



IRELAND
leave no trace



HOW TO LEAVE NO TRACE

While enjoying the
South and East Cork Bird Trail



SECAD

South & East Cork Area Development



This publication was produced by South and East Cork Area Development Ltd (SECAD) in conjunction with Leave No Trace Ireland through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the National Development Plan 2007 - 2013.



Visit www.ringofcork.ie and discover more things to do in the South and East Cork area, such as family fun and adventure breaks, historic trails, romantic getaways, sporting stays, beach walks and spa-breaks!

Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to present to the reader, things worth thinking about when leaving no trace in the SECAD area and while enjoying the South and East Cork Bird trail and other outdoor recreation experiences in South and East Cork. Once we understand why we should or shouldn't do a certain thing, then it becomes easier for us to make a better choice. Hopefully this booklet will inspire people to leave no trace and will also help justify the leave no trace message by presenting relevant information that relates to the recreational impacts we are having on the Irish outdoors.

You will find the sources of the cited information contained within this booklet on pages 25 & 26.

If you find the facts in this booklet interesting, then you can find out more by reading "101 things to think about while leaving no trace in Ireland" by Kennedy and O'Halloran, 2015. It is available for viewing online at www.leavenotraceireland.org and contains many more research based facts that relate to Leave No Trace in Ireland.



About SECAD and the South and East Cork Bird Trail

South and East Cork Area Development (SECAD) is a local not-for-profit community led development company that works in partnership with state agencies, local authorities, the community sector, recreation and tourism bodies and social partners such as employer, trade union, farming and environmental organisations.

Through a 'bottom up' approach, SECAD supports people, community and enterprise in a diverse number of ways, including the provision of education and training, mentoring and advisory services, employment support services, technical and project management assistance, managing work placement programmes, capital grants and facilitating networking opportunities. SECAD's overall objective is to promote greater Sustainability across the Communities that live in South & East Cork.

SECAD accesses public funds (from the EU, State and Local Authorities) and Private/Corporate Donations to support their development programmes; The South & East Cork Bird-Trail is one example of SECAD's multi-dimensional strategy to encourage a greater awareness of our most precious environment whilst also promoting eco-education and eco-tourism across South & East Cork. This Bird Trail is a driving route of over 100km stretching from Rocky Bay in South Cork to Youghal in East Cork linking a range of different locations and habitats. The trail takes you on a journey through a region International Importance for birds and is suitable for anyone who has an interest in nature. It's a great experience for young and old alike and can be enjoyed by complete beginners or bird watching enthusiasts. The entire route can be driven in one day, or you could also spend the day at just one location. The more time you spend in each place the more birds you will see and the type and number of birds' present changes throughout the seasons.

SECAD is also supporting a range of complementary developments such as walking, cycling and water based trails and encouraging entrepreneurs to create supporting services. To learn more please visit www.secad.ie and www.ringofcork.ie.



About Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace is an outdoor skills and ethics programme designed to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. It is based on 7 principles which encourage people to make better decisions when using the outdoors, in order to minimise the impact of recreation on the outdoor environment. The Leave No Trace concept originated in the USA in the 1960's and was incorporated as a non-profit organisation in 1994. Leave No Trace Ireland was established in 2006 and today it is a conservation charity committed to raising awareness of Ireland's rich natural heritage and protecting the outdoors for future generations. Some examples of leave no trace in practice may include: being considerate of other users of the outdoors, keeping your dog under effective control, picking up your litter, avoiding causing unnecessary disturbance to wildlife and farm animals and leaving things as we find them for the benefit of others.

The 7 Principles of Leave No Trace are...

Plan Ahead and Prepare

Be Considerate of Others

Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife

Travel and Camp on Durable Ground

Leave What You Find

Dispose of Waste Properly

Minimise the Effects of Fire

“What is the good of your stars and trees, your sunrise and the wind, if they do not enter into our daily lives?” E. M. Forster



**Things
to think
about**

**... And tips on how to
leave no trace**

Plan ahead and prepare

SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON

began planning for his Trans-Antarctica Expedition of 1914 – 1917, in 1909, almost

5 YEARS

before he was ready to make his historic journey¹



OYSTERCATCHER numbers fell by **2/3**

When planning where to go on activity, please consider wildlife. For example, a study on bird disturbance factors which focused on approximately 3000 Oystercatchers (*Haematopus ostralegus*) in a protected site in Dublin Bay, showed that the presence of these birds decreased by two thirds in parts of the site where kite surfing took place. The disturbance caused by kite surfing also negatively affected the ability of the birds to feed. Dogs were shown to also cause significant disturbance to the Oystercatchers².



Check the weather forecast and always be prepared for changing weather conditions.



Wet, cold or unprepared visitors will be more likely to abandon leave no trace techniques.



When parking, please consider that the emergency services, land managers and local residents need access at all times.



Be prepared to split larger parties into smaller groups to help minimise the impact you leave on the environment, local residents and other visitors.



Think about scheduling your trip to avoid times of high use, because visits to popular destinations during peak use periods, such as holidays and weekends, are often fraught with traffic, crowding, delays, and conflicts with other groups.



“

“Rowing harder doesn't help if the boat is headed in the wrong direction.”

Kenichi Ohmae

Be considerate of others

Under the

OCCUPIERS LIABILITY ACT 1995

an 'occupier' or landowner can give a 'recreational user' permission to enter their land. This does not, however, make the recreational user a 'visitor' and does not increase the duty of care owed by the landowner³.



We all enjoy the outdoors in different ways. Pay attention, expect to encounter others and be courteous.



Treat another's property as you would treat your own.



Respect "No Trespassing" and other signs.



To some, technology is a necessity even in remote places. To others, it is inappropriate. Try to keep the noise level down and let nature's sound prevail.



'Advice I would give is to keep surfing with "Aloha." Always feel that if anything goes wrong, it is your fault. If you hit a guy with your board – it's your fault. If a guy hits you – it is your fault.'

Dorian "Doc" Paskowitz

Cynophobia

is the extremely common 'fear of dogs'. It can restrict the sufferers' normal routine and limit their enjoyment of outdoor activities, particularly in places where many outdoor enthusiasts bring their dogs along, including beaches, the woods and local parks⁴.

Having 'effectual control' of your dog, if off leash, means that it will return to the owner when called⁵.



Other visitors may not appreciate your dog's company; if not sure, ask before allowing your dog to approach them. Keep your dog nearby, always in sight and under control. Carry and use a leash as required. Please do not let your dog approach or chase farm animals or wildlife.

Respect farm animals and wildlife

IRELAND

is home to **28 species of land mammal**, more than **400 regularly occurring bird species**, more than **4,000 plant species**, and over **12,000 species of insect**⁶.

Between 2011 and 2014,

23 SEALS

were rescued by Seal Rescue Ireland, after being bitten by dogs¹⁰.

RED LISTS,

co-ordinated in Ireland by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, **identify species and habitats in most need of conservation interventions**. More than a third of Irish bee species and non-marine mollusc species are deemed threatened on recent Red Lists and more than 15% of Irish water beetle species, butterfly species, dragonflies and damselflies are also threatened⁷.

BIRD POPULATIONS

are a good indication of the health of wildlife and of the countryside. Between 1994/95 and 2012/13 the total wetland bird population in Northern Ireland was estimated to have decreased by 26%. During that time, coastal populations declined by 18%, while freshwater populations declined by 39%⁸.

9 SPECIES OF BAT

There are 9 species of bat in Ireland and 2 of our common species are rare in the rest of Europe. In a European context, Ireland is a stronghold for the Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), brought to the verge of extinction over most of the continent⁹.

A report from 2011 on declines in numbers of breeding wader birds at key sites in Donegal and Mayo raised concerns that **"recreational impacts could be contributing to declines at certain sites"**¹¹.



As more and more people visit the outdoors, wildlife in these areas are affected by visitors' presence. To help keep wildlife wild, please observe from a distance. As a simple rule of thumb – if an animal or a bird moves in response to your presence, you are too close.



Never feed farm animals or wildlife. Feeding damages their health, alters natural behaviours and exposes wildlife to predators and other dangers.



Keeping your dog under effective control keeps people, dogs, livestock and wildlife safe.



When wildlife are chased or harassed, they change eating patterns and exert more energy that can result in poor health or death.



If you are not sure that your dog can comply with voice and sight control, please leash it, for their sake and the sake of others.



"If a man aspires towards a righteous life, his first act of abstinence is from injury to animals."

Albert Einstein

Leave what you find

WATER SPORTS
account for more than **40% of invasive species** introductions in EU waterways¹⁶.



Structures, dwellings and artefacts should not be disturbed. Archaeological and historical artefacts such as old walls, holy wells, castles and dolmens are reminders of the rich human history of the landscape and belong to all people for all time.



Let photos, drawings and memories comprise your souvenirs.



Try to leave natural objects undisturbed – load your camera, not your bag.



Objects in nature derive much of their beauty from their surroundings and don't always look quite the same back home.



Be careful not to disturb the equipment of farmers, anglers, foresters and others who derive their income from the land.

A survey on the destruction of Ireland's Archaeological heritage carried out in 1998 revealed that **34% of the monuments** ever known to have existed within the study areas **had been destroyed**, while 8% of those remaining had been damaged¹⁴.

The Republic of Ireland has over **120,000 known archaeological monuments**, many of which are found in the countryside¹³.



While **PICKING WILD FLOWERS** has been a traditional pastime, we are now aware of the risks that it poses. It has certainly been a factor in the decline of certain species such as the Killarney Fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*), which suffered from collecting during the Victorian era¹².



In Spain, a decrease in **shell abundance correlated with an increase in tourism**, over a 30 year period. This removal of shells has had a damaging effect on the ecosystem, for example, hermit crabs and fish, which use shells for shelter are often limited by a lack of suitable shells¹⁵.



“It is our task in our time and in our generation, to hand down undiminished to those who come after us...the natural wealth and beauty which is ours.”

U.S. President John F. Kennedy

Dispose of waste properly

Globally at least **43%** of cetacean species, all species of marine turtles and approximately 36% of the world's seabird species **have been reported to ingest marine litter**¹⁷.



Please take home all litter - yours and others if possible.

During An Taisce's Big Beach Clean Weekend in September 2014, 103 Clean Coasts groups removed **33,442 LITTER ITEMS** from 128km of coastline²⁰.



Even biodegradable materials, such as orange peel, apple cores and food scraps take years to break down and they can have a negative impact on local wildlife.



Waste is unsightly and ruins everyone's outdoor experience.



Let's all enrich everyone's outdoor experience and take out all litter.

Based on an estimated population of 650,000 dogs in the Republic of Ireland, **100 TONNES OF DOG FAECES** is produced **every day**¹⁸.



Although the topic of human waste can be a particularly uncomfortable issue with visitors to the outdoors, it is very important to address it directly. Never miss an opportunity to use a proper toilet facility.



It is an offence to allow a dog under your control to foul a public place. It must be removed and disposed of correctly¹⁹.



If you must go, in the outdoors, deposit solid human waste in a hole dug 10-12 cm deep, in as secluded a place as possible and away from any water source. This will protect the water source, promote decomposition of the waste and reduce the likelihood that other visitors may have unpleasant encounters. Cover and disguise the hole when you are finished and be sure to pack out all used toilet paper and hygiene products, ideally in a brown paper bag placed inside an impermeable plastic bag. These can then be safely disposed of elsewhere.

"There is no such thing as "away". When we throw anything away it must go somewhere'

Annie Leonard

Travel and camp on durable ground



Try stick to established pathways and please avoid walking in areas that may have sensitive vegetation, such as sand dunes.



In a study of impacts on designated conservation areas in Irish coastal habitats

**CARAVANNING/CAMPING
WAS LISTED AS A DAMAGING
OPERATION**

in 53 areas²¹.



“A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Minimise the effects of fire

The main risk season for out of control countryside fires is February to June, with

MARCH/APRIL BEING THE MOST CRITICAL TIME²²



During the bird breeding season any wildfire can destroy nests and eggs and unfledged young.

In a severe fire, adult birds may also be killed by getting sucked into the fire by fierce air currents, generated by the heat²³.



Even though campfires have been a part of the outdoors for a long time, the legacy of campfires and barbecues too often are charred park benches and rocks, large rubbish-filled fire rings, damaged trees and uncontrolled wildfires.



Where fires are permitted and appropriate, use techniques to reduce your impact on the land and avoid leaving unsightly and ecologically damaging fire scars by placing your disposable b-b-q on sand or elevating it off the grass to avoid burning the ground below.



The mound fire technique is a great way to minimize the affects of fire. To learn more about this technique and other leave no trace skills, contact leave no trace Ireland about some awareness training.

“The poetry of the earth is never dead.”

John Keats





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Leave No Trace Ireland's main financial partners are:



www.leavenotraceireland.org



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Discover more at
www.ringofcork.ie

“Take care, be kind, be considerate of other people and other species and be loving”

John Lithgow