

# The Green Blue

Making the environment second nature

## The Green Guide to Inland Boating

Photograph courtesy of British Waterways Photo Library



A joint BMF and RYA Initiative

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**The Green Blue** is an innovative environmental programme developed 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)

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

# 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, but it causes more damage to the environment as the oil is ingested by fish and the phosphates cause algal blooms and reduce oxygen levels.
- 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)

Report incidents in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland 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?

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 and breeds along our waterways, and exhaust fumes contribute to poor air quality.

## What can I do about it?

- 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%.
- Consider an electric powered craft. They have low 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)

Go shopping at the Green Directory –  
[www.sailingnetworks.com/green](http://www.sailingnetworks.com/green)



How to...

# treat sewage and waste

## What's the problem?

Sewage discharge is prohibited by law on most inland waterways. Both grey and black water discharge can have detrimental effects on natural ecosystems and wildlife. Sewage can spread gastroenteritis and also contains phosphorous and nitrogen which increase levels of algae and reduce water quality. The chemicals found in grey water from cleaning products, such as washing up liquids, deplete oxygen, causing suffocation to aquatic life. Whilst other chemicals such as chlorine can affect the way in which wildlife feeds, breathes and breeds.

## What can I do?

- Use a closed toilet-system such as a holding tank or chemical toilet.
- Always use shore side pump out facilities or sewerage facilities to dispose of grey and black water.
- If fitting a holding tank, install a system which complies with BS EN ISO 8099.
- Boats complying with the Boat Safety Scheme must have a valve fitted to any overboard discharge lines.

## Where can I find out more?

Locate holding tank pump out facilities

– [www.thegreenblue.org.uk/pump\\_out\\_directory.aspx](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk/pump_out_directory.aspx)



How to...

# clean your boat

## What's the problem?

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

In addition, the British Waterways Terms and Conditions for Boat Licences requests that phosphate-free detergents are used on board, particularly in washing machines and dishwashers.

## 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?

Where to buy environmentally friendly products for your boat  
– [www.sailingnetworks.com/green](http://www.sailingnetworks.com/green)

Non native invasive species – [www.marlin.ac.uk/marine\\_aliases](http://www.marlin.ac.uk/marine_aliases)  
– [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org)



# 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 bow 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 knots.
- 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/coursetraining](http://www.rya.org.uk/coursetraining)



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 which can be composted.
- 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, e.g. 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](http://www.ukrivers.net)

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



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.
- 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.
- 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?

Reduce your carbon footprint

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



How to...

# avoid spreading non-native 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 140 aquatic non-native 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, paying particular attention to the propeller, prop shaft, bottom of the keel, anchor chains as well as water inlets and outlets. 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 sightings in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

- Call [0800 80 70 60](tel:0800807060)
- Visit – [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org)

Identify non-native invasive species

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

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

- [www.direct.gov.uk/checkcleandry](http://www.direct.gov.uk/checkcleandry)



How to...

# manage your antifouling

## What's the problem?

The extent to which antifouling is used varies throughout the UK and is influenced by both the type of boat and nature of the water body. Generally the range of fouling organisms and extent of fouling tends to be smaller in freshwaters than marine waters and comprises mainly of algae, which although unsightly can usually be removed with a regular scrub. Although freshwater coatings usually have lower levels of copper (the main active ingredient in biocidal antifoulants), toxins can still build up if scrapings and residues are not caught during cleaning and maintenance and are allowed to enter the water.

## What can I do?

- Select the right antifoul for your boat and location, choosing the lowest levels of biocides and copper where possible.
- Consider more environmentally friendly paints (such as low volatile organic compound paints) and non-biocidal coatings such as silicone.
- When preparing the surface and applying the paint, catch flakes and drips by using a tarpaulin.
- Dispose of used brushes, trays and empty tins in the hazardous waste bin.
- Encourage your marina or club to collect and properly dispose of wash down residues.
- When cleaning, only scrub off the fouling and not the paint.

## Where can I find out more?

Information on paints – [www.boatpaint.co.uk](http://www.boatpaint.co.uk)

A-Z and Rough Guide to Antifoul – [www.thegreenblue.org.uk](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk)



# 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 spot...

# waterways wildlife

## 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.



## 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.



## 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.



## 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.



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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