

Litter and Pollution

Table 5 provides an idea of the amount of litter that is deposited in protected areas and other areas visited by tourists and their support staff, including porters. The generation of garbage of such volume is a serious concern, especially since decomposition is an extremely slow process in the mountain environment. Furthermore, if allowed to accumulate, the non-biodegradable, non-burnable garbage generated would ruin the environment, vegetation, livestock, and habitats. Add to this the poor assimilative capacity of the high altitude environment and the garbage problem is further exacerbated.

Table 5: Litter Deposited in the Mountain Environment, 1988 (in kg)

Area	Number of Trekkers	Average Deposited	Total Deposited	
Annapurna	37902	15	56853	
Khumbu	11366	15	17049	
Langtang	8423	15	12635	
Other	3582	15	5373	
Cumulative total (1976 to 1993)(in mt)			640mt	
Mountaineering (1979-1988): Garbage Cleared From Everest Base Camp, Spring 1993				
	Disposable Garbage	Non-Disposable Garbage	Oxygen/Gas Cylinders	Total
14 expeditions	7030	2350	3444	12824
Average/team	502	168	246	916
Range	90-1350	60-360	356-540	390-1820
Nepal Total (1979-1988) total for 840 teams (in mt)				
	421680	141120	206640	769.44mt

Source: Lama and Sherpa (1995)

Pollution of water sources by placing toilets too close to or over streams and drinking water sources (both lodge latrines and movable trekking toilet tents), and use of chemical soaps for bathing and washing dishes and clothes in streams and near water sources, have been reported (Banskota and Upadhyay 1989; Gurung 1990; Lama and Sherpa 1995)