



## **10 Sins of the Oblivious Tourist**

2024-05-29

**It's that time of year again when to make the most of the spring weather and some additional days off we like to spend time close to nature, often by the water. In our search for pristine nature, we often come across unpleasant surprises - in rivers, lakes and other water bodies, as well as along their banks. Illegally dumped bags with rubbish, barbecue leftovers, and traces of detergents used to wash cars that leave multicolor film floating on the surface of the water. Such views can ruin your well-deserved relaxation. That's why we would like to remind everybody that we are all responsible for taking care of the waters.**

So, what should you definitely not do by the water? Below you will find a list published by the Wodne Sprawy (Water Matters) website. Please read it and enjoy a blissful time in nature, and treat it as you would your best friend.

### **10 Sins of the Oblivious Tourist**

#### **#1 Illegal piers, wild swimming spots and mooring in the reeds**

To enjoy the water for swimming, fishing or sailing, you often need to make your way through willows, muddy sedges and lines of rushes along the bank line. The area where the lakefront meets the shore, i.e. marshy and wet zones by the water together with the littoral, provides a natural buffer zone. This is the most effective "bio-filter" limiting the brunt of biogenic compounds reaching the waters from the catchment. The creation of human access points to water from land (in the case of boaters - access to land from water) damages this natural buffer, contributing to increased water pollution, conversion or degradation of the dwellings and habitats of aquatic and arboreal species, and thus deteriorating the ecological state of ecosystems.

Enjoy water only in officially designated zones

Avoid wild swimming spots and illegal piers.

Don't sail into or take a break in the reeds.

Don't tie boats to trees.

#### **#2 Lighting bonfires outside designated areas**

A bonfire is not only a fire hazard, but it may also damage the buffer zone and potentially release numerous harmful substances into the atmosphere during the combustion process. Smoke contains particulate matter (PM) as well as carbon monoxide, benzene, toluene, styrene, formaldehyde and acrolein, not to mention the harmful dioxins and carcinogenic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), including benzo(a)pyrene, which, if exceeded, becomes one of the primary causes of the poor state of water in Poland.

Remember to light bonfires in designated areas and always be fully prepared.

And don't forget to put the fire out!



### **#3 Physiological needs**

Not only does taking care of your physiological needs in coastal areas look unpleasant, but it is also unhygienic and bad for the environment. It might not seem like much, but it all depends on the scale. Scientists estimate that one person using a swimming area generates an additional load of 1.0 g of nitrogen and 0.046 g of phosphorus per day. If we assume that there are 60 warm days a year, this adds up to a sizable dose of biogenic substances. And one single body of water can be visited by several thousand tourists.

Always try to take care of your physiological needs in designated areas.

When sailing, make sure that the yacht is equipped with a proper toilet that is emptied in ports with facilities for receiving sewage.

### **#4 Using detergents**

Laundry detergents, all-purpose cleaners or dishwashing liquids contain harmful chemicals (mostly phosphates) that contribute to eutrophication, which leads to reduced water clarity, oxygen deficiency, fish kill, and many plant and animal species disappearing.

Swim in lakes, but do your washing on land.

If there is no bathroom with a shower or washing area, use the water for washing dishes on land, at least 100 metres from the shore.

### **#5 Boat fuel and carpark runoffs**

Exhaust fumes and fuels contain harmful substances that, if present in water in high concentrations, can contribute to a poor chemical state of the water. Fuel combustion emits a high concentration of substances that are harmful to aquatic organisms, such as carbon monoxide, HC hydrocarbons and their derivatives, nitrogen oxide, sulfur oxides, lead and its compounds. Fuel leaks also introduce oil-derived substances into waterways, and engines use other chemical agents, such as lubricants and grease.

Vehicle traffic, and the pollution it generates, increase the risk of compounds and substances responsible for exceeding the groundwater chemical status in waters and sediments. It is not only products of fuel combustion that are at fault, but also material from tyre wear, bituminous pavement layers, brake discs or leaks of operating fluids that cause pollution, which gets flushed by rainwater and ends up in waterways with surface runoff and the sewer system. The same can be said for substances used to maintain roads in winter.

If you use a diesel-powered boat, always make sure that the fuel does not get into the water.

Refill the boat in a sheltered place, in a port, near the shore, at low tide, using a funnel and positioning the canister sideways to limit splashing.

If you are planning to get to the water by car, park in a legal parking spot as far from the shore



as possible.

### **#6 Motorboats**

Different types of motorboats have a different level of impact on the water ecosystem, with their fumes, evaporating and leaking fuels, and consumables, but also through the noise and ripples they generate. Increased water traffic mechanically destroys coastal vegetation, both reeds and underwater plants. It also negatively affects the dwellings of many littoral animals, such as macroinvertebrates and fish breeding grounds. As a consequence, sediment resuspension grows, contributing to increased water turbidity.

Before you fire up your motorboat engine, think about other water users.

### **#7 Beach waste**

Rubbish on the shore and in the water not only looks awful, but can also be dangerous to dwellers of the ecosystem. All plastic packaging causes problems, as it decomposes very slowly and, in the process, generates harmful compounds or micro- and nanoplastics that are dangerous to organisms. Aquatic animals eat such microparticles and carry them up the food chain, from where they can also enter the human body.

Always remember to segregate and throw your rubbish into designated bins.

If there are no such bins at your campsite, take your rubbish with you and throw it into designated bins.

Never dispose of your rubbish in the campfire.

### **#8 Cigarette butts**

Cigarette butts are currently the most common type of waste. It is estimated that 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are thrown away worldwide each year, some of them ending up directly in the environment. Tobacco farming and cigarette production use numerous chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides), residues of which may be found in cigarettes. More than 4,000 other substances are created in the process of cigarette production and tobacco combustion, including carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide, nitrogen oxides, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, ammonia, acetaldehyde, formaldehyde, benzene, phenol, argon, pyridines and acetone.

Never throw cigarette butts into water or a campfire.

### **#9 Fishing lures**

A negative impact of fishing on the water ecosystem is littering the littoral or destroying habitats, and especially with the increased supply of nutrients caused by the use of lures. Fishing lures are commonly used to make fishing easier. Scientists have shown that the amount of lures used when fishing in a given body of water can be measured in tonnes per year, which



gives as much as 20-50kg per one angler.

Material introduced as lures decompose in water, which accelerates the depletion of dissolved oxygen in water and generates biogenic substances. If the balance of biogenic substances introduced as lures into the water environment by anglers and then removed in the biomass of caught fish is unfavorable, the fertility of the water increases, and its quality deteriorates. If the composition of lures is not controlled, undesirable substances can enter the water, for example attractants of an undefined composition (including artificial flavours).

If you fish for pleasure, don't use lures in order to avoid increasing fertility and deteriorating water quality.

### **#10 Water and coastal sports**

ATV rallies in open terrain, off paved roads, erode the soil, damage vegetation cover and cause deep ruts, which can irreversibly change morphological structures and plant formations, including those on water banks.

Cruising behind a motorboat on water skis or boards requires significant speeds, contributing to the formation of large waves and generates noise. This noise frightens animals, mainly fish and birds, and the large waves destroy submerged vegetation and rushes, increase sediment resuspension, and damage coastal habitats. The current trend of nurting, or wading upstream in mountain streams, destroys water beds, plant and animal habitats, fish breeding grounds, scares fish and plows water beds.

Before trying any of these forms of recreation, think about their impact on the ecosystem.