

# The Green Blue

Making the environment second nature

How to...  
guide to  
inland  
boating

Photograph courtesy of British Waterways Photo Library



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**The Green Blue** is an exciting environmental awareness initiative by the British Marine Federation and the Royal Yachting Association.

The Green Blue is for everyone who enjoys getting out on the water, or whose livelihood depends on boats and watersports. By working towards an environmentally sustainable boating community, we can save money, avoid red tape and safeguard the waterways and habitats we enjoy for the future.

To help you think and act in a more environmentally conscious way, The Green Blue has designed this simple guide packed with advice and tips.

Find out more at:

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

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**Making the environment **second nature****

How to...

# use oil & fuels

## What's the problem?

Oil and fuels are the most frequently reported pollutant of inland waters in England and Wales. 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.

## What can I do?

- A drip tray under the engine is a requirement on many waterways. If it starts getting oily, find and mend the leak.
- Use an absorbent sock to control oil and fuel in the bilge.
- Check the engine bilge before pumping.
- Make sure you use a large enough funnel if you have to refuel onboard.
- Maintain fuel lines, connections and seals.
- Transfer waste oil and fuel in proper containers.
- Remember that oily or fuel-soaked materials are hazardous waste, dispose of them appropriately.
- Avoid over filling the tank. Allow room for the fuel inside to expand and check the tank vent for blockages.
- Never use detergents to deal with spills – it may disperse the fuel or oil and save you embarrassment, but it can do even more damage to the environment.
- On shore try not to use oil and fuel within ten metres of the water.

## Where can I find out more?

Boat Safety Scheme guide to Pollution Reduction  
– [www.boatsafetyScheme.com](http://www.boatsafetyScheme.com)

Environment Agency  
– [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/oilcare](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/oilcare)

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

Find your nearest oil disposal centre  
– [www.oilbankline.org.uk](http://www.oilbankline.org.uk)



How to...

# cut noise & exhaust fumes

## What's the problem?

By 2011, the Government has specified that 5% of domestic fuel must come from renewable sources e.g. bio diesel. The Recreational Craft Directive also has more stringent requirements in terms of emissions and noise. These are also key issues when it comes to disturbance of wildlife.

## What can I do about it?

- Regularly service your engine to lower fuel costs and emissions.
- Use a cleaner, quieter four stroke outboard engine instead of a two stroke.
- Fitting sound insulation around the engine can cut noise by 85%.
- Vibration absorbers can also reduce structural noise by 85%.
- Bio-diesel is a cleaner fuel. Most diesel engines can easily be converted, but check your warranty first.
- Consider an electric powered craft. They have very little emissions and are very quiet.
- Try switching to biodegradable hydraulic and lubricating oils.

## Where can I find out more?

Electric boats – [www.electric-boat-association.org.uk](http://www.electric-boat-association.org.uk)

Recreational Craft Directive (RCD) – [www.britishmarine.co.uk](http://www.britishmarine.co.uk)

Bio-diesel conversions – [www.bloomingfutures.co.uk](http://www.bloomingfutures.co.uk)

Find Bio-diesel – [www.biodieselfillingstations.co.uk](http://www.biodieselfillingstations.co.uk)

Sound proofing – [www.asap-supplies.com](http://www.asap-supplies.com)

Save a gallon – [www.ybw.com/ybw/honda/gallon](http://www.ybw.com/ybw/honda/gallon)

Go shopping at the Green Directory – [www.thegreenblue.org.uk](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk)



How to...

# appreciate wildlife

## What's the problem?

Annually the UK hosts more than 5 million migratory waterbirds. Of the 38 species of freshwater fish native to Great Britain, many are now endangered including lampreys, bullhead and the Atlantic salmon. Britain has 17 species of bat, many of which feed along the canals and waterways. Wildlife is under constant pressure from factors such as climate change, development and disturbance.

## What can I do?

- Wherever you go take care not to disturb plants, birds, marine animals or damage geological features. A good source of advice is the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
- Find out if the areas you visit are protected and why.
- Keep your distance, use binoculars! Never separate mother and young or disturb resting animals.
- Keep noise and wash to a minimum. See more by disturbing less.
- Small craft can reach shallow, more sensitive areas. Avoid stirring up the bottom or disturbing vegetation and wildlife.
- Keep a constant speed and direction when you spot wildlife.

## Where can I find out more?

– [www.waterscape.com/wildlife](http://www.waterscape.com/wildlife)

Facts and legalities – [www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk)  
– [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)  
– [www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)

What's special near you – [www.natureonthemap.org.uk](http://www.natureonthemap.org.uk)

Identify birds – [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

Volunteer for conservation work  
– [www.waterways.org](http://www.waterways.org)



How to...

# clean your boat

## What's the problem?

Most detergents contain phosphates which can cause algal blooms and oxygen depletion which can suffocate aquatic life. Chemicals such as Triclosan, chlorine formaldehyde, potassium hydroxide and solvents used to clean, disinfect and deodourise are toxic to aquatic life.

## What can I do?

- Choose environmentally friendly products for cleaning and maintaining your boat. Avoid chlorine, bleach products and phosphates in particular.
- Use non-toxic solutions wherever possible, water and elbow grease are great!
- If you have a washing machine onboard use a detergent-free washball.
- Avoid spreading invasive species by thoroughly scrubbing your waterline regularly as well as dinghies, trailers and other possibly contaminated items such as anchors.

## Where can I find out more?

The Green Blue 'Green Directory' - [www.thegreenblue.org.uk](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk)

Eco shopping - [www.ecotopia.co.uk](http://www.ecotopia.co.uk)  
- [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod)

Marine aliens - [www.marlin.ac.uk/marine\\_aliases](http://www.marlin.ac.uk/marine_aliases)



# reduce your wash

## What's the problem?

Shoreline and bankside habitats support a rich variety of wildlife. Even minor damage can be a problem in sensitive habitats such as mudflats, salt marshes and reed beds. Your wash can erode banks, a major cause of habitat loss, disturb moored boats and even loosen their moorings.

## What can I do?

- Slow down if there are waves at the bows or stern of your boat. You are probably using unnecessary fuel with no increase in actual speed.
- Keep to designated speed limits. If in doubt, don't exceed 4 mph.
- To minimise the impact of your wake keep a safe and reasonable distance between your boat and the bank.
- Hull design can have a major influence on wash. Short full bows give higher waves, while longer and finer bows can reduce wash.
- A well balanced and clean propeller will disturb less sediment and reduce your impact on the underwater environment.
- Sensible use of throttle and good boat handling skills can significantly reduce wash as well as improve fuel efficiency.
- Take a training course to improve your skills.
- When you go ashore try to use recognised landing places.

## Where can I find out more?

Take the RYA's Inland Waterways Helmsman's Course - [www.rya.org.uk](http://www.rya.org.uk)

Boating Basics - [www.broads-authority.gov.uk](http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk)

The Boaters Handbook - [www.aina.org.uk](http://www.aina.org.uk)



How to...

# watch your waste

## What's the problem?

Thousands of tonnes of rubbish are washed down our rivers and waterways every year. It is estimated that more than a million birds and mammals die every year from entanglement, or ingestion of plastics such as balloons and plastic bags. A survey of 452 river and canal sites by the Environment Agency showed that litter was the most common cause of poor water quality and about 60% of the litter was plastic.

## What can I do?

- Don't throw anything over the side, including food.
- If you smoke, keep a butt tin in your pocket for cigarette ends.
- Use starch-based rubbish bags.
- Prevent loose items from blowing overboard.
- Remove excess packaging and recycle it.
- Recycle more – it's the same quantity of waste just a little more effort.
- Reduce waste, eg. by refilling water bottles.
- Don't contaminate general waste by throwing hazardous items in the wrong container e.g. paint tins, oily rags and old electronic instruments.

## Where can I find out more?

Adopt a river – [www.ukrivers.net/adopt-a-river](http://www.ukrivers.net/adopt-a-river)

Join a British Waterways spring clean – [www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com)

Find local recycling facilities – [www.recycle-more.co.uk](http://www.recycle-more.co.uk)

Information on hazardous waste

– [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/special](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/special)



How to...

# use resources sustainably

## What's the problem?

Global warming is now an accepted fact by the world's scientists. Sea level rise and extreme weather conditions will have a significant effect on the recreational boating community. Increased flood risk will cause loss of water side facilities, damage to existing facilities and raise insurance prices.

## What can I do?

- Everyone has a responsibility to cut their emissions. Consider the alternatives available – from electric to Bio-diesel engines to water lubricated stern glands and low VOC paints and varnishes.
- Log on to the Green Directory and do a car share to the next inland waterways event.
- Change to low energy electrics and use solar or wind energy where you can, check for grants which may be able to help you with the cost.
- Think about emissions and the ability to recycle when buying kit or craft. Ask about the environmental policies of the businesses or manufacturer before you buy.
- Try to use only FSC certified wood from responsibly managed forests.
- Recycle your second hand kit at the Green Directory.
- Keep your hull clean, engine running efficiently with regular servicing and trim the engine to minimise fuel consumption.
- Buy local produce and products as much as possible.

## Where can I find out more?

Exchange kit and car share

– [www.thegreenblue.org.uk/greendirectory](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk/greendirectory)

Information about sustainability

– [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/scp](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/scp)

Makes sense of climate change

– [www.ukcip.org.uk](http://www.ukcip.org.uk)

Become carbon neutral

– [www.thecarbontrust.co.uk](http://www.thecarbontrust.co.uk)

– [www.carbonneutral.com](http://www.carbonneutral.com)



How to...

# avoid spreading invasive species

## What's the problem?

Invasive (alien) species are introduced non-native species that have become established outside their normal habitat or native country. It is estimated that the threat to biodiversity from these invaders is second only to that of habitat loss. There are currently about 65 marine invasive species in Britain. Many species thrive in both salt and fresh water. Their main means of spreading is via boat hulls or propellers, or within bilge or engine cooling water systems.

## What can I do?

- When recovering a boat or dinghy drain all the water from the boat including buckets, sails etc.
- Always remove any visible plant, fish, animal matter and mud and put it in the bin.
- For boats kept in the water permanently, hull fouling is the main means of transfer. Clean your hull regularly to minimise the risk. Consider pulling the boat out if you don't need it for a while.
- Try not to run through water plants and weed. This chops up the plants and can spread them further.

## Where can I find out more?

Report invasive species to the Environment Agency, SEPA or CCW on [0800 80 70 60](tel:0800807060)

Fact sheet - [www.thegreenblue.org.uk](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk)

Identify marine aliens - [www.marlin.ac.uk/marine\\_alien](http://www.marlin.ac.uk/marine_alien)

Exotic Invasion quiz - [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

Species introduced since 1700 - [www.introduced-species.co.uk](http://www.introduced-species.co.uk)



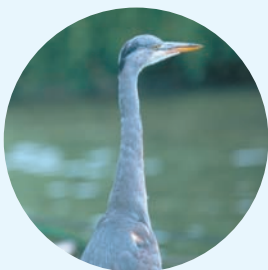
How to spot...

# waterways wildlife

## Bat

Bats can be spotted around dusk as they venture out to hunt their insect prey.

You are most likely to see the Daubentons bat which feeds only a few inches above the surface of the water.



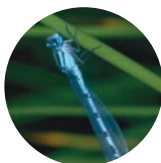
## Heron

Grey herons are common in the UK and breed in woodland areas close to water. Herons have white or light grey heads, a long, pointed yellow bill and a grey back and wings. Some British herons migrate to France, Spain and even Portugal for the winter.

## Damselfly

It can be difficult to tell the damselfly and the dragonfly apart. Damselflies are smaller and daintier with eyes protruding from the side of their heads.

When resting, damselflies fold their wings along their backs whereas dragonflies stretch their wings outwards.



Report your wildlife sightings to the  
British Waterways Wildlife Survey

How to spot...

# waterways wildlife

## Moorhen

Moorhens can be identified by the white line running down each side of their body and their unmistakable habit of flicking their tail as they walk. Moorhens are omnivorous and feed on insects, worms and snails as well as aquatic plants, seeds and fruit.



## Frog

Frogs can breathe through their skin and therefore happily spend several months underwater, beneath piles of mud or leaves. Adult frogs feed on insects, snails, worms and slugs whereas tadpoles are herbivorous and feed only on algae.



## Kingfisher

Kingfishers have unmistakable bright blue and orange plumage. They fly rapidly and low over slow moving or still water, and hunt fish from riverside perches, occasionally hovering above the water's surface.

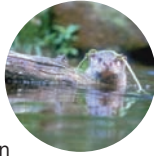


How to spot...

# waterways wildlife

## Otter

Otters were once widespread throughout UK waters. Brown in colour with long bodies, their strong tails and webbed feet help them swim quickly through the water. Otters are timid and not often observed by humans, but have vast territories, covering up to 40km of watercourse.



## Water vole

Also known as 'Ratty' from Wind in the Willows the water vole is the largest British vole and one of our most endangered species.



They need steep sided earth banks where they construct complicated tunnel systems with entrances both above and below the waterline.

These are essential for escaping their natural predators and can be inundated or eroded by wash from passing boats.

Photos and information courtesy of British Waterways

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British Waterways Wildlife Survey

For more information or to search the database of scientific papers visit [www.thegreenblue.org.uk](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk). The site is packed with practical advice, case studies and information on green products to help you save money, protect water quality and habitats and, ultimately, safeguard the future of boating.

Find out more at:

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

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