

## **Caring for the Marine environment Summary**

Your canoe is a traditional craft used throughout the world for exploring wilderness areas and quietly observing wildlife and flora. It causes no erosion, noise or pollution, and leaves no trace of its passing.

By following the simple steps below you can ensure your presence is not detrimental to the freshwater and marine environment, minimise and avoid accidentally disturbing wildlife and their habitats.

- Find out about the area before you go, noting its sensitive places, species and breeding seasons.
- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home with you.
- When clearing litter left by others, handle it with care.
- Leave the environment as you find it
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Do not “seal” launch or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks. Float your canoe for launching, lift out when landing and carry it to and from the water.
- Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing.
- Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
- On coastal waters take care on shingles beaches - they may be nesting grounds
- Avoid dragging canoes through sand dunes and associated areas
- Canoe a safe distance away from wildlife to avoid causing disturbance and stress – otters, seal colonies, rafts of wildfowl and sea birds, their nesting, shelter and feeding areas i.e. mudflats, marshes. Remember basking sharks, dolphins and whales can also be a danger to you.
- Constantly assess wildlife. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly.
- Note Environment Agency information on measures on the spread of alien species in UK rivers and threat of disease to UK salmon stocks after using canoes and equipment overseas

Be the eyes and ears on the water. Report pollution, wildlife problems, damage, incidents etc to the relevant authorities.

There is a wealth of wildlife for you to see and enjoy throughout the British Isles and off our extensive coastline, but a lot of these animals are vulnerable to disturbance if not approached in a responsible way that respects their wild nature.

We share the waters we use for our recreation with a wide range of birds, fish and cetaceans but the presence of boats should not necessarily have to mean disturbance to the local wildlife. If craft are handled with sensitivity there can be minimal or zero disturbance.

## **Canoeing in Context**

The impact that canoeing at sea has on the sea has to be seen in context. Compared to certain industries and other recreational activities the disturbance we cause is minimal, but we should not be complacent. Canoe England is actively promoting the fact that all canoeists should strive to learn more about the sea, and develop skills and senses that ensure marine wildlife does not suffer from our visits. The breeding season for birds and common seals coincides with the best conditions for kayaking, so it is important to be aware of the needs of wildlife.

**Above all enjoy your canoeing and don't forget your camera!**

