Society **Beachwatch app** to report all litter. Here's **why**.

Tip

If you find an animal that may be injured or in distress and you're unsure what to do, call a local rescue organisation.