

RIVERKEEPER® SWEEP

Household Plastic Use Tracking Activity

- Plastic pollution is a serious threat to waterways around the world, including rivers right here in New York.
- Many people do not realize how much plastic their household uses every week.
 - It can be difficult to avoid using plastic, as many things come packaged in it.
- By studying how much plastic we each personally use, we can come up with ideas for how to reduce our use of plastic.
 - We will focus on single-use plastic, as it contributes much more to pollution than durable plastic. Single-use plastic is any item made of plastic that is only intended to be used once before it is throw away or recycled.

Examples of single-use plastic items:

		
Straws	Bottles	Packaging

What about recycling?

- According to the EPA, less than 10% of plastic used in the United States ends up being recycled.
 - Many plastic items are not recyclable, including things like straws, plastic bags and wrap, and many food containers.
 - Even when you put something recyclable in the recycling bin, [it sometimes goes to the landfill instead.](#)
- ***It is much more important to reduce how much plastic we use.***

Reflection Questions:

- Did your household use more or less single-use plastic than you expected?
- What type of single-use plastic did your household use the most of?
 - How can you reduce the amount of this plastic you use?
- Did all the plastic packaging seem reasonable or necessary?
- What percentage of the single-use plastic that you used was recyclable?
 - What agency handles your recycling?
 - Can you find any statistics or news articles on what percentage of recyclable waste that agency is actually able to recycle?

Take action:

- [Support Riverkeeper's campaigns work](#)
- [Learn more about Riverkeeper's story and approach](#)

Additional Resources

- [Surfrider Foundation - Rise Above Plastics Campaign](#)
- [GrowNYC - New York City's sustainability resource](#)
- [Hudson River Park Trust - Park of Plastics Program](#)