

You, your canoe and the environment

Caring for the environment

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. Canoeing at appropriate water levels is an environmentally benign activity² and causes no damage to fish stocks³.

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

- Find out about the area before you go, noting its sensitive places, protected areas⁶, species and breeding seasons.
- Take your litter home with you, leave no trace of your visit.
- 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 rivers, avoid paddling over gravel banks in low water conditions- they may contain fish spawn.

- On coastal waters take care on shingle beaches- they may be nesting grounds e.g. Terns. Avoid dragging canoes across rocky inter-tidal areas, through sand dunes and their grasses. For more advice refer to Canoeing on the sea – A Guide to Good Environmental Practice⁵.
- Canoe a safe distance away from wildlife to avoid causing disturbance and stress to otters, seal colonies - especially with pups present, rafts of wildfowl and sea birds as well as their nesting, shelter and feeding areas e.g. mudflats, marshes and cliffs. Remember, basking sharks, dolphins and whales can also be a danger to you.
- Constantly assess wildlife. If you see signs of disturbance move away quickly.
- Note the bio-security measures to minimise the spread of invasive alien aquatic species and diseases in UK waters. Check, clean and dry canoes & equipment after use⁴.

Report pollution, damage and incidents to the relevant authorities.

Environment Agency
Telephone 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)

British Waterways
Telephone 01923 201120
Out of hours Telephone 0800 47 999 47

RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress
Telephone 0990 55 59 99 (24 hours)

For Coastguard and other emergency services call 999

Canoe England Membership



Membership of Canoe England offers a huge range of benefits including:

- Licence to paddle on 4,500km of Britain's navigations and canals
- Civil liability insurance up to £10 million
- Six editions of Canoe Focus magazine
- Discounts on events, equipment, clothing, travel and boat insurance and coaching supplies
- Access to information, resources, courses and competitions
- Access to the member's area on the website, including classified advertisements

So don't delay- join or renew your membership today!

Telephone 0845 370 9500 or visit www.canoe-england.org.uk

Notes

Canoeing is the generic term used to describe canoe, kayak and paddlesports.

¹ For health, safety, and water quality (Weil's Disease) information visit www.canoe-england.org.uk/about/health-and-safety. Also refer to the Canoe England Member's Directory and information provided by local navigation and port authorities.

² Canoe England has a Memorandum of Understanding with English Nature (now formed as Natural England) that states "English Nature and the BCU agree that there is unlikely to be any significant impact on or lasting disturbance to wildlife and the water environment from the passage of canoes."

³ An Environment Agency report entitled "W266- The effects of Canoeing on Fish Stocks & Angling" concluded that there is no empirical evidence linking canoeing with damage to fish spawning grounds or damage to fish stocks.

⁴ Invasive alien aquatic plant and animal species in some UK and overseas waters could be transferred to other waters on damp water recreation equipment and damage ecosystems. Check, clean and dry canoes, clothing equipment – ropes, fishing tackle etc after use.

If used abroad, ensure to disinfect/dry before re-use in the UK and guard against the fish parasite (*Gyrodactylus salaris*) that is a threat to UK salmon stocks. For procedures on bio-security measures visit: www.canoe-england.org.uk under Environment and Canoeing on the sea www.direct.gov.uk/checkcleandry, and www.environment-agency.gov.uk

⁵ Canoeing on the sea - A guide to Good Environmental Practice at www.canoe-england.org.uk. Also see www.canoescotland.com/default.aspx?tabid=701

⁶ Protected Area designations- Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI's), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's), Special Protection Areas (SPA's apply to rare and vulnerable species of birds), National Nature Reserves and Marine Nature Reserves (to be known as Marine Conservation Zones). Visit www.natural-england.org.uk for further information.

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waterways.org.uk



thegreenblue.org.uk



broads-authority.gov.uk



britishwaterways.co.uk



environment-agency.gov.uk



naturalengland.org.uk



www.pla.co.uk



www.canoe-england.org.uk

canoe england

You, your canoe & the environment

England has a wonderful network of inland and coastal waters that are amongst the best in Europe. This leaflet provides guidance on good practice for using these waters in a responsible and appropriate manner. Canoeists should be able to enjoy their sport and recreation in harmony with the natural environment and share the resource with other water-users.

To get the best canoeing experience, try to be considerate and respectful; treat others as you would wish to be treated, respect the freshwater and marine environment, follow safety recommendations and be seen as a welcomed visitor.

Observe the Countryside Code.
For information visit:
www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

For information on where to canoe, including information on access arrangements that may be in place, contact the Canoe England Local River Advisor, Local Coastal Advisor, Regional River Advisor, navigation or port authority. Contact details can be found on the Canoe England website:
www.canoe-england.org.uk

Take responsibility for your actions

The outdoors is a fantastic place for sport and recreation, but it is also a natural environment which needs to be treated with respect.

- Be aware of information/ hazards for your chosen journey and ensure you are confident in the ability of your party to cope with the conditions expected.
- Take account of water, flows, levels and weather conditions.
- Leave details of your trip with a responsible person and advise a safe arrival.
- Ensure your equipment is in good condition. Use and wear it correctly.
- It is recommended to take advantage of BCU advice and courses offered on canoe skills and safety for all levels of ability.
- Be aware of health, water quality and other safety information.¹
- Permission may be required to cross private land.
- It is your assessment of conditions/ factors whether to go on the water.



Consideration for others

Canoeists will meet a variety of land and water users on their journeys. Common sense, polite behaviour and conversations can help to promote a mutual understanding.

On Land

- Stay away from houses and private gardens.
- Change discreetly, using public facilities where possible.
- Drive sensibly at all times.
- Car Parking- do not obstruct roads or entrances to buildings or farm property.
- Ensure your kit does not cause an obstruction when unloading.
- Leave gates positioned and property as you find them.
- Avoid damage to fences and walls.

On Water

- Follow the general rules of navigation and any local bylaws. Obtain any necessary licences.
- Respect and do not obstruct other water users.
- Keep a look out and 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 river and the impact on your surroundings.

- When offering assistance to those in need, on or off the water, do not put yourself or fellow canoeists at risk.
- Show consideration to organised bank side activities, and give way as required to on-water events.

Anglers

Keep a look out for anglers whilst paddling. Anglers can be hard to spot on banks.

- Co-operate to avoid lines, nets and swims.
- If it is unclear where to pass lines or swims, then quietly attract the attention of the angler and agree a route to follow.
- When an angler is playing a fish from the bank or wading, stop some way off and await their acknowledgement to proceed.
- Do not linger in pools or swims occupied by an angler.

For information about canoeing in England go to **www.canoe-england.org.uk**

For information about canoeing elsewhere visit the following websites:

www.canoe-wales.com
www.canoe-scotland.com
www.cani.org.uk

