



# YOU, YOUR CANOE AND THE MARINE **ENVIRONMENT**



giving  
nature  
a home

# WELCOME

Thanks for taking the time to read *You, Your Canoe and the Marine Environment*. Inside you will find handy tips and advice to help you experience the natural marine environment in a sustainable and enjoyable way.

Paddling connects us to nature and the natural environment and gives us access to thousands of miles of beautiful coastline. This guide will help you to recognise and appreciate much of the marine wildlife you will encounter while out on the water.

We take our responsibility to the environment seriously, and by developing partnerships with environmental organisations such as the RSPB, we can help promote ways for paddlers to enjoy the diverse marine wildlife while ensuring we do not disturb species that permanently inhabit or seasonally visit our coastline. We would like to thank the RSPB and The Green Blue for their help and support in the development of this informative booklet.

We want you to have fun and get as much as possible out of your time on the water so don't forget to take your camera when you head out so you can share your experiences. Happy Paddling!



**Paul Owen**  
British Canoeing Chief Executive



The UK's coasts and seas are internationally important for marine life. In some places, for example, the UK holds more than half the world's populations of some breeding seabird species.

Wildlife is generally sensitive to our presence though, and can be easily disturbed if you get too close. That's why we're pleased to work with British Canoeing in developing this guidance on sea kayaking.

By knowing a bit about what you might see and following the guidance in this booklet, you'll get even more out of your wildlife experience. Take a pair of binoculars with you and you'll see even more. It's great to spend time outdoors; whenever I'm in a stuffy meeting in central London, I know where I'd rather be!



**Mike Clarke**  
RSPB Chief Executive



# INTRODUCTION

Canoeing and kayaking on the sea offer a fantastic opportunity to see wildlife in its natural environment, from seabirds to seals and even whales and dolphins. To connect with nature at sea and at such close quarters is an amazing privilege.

By following this guidance, you can ensure that you make the most of your canoeing experience, while leaving the environment as you find it. Sensible canoeing and kayaking should cause no erosion, noise or pollution. Remember, you are sharing this environment – leave it untouched for the wildlife and those who follow.

Please also be aware when canoeing around the coasts of England and Wales that where wildlife is protected, this may restrict where or when you can go at certain times of year.

Finally, for your safety, ensure that you are properly equipped and plan for the expected conditions. Check for information on tides and weather, and check your access points with British Canoeing's Local Coastal Advisor or Regional Waterways Advisor.

# CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

## Ten Principles to Remember

When encountering wildlife, whether on sea or on land, these ten general principles will help you make the most of your adventure:

1. Find out about the area before you go. Note down any sensitive places and species likely to be present at that time. Remember that wildlife may be particularly sensitive to disturbance in areas not normally visited by people.
2. Be aware of any protected area designations. These may have certain restrictions on human activities where they have the potential to damage or disturb wildlife.
3. Keep to designated paths or launching points where possible.
4. Paddle at a safe distance from wildlife, keeping noise and sudden movements to a minimum. If animals change their behaviour in reaction to your presence, move away without causing further disturbance.
5. Never surround animals and don't block them in from their escape routes. You will enjoy the sightings much more if they are relaxed about your presence.
6. Look, then move on. Don't linger for too long if you think it may disturb or displace wildlife.
7. Don't damage plants and other habitats that animals depend upon.
8. Float your canoe for launching and lift out when landing, so as not to cause damage when launching or landing along natural banks/beaches.
9. Take your litter home with you.
10. Be a wildlife-friendly kayaker by reporting any interesting sightings or any instances of disturbance (see contact details for relevant organisations).



# BIRDS

The coasts, estuaries and seas around England and Wales are home to millions of seabirds and shorebirds that breed, feed, overwinter or pass through on migration. Canoeing provides a great opportunity to observe this fantastic diversity all year round. Some common species you may encounter include:



Oystercatcher

**Shorebirds** (such as Oystercatcher & Redshank)



Shag

**Cormorants and Shags**



Little Tern

**Terns** (several species)



Guillemot

**Auks** (Guillemot, Razorbill, Puffin)



Great Black Backed Gull

**Gulls** (several species)



Great Crested Grebe

**Divers and Grebes** (several species)

During the breeding season (roughly from February to August, depending on the species), birds nest in burrows and crevices, on cliff tops and cliff faces or on shingle beaches at the shoreline. In many places, these birds come together to form spectacular colonies, with amazing sights, sounds and smells, as well as using the waters around their colonies for feeding, resting and socialising.

During the non-breeding season (generally from August to May, but again can vary), large concentrations of waterbirds use our estuaries and are especially prone to disturbance at these times. For this reason some estuaries or parts thereof are out of bounds for water sport recreation.



Puffin

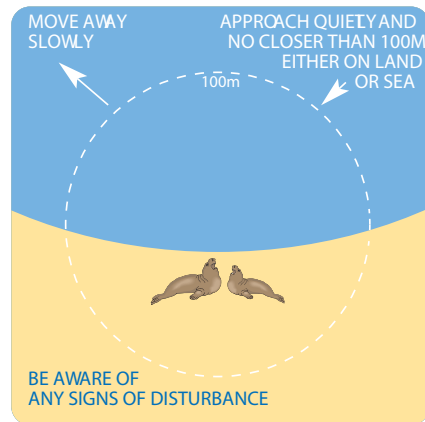
## GUIDANCE

- Stay at a safe distance from cliffs with nesting seabirds during the breeding season, ideally at least 50 metres from the cliff. Move by quietly and steadily so as not to panic the birds and allow seabirds to resetttle quickly.
- Be vigilant for nests on the ground and move out of any breeding area as soon as you realise you are in or close to it. Walking over a burrow can crush the nest, or cause the adult to desert its young, so be aware of their presence. Remember, reckless destruction of active burrows is illegal under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- Avoid panicking seabirds on the water into flight. These birds are likely to be feeding or resting, so disturbance is likely to cause them to use up extra energy or reduce their feeding time.
- Keep a low paddle angle where possible.
- In late summer many seabirds and ducks moult and are at their weakest and most vulnerable. Some species such as guillemots and razorbills are often with their flightless young in the waters around breeding colonies at this time too.
- Avoid high tide roosts of shore birds and feeding concentrations of waterbirds on estuaries.
- Report any incidents of disturbance you see to your regional RSPB office.



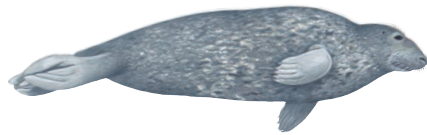
# SEALS

Two species of seals come to our shores to breed: the grey seal and common (or harbour) seal. Grey and common seals can be very difficult to tell apart, especially when they are in the water. Look out for the Roman nose, small spots and parallel nostrils of the grey seal. In common seals, which are smaller than grey seal, the nostrils are joined at the base and the head is not so long. About half of the world's population of grey seals can be found around British and Irish coasts so you've got a greater chance of spotting this mammal than the smaller common seal which is more likely to be found on east coast. Whilst cumbersome on land, grey seals are athletes when in the water. The seals can swim up to 100 kilometres a day, can hold their breath for an hour and a half underwater and dive to almost 1,500 metres.



## Grey seal *Halichoerus grypus*

- Large seal (adult 2.1 - 3.3m)
- Head has flat profile i.e. straight line from top of head to nose. In male exaggerated to give a hooked or 'Roman nose'.
- Variable grey coat is covered in thick blotches, unique to each animal. Male usually dark with lighter blotches and female light with dark blotches.
- Nostrils parallel to one another, not always obvious.
- Usually seen in rocky areas, but also in estuaries and bays.
- Breeds on beaches, pups are white.



## Common or harbour seal *Phoca vitulina*

- Smaller seal (adult 1.2 - 1.9m)
- Muzzle short and concave. Face has a dog-like appearance.
- Coat has mottled pattern of spots, varies in colour from light grey to dark brown.
- Nostrils joined at base in 'V' shape.
- Frequents sandbanks in estuaries but also occurs on rocky coasts.



Grey seals breed from September to December in traditional sites known as rookeries on British and Irish shores. The female gives birth to a single pup amongst the crowd of sometime many hundreds of other cows and pups. At birth the pup has a thick, creamy-white coat, but this is replaced by a greyish juvenile coat after about three weeks.

Generally, grey seal pups spend these first three weeks of life on land in safe haul out sites above the high water mark. Common seal pups are born on sandbanks and swim off on the next high tide. Both grey and common seals need to haul out and rest at their traditional sites. Adults spend the winter moulting at haul out sites and it is just as important not to disturb them at this time of year too.

Seals have a natural curiosity and will often watch canoeists pass by, or even take to the water to investigate your presence. Many tour boat owners also make a living from taking tourists to look at seal colonies - seals will usually stay put when these boats approach.



## GUIDANCE

- Never land on a beach where seals are hauled out or are with their pups, except in an emergency. Sudden disturbance can lead to pups being crushed or separated from their mothers.
- Always observe a seal's reactions to your presence - seals (as with other animals) may be startled by your sudden appearance.
- If seals repeatedly look at you in an alert way and move nearer the water's edge, this shows you are already close enough, so back away slightly, remain still and avoid eye contact.
- Try to maintain a slow, steady and predictable rhythm as you paddle past seals.
- Leave the seal with an obvious escape route back to the sea and never attempt to land where you see seals.
- Exercise caution if they happen to swim up to you, around you, or choose to play with you.
- Don't do anything to harass them, just enjoy the moment and memory.
- Be a seal friendly kayaker by reporting any sightings of seals to one of the seal organizations.

# CETACEANS

(whales, dolphins, porpoises)

Cetaceans can often be seen from a canoe and their antics and gracefulness in the water are a joy to behold. It is important though to be aware how you can be a danger to the animal, and how it can be a danger to you.

Porpoises, such as harbour porpoise, do not tend to show a lot of interest in kayaks so you will usually see them swim by without altering their course. Dolphins on the other hand are more inquisitive and will often come over towards you. The best advice if you are close to dolphins is to just stay still and watch, or maintain a straight course and they will follow if they are interested in you.

You may encounter several species of whales whilst on the water. Minke whales are often the most frequently seen, especially in late summer off the west coast, but humpback, fin, sei and even killer whales (orca) are regular visitors. Their size is obvious when they are next to you, so avoid blocking their escape route, but otherwise stay still and let them do the moving.



Common dolphin



Harbour porpoise

## GUIDANCE

- Always approach at an oblique angle. A moving canoe outline can appear threatening when heading straight towards them.
- Move steadily and predictably, and do not get too close.
- Never chase after whales, dolphins or porpoises. If they want to see you they will come over and check you out, but if they choose to swim away from you then respect their wish.
- Avoid coming between individuals/keep to one side of a group of animals.
- Do not swim, touch or feed dolphins for their safety and yours.
- Avoid close approaches to dolphins with young.



### Fin whale *Balaenoptera physalus*

- Second largest animal on earth (adult 18 - 22m).
- Small, falcate dorsal fin far behind centre on the back.
- Slender, pointed head with single central ridge.
- Asymmetrical colouring on lower jaw (grey on the left, white on the right).
- Fast swimmer. Fin visible soon after blow.
- More commonly seen in small groups.



### Orca (killer whale) *Orcinus orca*

- Largest member of the dolphin family, extremely robust body (adult 3.8 - 9.8m).
- Very tall, erect dorsal fin, more prominent in adult male (1-1.8m tall).
- Female and juvenile's dorsal fin is smaller and curved.
- Conical head with indistinct beak.
- Distinctive black and white body, oval white patches behind eye and on belly, grey saddle behind dorsal fin.
- Large rounded, paddle-shaped flippers.
- Fastest dolphin (30 knots). Highly active, breaching, tail-slapping and logging.
- Usually seen in tight family groups of 2-30.



### Humpback whale *Megaptera novaengliae*

- Large rounded body (adult 11.5 - 15m).
- Black or dark grey on upper side.
- Low, stubby fin with lump, far behind centre.
- Can easily be distinguished from large tail fluke and long knobbly flippers.
- One of the most energetic of large whales.
- Large groups can be observed but rarely sighted around the UK.



### Minke whale *Balaenoptera acutirostrata*

- Smallest baleen whale in Atlantic (adult 6.9 - 10.5m).
- Sickle-shaped dorsal fin two thirds along the back.
- Slender, pointed head with single central ridge.
- Distinct white band on flippers, dark/grey/black head and body with grey areas on flanks.
- Fast swimmer. Blowhole and dorsal fin visible at same time when surfacing.
- Usually solitary.
- Can be confused with other baleen whales (bigger, no white patch and flippers).



### Long-finned pilot whale *Globicephala melas*

- All black body large (adult 3.8 - 6.3m).
- Low, rounded, swept-back and wide-based dorsal fin.
- Bulbous rounded forehead (melon), no obvious beak.
- Long, thin flippers.
- Light grey streaks over eyebrow and saddle behind dorsal fin.
- Slow swimming. Groups can be synchronised.
- Often floats on surface (logging) and spy-hops.
- Seen in family groups of 5-20, can be spread out.



### Bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

- Large, stocky (adult 2.2 - 4m).
- Tall, curved dorsal fin.
- Short, stubby beak.
- Plain grey colouration, with possible muted colour pattern.
- Often jumps or breaches and bow rides.
- Usually in small groups close to shore but can be seen in larger groups offshore.



#### Striped dolphin *Stenella coeruleoalba*

- Small, slender, torpedo-shaped (adult 1.8 - 2.5m).
- Curved dorsal fin.
- Long, well-defined beak, prominent forehead.
- White/light grey V-shape 'shoulder blaze', swept back and up toward dorsal fin.
- Very active and agile, often jumping and bowriding.
- Sometimes travels in large groups of up to 1,000.
- Rare visitor from southern waters.
- Can be confused with: common dolphin.



#### Risso's dolphin *Grampus griseus*

- Large, robust (adult 2.6 - 3.8m).
- Tall (sometimes very tall) curved dorsal fin.
- Rounded head, no beak.
- Dark grey back and flanks, often heavily scarred, especially the head. Older animals look almost white.
- Surfaces slowly but can be active (spy-hopping, breaching and head/tail slapping).
- Usually seen in groups of up to 15.
- Can be confused with: bottlenose dolphin.



#### Harbour porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

- Small size (adult 1.3 - 1.9m) but chunky.
- Small, blunt and triangular dorsal fin.
- Blunt head, no beak.
- Dark grey/black back, paler patch on flanks.
- Quietly rolls through water, rarely jumps.
- Often alone or in small groups.
- Most common cetacean in our inshore waters.
- Very shy.
- Only porpoise found in northern hemisphere.
- Not a dolphin.



#### White-beaked dolphin *Lagenorhynchus albirostris*

- Medium-sized, robust body (adult 2.5 - 2.8m).
- Tall, dark dorsal fin.
- Short, stubby beak, often white but not always.
- Obvious pale grey 'saddle' behind dorsal fin, otherwise body is variable dark grey with greyish white blazes.
- Thick tail stock.
- Powerful swimmer. Active and acrobatic.
- Usually travels in groups of 5 to 50.
- Can be confused with: Atlantic white-sided dolphin.



#### Common dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

- Small, slender, torpedo-shaped (adult 1.6 - 2.6m).
- Curved, dark dorsal fin, often has pale grey centre.
- Long, narrow beak.
- Clotted cream or yellow patch on sides near head forms part of distinct hourglass pattern, creating dark V-shape under dorsal fin.
- Very active and agile, often jumping/somersaulting.
- Sometimes travels in large groups of 50-1,000.
- Can be confused with: striped dolphin and Atlantic white-sided dolphin.



#### Atlantic white-sided dolphin *Lagenorhynchus acutus*

- Medium-sized dolphin, robust body (adult 1.9 - 2.8m).
- Tall, curved dorsal fin.
- Short, stubby beak, black on top, pale grey/white lower jaw.
- Body has colourful, bold markings.
- Entire dorsal surface is dark grey or black. Long white then yellow/ochre blaze on flank.
- Thick tail stock.
- Active and acrobatic.
- Can travel in groups of up to 1,000 but generally in smaller groups of up to 30 closer inshore.
- Can be confused with: common and white-beaked dolphins.

## SHARKS

Contrary to popular belief, sharks do occur around the coasts of Britain. In fact there are over 30 species, including some of the fastest, rarest, largest and most highly migratory sharks in the world. Sadly, over 50% of the UK's shark species are under threat.

At least 21 species of shark are resident inhabitants and commonly found around the coasts of Britain all year round, such as the Smallspotted Catshark, Porbeagle Shark and Basking Shark. Blue Sharks and Shortfin Mako Sharks are seasonal visitors, appearing in British waters in summer during their trans-Atlantic migrations.

#### Basking shark *Cetorhinus maximus*

- Second largest fish in world (adult to 11m).
- Large, angular dorsal fin.
- Pointed snout over cavernous mouth (white inside).
- Swims slowly at surface, feeding.
- Often see snout, dorsal and tail fin together on surface.
- Seen most often in summer.



#### GUIDANCE

- Take time to observe the direction(s) of movement of sharks and then quietly position your kayak alongside their anticipated course for a safe and enjoyable view. Sharks are often attracted to kayaks and will swim alongside and below, very close to the hulls. If you stay calm, still, and observe, there is a good chance they will come to you.
- Do not approach within 100m of Basking sharks. Avoid getting too close to a Basking shark as it could easily capsize you if you get in front of it, or cause you serious injury if it lashed out with its powerful tail with you alongside it.
- Remember that for every shark visible on the surface more may be more hidden below. Never paddle your kayak directly towards the sharks or allow several kayaks to surround them, as such actions will probably frighten them and make them dive or act unpredictably. Stay in a group, rather than stringing out around the sharks.
- Kayakers should not cross the path of the shark so the sharks can maintain their course without changing direction or speed.
- Avoid sudden movements which will disturb the sharks. Never use your paddle or kayak to touch a shark.
- Avoid pairs or large numbers of sharks following each other closely. This may be courting behaviour and they should not be disturbed.



## OTHER SPECIES

### Otters

Otters should be observed from a distance that doesn't disturb their natural behaviour, such as fishing, resting and playing. Under no circumstances should they be pursued by canoe.



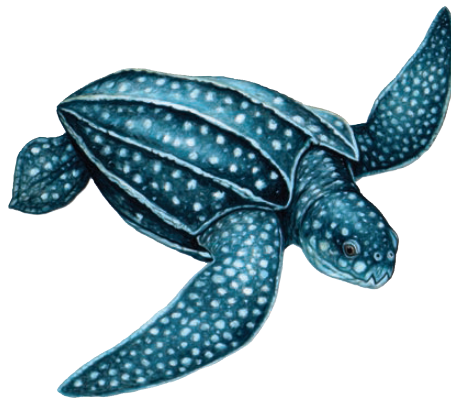
European otter

### Summer Visitors and jellyfish

The shores around England and Wales are a home to thousands of visiting species all year round. The summer particularly attracts marine wildlife to our warmer waters and these visitors are another reason for exploring the coastlines.

### Leatherback turtle *Dermochelys coriacea*

- Largest turtle in world (adult to 3m)
- Distinctive, soft shell with longitudinal ridges
- Black with white spots
- When at surface only back and sometimes head visible



### Sunfish *Mola mola*

- Large unusual looking fish (adult 3.3m)
- Large head/body with truncated tail fin
- The side fins are small and fan-shaped. However, the top and bottom fins are lengthened, often making the fish as tall as it is long.
- Range from brown to silvery-gray or white, with a variety of mottled skin patterns



## JELLYFISH



### Moon jellyfish *Aurelia aurita*

- Up to 40cm across.
- Four rings in bell, short tentacles.
- Mild sting.
- DO NOT TOUCH



### Lion's mane jellyfish *Cyanea capillata*

- Up to 2.5 m across; trailing tentacles can reach in excess of 30m.
- Bell divided into 8 lobes; younger individuals usually orange or tan in colour.
- Strong sting.
- DO NOT TOUCH.



### Dustbin lid, barrel or root mouth jellyfish *Rhizostoma octopus*

- Up to 1m across
- Solid, rubbery bell and thick, frilled arms
- Can be white or pale pink, blue or yellow
- DO NOT TOUCH



### Portuguese man-of-war *Physalia physalis*

- Float is up to 30cm long.
- Gas-filled float, very long trailing tentacles
- Strong sting
- DO NOT TOUCH



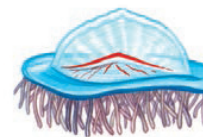
### Mauve stinger *Pelagia noctiluca*

- Up to 10cm across
- Deep bell with small 'warts', glows at night
- Strong sting
- DO NOT TOUCH



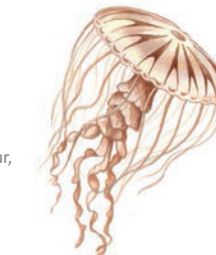
### Blue jellyfish *Cyanea lamarckii*

- Up to 30cm across
- Blue bell with radial lines
- Mild sting
- DO NOT TOUCH



### By-the-wind-sailor *Velella velella*

- Up to 10cm across
- Upright 'sail', blue-purple colour, occurs in vast swarms



### Compass jellyfish *Chrysaora hysoscella*

- Up to 30cm across
- V-shaped markings on bell look like compass points.
- Stings
- DO NOT TOUCH

# COASTAL HABITATS

## Shingle Shores and Dunes

Several species of birds nest on shingle beaches, including terns. The utmost care should be taken not to disturb nesting birds on these sites. Their eggs and chicks are always very well camouflaged against the shingle and are easily trodden underfoot. Check before you embark on your trips that you avoid landing on islands used by seals and nesting birds. Take care during stops not to damage vegetation on the upper shore and in sand dunes. Carry canoes/kayaks rather than dragging them, especially in dunes.

## Estuaries

Many estuaries in the world play host to shore birds and waterfowl. Undisturbed feeding and resting are important for their survival, especially in severe winter weather. You can assist by avoiding mudflats and sandbanks with large concentrations of birds. Often these are designated as 'No Go' areas so please look out for signs indicating any restrictions.

## Rocky Outcrops and Salt Marshes

Be aware that rocky outcrops and salt marshes often provide shelter and safety for wildlife. Otters use outcrops for their nest holts and seals haul out onto rocks exposed by the tide. A number of birds live in salt marshes, freshwater marshes and use reed beds in which to feed and as a refuge from predators.

## Following Best Practice – Leave No Trace

### Take responsibility for your actions

The outdoors is a great place for sport and recreation, but it is also a natural environment which needs to be treated with respect. It is recommended that you take advantage of the courses that British Canoeing has to offer on canoe skills and safety, which are available for all levels of ability.

Be aware:

- Of the hazards on your chosen journey and ensure you are confident in the ability of your party to negotiate them
- Of current, tide times, and weather conditions (See Note 2 on page 21)
- To use suitable equipment in good condition
- To leave details of your trip with a responsible person
- Of other safety information available
- That permission may be required to go to a private place
- Of certain 'No Go' areas – some areas are out of bounds
- That you may need permission at ports and estuaries from the Harbourmaster to launch from designated areas

### Anglers and Commercial Fishing Nets

Keep a look out for anglers whilst paddling to avoid lines, nets and swims as well as commercial fishing nets that are set from the shore or a boat. Take care when launching from beaches and jetties if there are lines from anglers nearby.

## Consideration for others

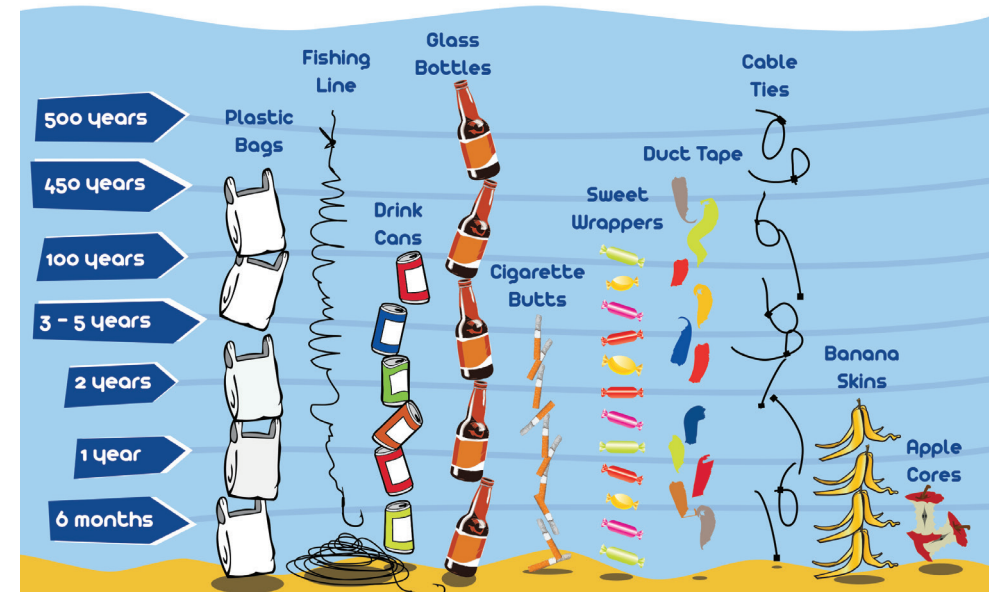
All of us want to enjoy the outdoors so we need to be aware of other users and share the space appropriately. Common sense and polite communications can help to improve understanding and maintain good relations and add to the enjoyment of all.

### On Land

- Stay away from houses and private beaches/gardens.
- Change discreetly. Use public facilities where possible.
- Drive sensibly at all times.
- Park considerately - do not obstruct roads, footpaths or entrances to buildings or farm property.
- Make sure your kit does not cause an obstruction when unloading.
- Leave gates positioned and property as you find them.
- Do not leave behind any food scraps, as these attract scavenging animals and birds.
- Take away all your litter and any you find left by other people, leaving the coastline that bit cleaner than it was before your visit.

### On Water

- Follow the general rules of navigation and any local bylaws. Obtain any necessary licences and pay the appropriate harbour dues.
- Respect and do not obstruct other water users, being mindful that there are shipping channels and other faster moving craft.
- Keep a look out. Be aware that larger vessels may not see you and are less manoeuvrable. In confined waters keep to the edge of the deepwater navigation channel.
- Keep the numbers in your party consistent with safety, the nature of the stretch of water and the impact on your surroundings.
- When offering assistance to those in need, on or off the water, do not put yourself or fellow paddlers at risk.
- Show consideration for organised events and give way to their passage.



# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

## Fires

Canoeists on multi-day trips will quite often have a fire on a beach as part of their overnight camping experience. Following a few simple guidelines should ensure that you don't cause any damage (check first to see if the local laws/bye laws allow fires).

Fires below the high water mark are washed away by the next high tide, so this can be a good way of ensuring that your fire is cleared away and properly put out.

Before starting to build a fire assess the fire risk. Consider the wind direction and strength and think about the proximity of any dry forest or vegetation. If in doubt, don't have a fire.

If you are wanting to cook, then use a stove. It is much cleaner and more efficient. It is recommended that you use a small portable firebox which is easy to use and safer than an open fire. Boil water in a Kelly or Volcano kettle using small twigs which make very little smoke.

If you must make a camp fire then dig a firepit area in turf or within sand/gravel. On grass, preserve the grass to replace in the morning. Be aware that there is a risk of fire travelling in peat or along tree roots. On sand/gravel, scoop out a small pit.

Be careful on boulder beaches that there aren't any birds, such as oystercatchers or ringed plovers, nesting amongst the boulders. If you have a fire above the high water mark then use established fire rings or mound fires on sand or soil piled up to provide a protective base for your fire.

Never leave the fire alight at night – always extinguish it with plenty of water before you go to bed. Make sure your fire is well burnt out or properly extinguished and that there is no risk of it spreading before you go to your tents and check there is no trace whatsoever of your fire before leaving in the morning. It is best to scatter any charred unburnt wood widely and if a firepit has been used then cover it, replacing the turf so there is no trace left. On sand/gravel make sure that any burnt sand is covered.

**Leave no trace.** Everyone wants to have a 'wilderness' experience and to feel that they are the only people to ever pass that way!

## Answering the call of nature

**Use the facilities provided.** If there is a latrine in an area – use it, and follow any instructions given.

There are some modern composting toilets which separate urine and faeces and produce a dry, odourless compost. These generally require men to sit when urinating.

**Take your waste home with you.** A 3l 'BDH' container – nowadays available from Motion Research will carry a week's faeces.

Hang a plastic bag inside the container, turned back over the edge, do your business in the bag, tie it up with a minimum of trapped air and drop it into the container. Next time, use a fresh bag.

**Keep away from drinking water sources.** Urine, whilst generally sterile, is rich in nutrients and will encourage the growth of nettles, so avoid urinating on poor soils or grass. On high volume, silt laden rivers it is better to urinate directly into the river than to contaminate the bank.

**Dig a small pit in the topsoil for faeces** about 6 inches deep. When you have finished, cover the waste completely so that there is no trace visible.

**Use seawater to wash** in preference to paper, but where necessary, use toilet paper sparingly. Use only 2 ply toilet paper that will disintegrate quickly, and, if you leave it in the hole, make sure that it is thoroughly wetted (water or urine) before covering with soil.

Wet paper will disintegrate; dry paper will not. Dry paper can of course be burned and some paddlers carry a small bottle of methylated spirit and matches for this very purpose.

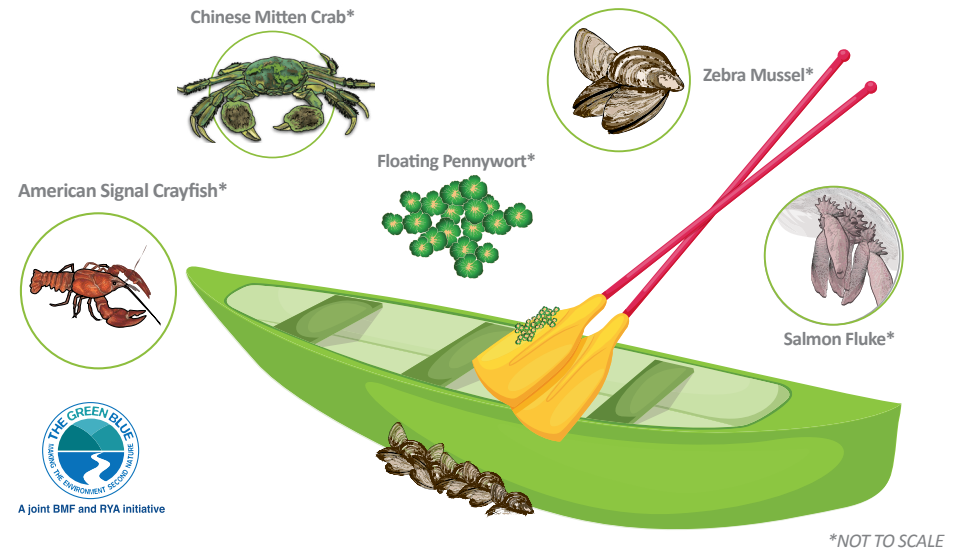
**Remember** that hand washing – perhaps with an antibacterial alcohol gel – is an essential part of personal hygiene when on expedition.

If one member of a party comes down with a tummy upset, the chances are that the rest of the team will soon follow suit! By taking care of your own hygiene you are helping to keep the rest of the team healthy.

# NON-NATIVE OR ALIEN SPECIES

The seas around many countries/continents contain a number of non-native, or alien, species of plants and animals, some of which cause problems due to their ability to out compete our native species and could also have economic impacts on coastal and estuarine communities and businesses.

To ensure you don't transfer non-native species between locations in and around the UK it is essential that you clean your boat and check inside the housing of retractable skegs. To do this we encourage that you follow 3 easy steps: Check, Clean and Dry all equipment.



## 1. Check

- Check your boat, equipment and clothing for living organisms.
- Your equipment – pay particular attention to areas that are damp and hard to inspect such as the bow and stern of your boat, under the seats and rims and behind buoyancy bags and foot rests.
- Your clothing – check folds of cagoules, buoyancy aids, spray-decks, throw-lines, and the clothes you wear under your cagoules.

## 2. Clean

- Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothes thoroughly.
- If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them; do not take them home and if they are notifiable – Report it!
- Use tap water to clean your boat. In times of drought you will have to do this by watering cans and buckets. Take water with you so Plan Ahead!

## 3. Dry

- Dry all equipment and clothing – some species can live for many days in moist conditions. If it's a warm sunny day, leave your boat out in the sun to dry – along with your extra kit.
- If the sun won't help then do dry your kit with towels etc. They will need to be washed after use. You might need to think of innovative ways of reaching inside the end of your boat but it's important to do so.
- Don't transfer water elsewhere.



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

We can help by reporting incidents of damage, disturbance or pollution to the relevant authorities:

Maritime and Coastguard Agency to report pollution at sea - [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency) or ring Coastguard on **023 8032 9525**.

Environment Agency to report pollution coming from land and in rivers/estuaries.

The EA's pollution hotline is **0800 80 70 60**.

For Coastguard and other emergency services call **999**.

RSPCA for wildlife and all live animals in distress (including birds) - **0300 1234 999** (24 hours).

RSPB for reports of disturbance to birds. Find the nearest regional office at [www.rspb.org.uk/about/offices](http://www.rspb.org.uk/about/offices)

Other organisations that can help with information about the marine environment are:

Leave No Trace | [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)

Natural England | [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england)

Natural Resources Wales/ Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru | [www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](http://www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk)

Green Blue | [www.thegreenblue.org.uk](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk)

RSPB | [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

RSPCA | [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)

National Trust | [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

Marine Management Organisation | [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency)

Wildlife Trusts for information and reporting sightings | [www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org)

Sea Trust | [www.seatrust.org.uk](http://www.seatrust.org.uk)

# JOIN US TODAY!

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## NOTES

### 1. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

- Protection of wild birds, their eggs and nests
- Protection of other animals
- Protection of plants

Penalties of up to £20,000 can apply to disturbance of breeding and non-breeding wildlife.

You can check for designations in the area you're visiting on the Government's web site [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk) (simply turn on the land and marine designations layers) Designation of SSSI designated areas, including intertidal areas.

### Other legislation:

#### Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Strengthened wildlife protection and protected areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

#### The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

Powers to designate and manage marine conservation zones (MCZs) for nationally important areas.

#### EU Habitats and Wild Birds Directives

Designation and management of European Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the Birds Directive to protect areas of international importance for key habitats and species. Most bird species are eligible for protection under the Birds Directive in some way.

### 2. Tide Times and weather conditions

The Met Office produce detailed online 5 day weather forecasts for coastal locations, which include tide times. This can be found at [www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/tide-times](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/tide-times)

Local ports may have longer range tide forecasts available online, but you can purchase annual tide information for specific locations online at [www.tidetimes.org.uk](http://www.tidetimes.org.uk)

### 3. Non Native Species

Non-native species are plants and animals that originate from other countries. Some can become established and invasive outside of their normal habitat.

They can damage the environment, which in turn can affect the economy and our way of life. For recreational boaters, this can mean restrictions on access to affected waters and therefore our boating activities.

Invasive species, invasive non-indigenous species and invasive non-native species - all these terms refer to species outside of their natural range due to intentional or unintentional introduction and can have a devastating impact.

As well as preying on, out-competing and displacing native wildlife, they can spread disease and block waterways. Their presence can sometimes be so damaging it can lead to an adverse effect not only on biological diversity, but also to impact on society and the economy.

[www.canoe-england.org.uk/waterways-and-environment/environmental-nonnative-species-information](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/waterways-and-environment/environmental-nonnative-species-information)

## NOTES

## Seal organisations

Cornwall Seal Group by emailing [sue@cornwallsealgroup.co.uk](mailto:sue@cornwallsealgroup.co.uk) giving the date, location and number of seals seen and any other relevant information and Cornwall Wildlife Trust by visiting their website.

[www.ercis.org.uk/wildlife](http://www.ercis.org.uk/wildlife) recording

In other areas, contact your local Wildlife Trust. For the Thames area, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) has an ongoing Thames Marine mammal survey at:

[www.sites.zsl.org/inthethames/#Public sightings](http://www.sites.zsl.org/inthethames/#Public%20sightings)

## Your Safety

The marine environment is a fascinating place to be BUT you must be aware of the dangers and risks involved in sea kayaking and train and prepare accordingly.

Further details can be found if you visit the British Canoeing website, or from our publication Canoe and Kayak Handbook.

The RNLI offer a range of resources to help paddlers on the seas stay safe, which you can find at [www.rnli.org/safety/respect-the-water/activities/Pages/kayaking.aspx](http://www.rnli.org/safety/respect-the-water/activities/Pages/kayaking.aspx)



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## NOTES

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For more information about British Canoeing visit:  
[www.britishcanoeing.org.uk](http://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk)



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