



L O N D O N

Natural History Museum

*Joined the #OneLess pioneer network in Nov 2018



At a glance

The Natural History Museum is one of London's most high-profile tourist attractions, with 5.5 million visitors a year visiting its vast collection of natural history.

nhm.ac.uk

Single-use plastic water bottles – gone!

In May 2018, the Natural History Museum removed all single-use plastic water bottles from their sites in South Kensington and Tring, previously selling **260,000** bottles a year.

Efforts have not stopped at plastic water bottles; the catering department has also phased out plastic cutlery and straws in cafes and restaurants.

Encouraging refilling

The Museum offers **10** water refill points for visitors to top-up their water bottles for free. This includes a fountain installed in partnership with the #OneLess campaign in November 2018. In 14 months, the fountain has been used to refill more than **45,000** (500ml) water bottles, which is an average usage rate of nearly **1,000** bottles a week!

The number of water refill points across the Museum

10

260,000
A YEAR

The number of plastic bottles no longer sold

Reducing plastic in retail

With the successes made in catering, the Museum is exploring what changes can be made across retail to reduce plastic consumption as well as increase recycling rates. Museum membership packs are already plastic-free as of July 2018, and **9,000** reusable water bottles are sold in museum shops every year. The Museum plans to work with suppliers in the coming months to see what further changes and plastic savings can be made.

Refilling 1,000 bottles a week – the average usage of the Museum's #OneLess drinking fountain



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The decision to remove all plastic water bottles from our South Kensington and Tring museums was a combined team effort of every department across the organisation, from our scientists monitoring plastic in the Thames, to our dedicated Media, PR and Estates teams. The change was received very positively by our visitors, and on social media people were pleased to see our refill stations. That our drinking fountains have been so heavily used has made a strong case for us to expand our infrastructure and further encourage a culture change towards refilling.

(Wayne Hitchings, NHM)

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Key challenges

Key challenges included existing catering contracts that restricted changes to one alternative to bottled water – in aluminium cans – which for a time limited the changes that the Museum could make. Bringing the catering supplier into the conversation of reducing single-use plastic early helped when planning these changes. Another challenge included the practicalities of installing a drinking fountain in a Grade I listed building. Although aligning the fountain location with existing utilities, drainage and water supply involved some planning, it was solvable.

What's next

On 20 January 2020, the Museum launched its new strategy until 2031; 'A Planetary Emergency: Our Response' which sets out an all-encompassing vision for how the Museum can further the sustainability of its operations. This will of course involve further commitments on reducing single-use plastic.

Join the #OneLess pioneer network
onelessbottle.org/network
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#OneLess

