



The Green Guide to Coastal Boating



A joint environmental programme

Brought to you by:



The Green Blue is an environmental programme created by British Marine and the Royal Yachting Association.

To help boaters make more environmentally sustainable choices,

The Green Blue has developed this green guide which is packed with sustainable boating advice and tips.

The Green Blue is for everyone who enjoys getting out on the water and whose livelihood depends on boats and watersports. By working towards an environmentally sustainable boating community, we can help to protect and enhance our waters, wildlife and habitats now and into the future.

Find out more at:

www.thegreenblue.org.uk

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How to...

use oil & fuels

What's the problem?

Only about 5% of oil and fuel pollution in the water is from catastrophic spills, the majority comes from every day sources such as refuelling, engine emissions and oil leaks. The legal limit for oil and fuel in water discharge is roughly one drop of oil in two litres of water (15mg/l). Any more and wildlife and habitats can suffer.

Did you know? One litre of oil can pollute one million litres of water.

What can I do?

- Check the bilge is free from oil before pumping.
- Install an in-line bilge filter to remove oil when pumping out bilge water.
- Use an absorbent sock to control oil and fuel in the bilge.
- Make sure you use a large enough funnel if you have to refuel onboard.
- Maintain fuel lines, connections and seals to avoid leaks.
- Transfer waste oil and fuel in proper containers.
- Dispose of oily or fuel-soaked materials in hazardous waste facilities.
- Avoid overfilling the tank and allow room for the fuel to expand.
- Never use detergent to deal with spills – it may disperse the fuel or oil and save you embarrassment, but it can do even more environmental damage.
- On shore avoid using oil and fuel within ten metres of the water.
- Use an absorbant fuel collar to catch drips or blowback when refuelling.

Find out more:

For your nearest marina, harbour or site with recycling and waste disposal facilities visit The Green Blue's [Environmental Facilities Directory and Map](#).

Further guidance on [Oil and Fuel Use](#).

Report incidents in Northern Ireland. England, Wales and Scotland on the 24 hour pollution hotline: **0800 80 70 60**



How to...

clean onboard

What's the problem?

Most detergents contain phosphates which can cause algal blooms, oxygen depletion and can suffocate aquatic life. Products used on boat hulls and decks can also contain chlorine, ammonia, potassium hydroxide and solvents as well as other chemicals which can affect the way wildlife feeds, breathes and breeds.

What can I do?

- Choose environmentally friendly products, with natural ingredients. Avoid products containing micro-plastics, chlorine, bleach and phosphates in particular.
- Choose cleaning products that provide refill options to reduce plastic waste.
- Use non-toxic solutions wherever possible, water and elbow grease are great!
- If cleaning the hull of your boat, only scrub off the fouling and not the underlying paint – be careful not to let waste material enter the water or run into surface water drains.
- Use onshore facilities to wash you and your clothes.
- It is good practice to regularly bring your boat ashore to clean and remove any fouling from your boat and equipment e.g. hull, rudder, propellers, fenders and ropes, to prevent the spread of harmful aquatic Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) around our coastal waters.

Find out more:

Visit the [Green Blue Business Directory](#) to discover more environmentally friendly cleaning products for your boat.

For more information on how to prevent the spread of INNS please refer to the 'How to avoid spreading Invasive Non-Native Species' section of this guide.



How to...

renew your anti-fouling

What's the problem?

Many Anti-foul paints still work largely by releasing biocides (pesticides) into the water. Most paints and used brushes, rollers and trays are classified as hazardous waste. These toxins can impact on marine wildlife and build up in the food chain, causing a wide range of environmental problems.

What can I do?

- Choose more environmentally friendly, non-biocide, foul release technologies such as Silicone and Ultrasonication.
- Prevent paint and debris from unnecessarily entering the water. Catch scrapings and drips by using a drip tray, roller and placing a tarpaulin on the ground. Don't leave a coloured patch under your boat!
- Check your drains - avoid applying and removing antifoul near rainwater drains.
- Only scrub off the fouling and not the paint especially when using scrubbing piles.
- Use a filtered/bunded washdown facility which is designed to capture antifoul runoff instead. Visit our online Environmental Facilities Directory to find your nearest.
- Encourage your marina, club or boatyard to install a filtered/bunded washdown facility.
- Select the right antifoul, choosing the lowest levels of biocides and copper suitable for your needs. For example using a hard antifoul paint that lasts longer and has a lower leaching level than ablative antifoul paints.
- Use low VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) paints where possible.

Find out more:

Download our [Antifoul Environmental Best Practice Guide](#).

View further details on [Choosing an Antifoul Coating](#).



watch your waste

What's the problem?

Marine litter consists of a wide range of materials, including plastic, metal, wood, rubber, glass and paper, however it is dominated by plastic which accounts for 80% of all marine pollution and around 8 to 10 million tons of plastic end up in the ocean each year.

It is also estimated that more than 1 million birds and thousands of marine mammals and turtles die every year from entanglement, or ingestion of plastics alone.

What can I do?

- Follow the four Rs - Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle.
- Avoid using single use plastics. Refill re-usable bottles instead.
- Reuse items wherever possible e.g. donate your equipment or kit to local clubs or charity shops.
- Purchase items made from more sustainable materials and that can be recycled at end of life.
- Take care of your equipment and kit to improve it's longevity.
- Recycle items at your marina, club or harbour. Alternatively take items home or to your local recycling centre.
- Avoid products that may contain micro-plastics e.g. exfoliants and other cleaning products. An ingredient to look out for is 'polyethylene'.
- Don't contaminate waste and recycling by throwing items in the wrong bins e.g. paint tins and oily rags need to be disposed of in hazardous waste.
- Don't throw anything overboard, even orange peel can take up to 2 years to biodegrade.
- Secure items onboard to prevent anything falling or getting blown overboard.

Including our Environmental Facilities Directory to help locate your nearest recycling points at marinas and harbours.



How to...

use resources sustainably

What's the problem?

Climate change is now an accepted fact by the world's scientists, so sea level rise and more extreme weather conditions will have a significant effect on the recreational boating community. Increased flood risk may mean the loss of some water side facilities, damage to existing facilities and increase in insurance prices.

What can I do?

- Everyone has a responsibility to cut their emissions. Consider the alternatives available – from electric outboards and inboard engines to water lubricated stern glands.
- Change to low energy electrics and use solar or wind energy where you can.
- Try to purchase products that have minimal emissions through their life cycle, from what they are made from, how they are manufactured and transported. Ask businesses about their environmental policies before you buy.
- Follow the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse, repair and recycle to minimise waste going to landfill through general waste disposal.
- Try to only use FSC certified wood and paper from responsibly managed forests.
- Avoid using single use plastics where possible. Refill reusable bottles for example.
- Keep your hull clean, engine running efficiently and trim the engine to minimise fuel consumption. Set off earlier so you can sail all the way!
- Buy local produce as much as possible to reduce emissions from food mileage and to support your local economy.

Find out more:

Visit our [Green Blue Business Directory](#) for more sustainable-boating products and services.

Information and advice on [Energy Conservation](#) and [Electric Boating](#).



How to...

discharge blackwater

What's the problem?

Untreated sewage from boats can spread gastroenteritis, contaminate shellfish beds and mussel ropes and use up vital oxygen in the water. Human waste also contains phosphorous and nitrogen which increase levels of algae and reduce water clarity. Chemicals such as chlorine, formaldehyde, ammonium and zinc compounds used to disinfect, breakdown and deodorise waste are toxic to marine life.

What can I do?

- Use onshore facilities wherever possible so waste can be treated.
- Use your holding tank and pump out facilities. Locate your nearest pump out facilities by visiting our [online Environmental Facilities Directory](#).
- Encourage your marina and harbour to install a pump out facility.
- If you don't have a holding tank, install one. It is law in some European countries and will also enable you to hold onto your blackwater until you reach a pump out facility or can discharge 3 nautical miles offshore, away from other water users.
- Avoid discharging in areas with poor tidal flushing, such as marinas, inlets or where there are protected wildlife and habitats such as oyster beds.
- If you use a chemical, it must be emptied ashore into the regular sewage system.

Find out more:

Locate your nearest pump out station or Elsan point by visiting our [Environmental Facilities Directory and Map](#).

Further info and advice on [Blackwater](#).



How to...

cut emissions, noise and exhaust fumes

What's the problem?

Noise and exhaust fumes are unpleasant and can spoil our enjoyment of a peaceful day on the water. What's more, noise can have a detrimental effect on the wildlife that lives, feeds and breeds along our coastlines and estuaries, and exhaust fumes contribute to poor air quality.

What can I do about it?

- Consider an electric powered craft. They have low emissions and are very quiet.
- Regularly service your engine to lower fuel costs and emissions.
- Use CE marked outboard engines manufactured after 2005 or electric engines to increase fuel efficiency, reduce noise and decrease emissions.
- Fitting sound insulation around the engine can cut noise by 85%.
- Vibration absorbers can also reduce structural noise by 85%.
- Try switching to biodegradable hydraulic and lubricating oils.

Find out more:

Further info and advice on [Electric Boating](#) and [Engine Efficiency](#).

Explore [The Green Blue Business Directory](#) for more sustainable products and services including electric outboards and inboard engines.



How to...

avoid spreading invasive non-native species

What's the problem?

A non-native species is any wild species that is not normally resident and not a regular visitor to Great Britain. Some non-native species are completely harmless but others, known as invasive species, have the ability to cause damage to the environment, the economy, our health and the way we live.

Aquatic invasive species can block up waterways, harm the environment and can damage boat engines and props. They can be spread in a number of different ways including by hitching a ride on boat hulls, anchors and propellers or being carried in ballast and bilge water. Once established, they can become extremely difficult and expensive to eradicate.

What can I do?

- Remember to **Check, Clean, Dry** your vessel, equipment and gear if you land your vessel/craft after each use:

Check for any visible plant and animal material, remove and put in the bin.

Clean by using tap water to wash down all parts of the boat (including outboard, trailer and trolley/vehicle tyres). Flush the engine with clean fresh water before leaving.

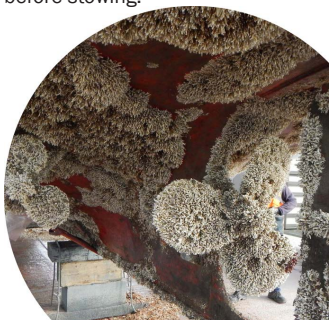
Dry your vessel/craft and equipment for as long as possible including draining all water from the bilges and any nooks and crannies.

- If the boat is on the water but not in use for a period of time, if possible, raise propellers and fenders out of the water.
- Use your boat regularly to prevent biofouling of the hull and engine - consider pulling the boat out if you don't need it for a while.
- Lift your boat, scrub and antifoul annually to prevent the build up and spread biofouling, which will also improve your fuel efficiency.
- Avoid sailing or motoring through plants and weed if possible. This can chop them up and spread them further.
- If an anchor has been used, remove any fouling by hand and wash off both the anchor and chain before stowing.

Find out more:

[Report](#) sightings in Great Britain.

Further details on [Invasive Species Prevention](#) for boat users.



How to spot...

invasive non-native species

Carpet Sea Squirt

Didemnum vexillum

Pale orange, cream or off-white colonies forming extensive, thin sheets. Firm, leathery texture and veined or marbled appearance. Recorded in marinas and adjacent shallow artificial submerged structures. Can also occur on natural cobble or gravel seabed to 80m depth, in tide pools on shore, in seagrass beds and in aquaculture installations.



Photo courtesy of CCW

Killer Shrimp

Dikergammarus villosus

A highly invasive shrimp, larger than native freshwater shrimp species, growing up to 30mm in length. Often has a striped appearance.

A voracious predator, killing invertebrates and small fish. They require hard banks, slow flowing water and are salt tolerant so can also colonise brackish coastal habitats.

Photo courtesy of EA



Wireweed

Sargassum muticum

A large olive brown seaweed with fronds over 1m long. A main axis bears alternating secondary branches giving it a washing line appearance out of water. Grows on hard surfaces in rock pools and in shallow water.

Wireweed competes with native seaweeds and seagrasses through rapid-growth, shading and abrasion. It is a nuisance in harbours and shallow waters where it is a hazard to boating (entanglement of propellers).

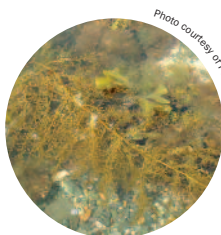


Photo courtesy of Paul Brazier, CCW

Chinese Mitten Crab

Eriocheir sinensis

A large crab with a maximum body length of 56 mm. The body is quite square in outline. Olive green colour with paler legs, which are twice the length of the body. The most obvious distinguishing feature is the dense mat of hair on the claws. Juveniles occur in lower estuaries and marine habitats. As they develop, young crabs migrate upstream, into freshwater and brackish systems.

Photo courtesy of Stephan Gollasch



How to...

appreciate wildlife

What's the problem?

The world's oceans support an estimated 10 million species but less than 3% have been identified. Our waters are also home to the world's second largest fish, the Basking Shark. Annually the UK hosts almost 6 million migratory waterbirds, which is almost 50% of the EU's population! However numbers are falling most likely because of climate change and pressure from development and disturbance.

What can I do about it?

- Think speed, and be steady, predictable, quiet and cautious around marine wildlife. This is the rule of thumb whether you spot something in the distance, whether something pops up on the port side, whether you use a smaller craft that can reach shallower depths or whether your passage takes you by seals hauled out on rocks or colonies of roosting birds on the cliff edge.
- Don't outstay your welcome if you take a moment to enjoy the experience, don't chase or follow to get a better view, and think about what might be above, alongside and underneath your boat.
- Disturbance can be caused by noise, proximity, wake and erratic movement and most marine species are protected by legislation which makes deliberate disturbance an offence.
- Remember to look out for local advice and marine codes wherever you choose to go boating as they can offer a wealth of information on what species you might see, any special characteristics and any local protections you need to be aware of.

Find out more:

Download [The Green Wildlife Guide for Boaters](#).

Further information and advice on [Habitat and Wildlife Protection](#) when boating.



How to spot... wildlife

Common or harbour seal

Phoca vitulina

Adult grows to between 1.2 to 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 a 'V' shape. Frequents sandbanks in estuaries and rocky coasts.



Leatherback turtle

Dermochelys coriacea

Largest turtle in world, grows up to 3m. Distinctive soft shell with longitudinal ridges. Black with white spots.



Common dolphin

Delphinus delphis

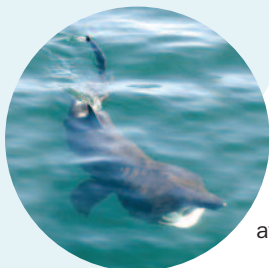
1.6 to 2.6m in length
Slender, torpedo shape and hourglass pattern. Often has pale grey centre. Cream or yellow patches on sides near head. Very active and agile, often jumping and somersaulting. Sometimes travels in large groups.



Basking shark

Cetorhinus maximus

Second largest fish in the world. Grows up to 11m in length. Large, angular dorsal fin. Cavernous mouth, white inside. Swims slowly at surface feeding. Seen most often in summer.



Find out more at:

www.thegreenblue.org.uk

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A joint environmental programme

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