



CANADIAN WILDLIFE
FEDERATION

BEST PRACTICES
on the water



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BEST PRACTICES



As Canadian sailors we enjoy many special connections with water. Canada has the longest coastline and the most lakes in the world, and more than 2 million rivers! All of this water flows across the land and drains into one of our three oceans – the Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic.

With all that water it's often easy to forget about the importance of keeping these watery spaces clean, safe and healthy for your club, neighbourhood and even the wild creatures and plants that share your space. Most wildlife are especially sensitive to pollution, so the more wildlife and bio-indicators we see the more likely that our water area is a healthy place for all.



BEFORE THE WATER

I prepare a list and mark my chart with important local elements, such as protected or sensitive areas (this might change depending on nesting, migratory or spawning seasons); pump out facilities; campsites; local numbers; and any other information that might be useful.	
I ensure that my craft and equipment comply with Transport Canada regulations.	
I maintain and prepare my craft in an bio-friendly way.	
I use non-metallic, nontoxic bottom paint.	
I prepare my boat in a controlled environment.	

ENGINE

I fuel my boat with biodiesel.	
I refuel away from the water when possible and take extra precautions using absorbent pads if I must refuel while afloat. I fill the tank slowly and do not use auto shutoff.	
I do not top up (overfill) the fuel.	
I keep an oil spill kit on hand. I never pour detergent to dispel an oil spill; it makes the problem worse.	
I have installed a bilge water filter sponge.	
I do not pump bilge water overboard if it is oily or has diesel in it.	
I have replaced our two-stroke engine for a cleaner four-stroke engine.	
I recycle engine liquids and other hazardous materials (e.g., antifreeze, engine oil, batteries, et cetera) properly.	
I prefer to use solar, wind or hydro charging systems.	
I turn off the engine of my boat when I can.	
I use electric options for slow speed work, or I drift, paddle, sail or anchor instead.	



ON THE WATER

I am aware of the best practices for the craft I am using, and I teach these habits to my group.	
I never throw litter over the side of the boat; my garbage does not belong in the water.	
Anything that I bring onto the boat must come back off the boat.	
If I see a problem such as a lot of litter or spilled oil, I report it to the Coast Guard or local authorities.	
If I see a problem such as an injured animal or damaged habitat, I contact the local vet, rescue centre or park authorities.	
All of my garbage is sorted, recycled and left ashore at recovery sites.	

CLEAN VENUE

I organize regular beach and shoreline clean-ups as part of our objective to maintain a neutral or positive plastic footprint.	
We regularly update and check the Best Practices for clubs and chalets on the water.	
I have installed and use our water sewage holding tanks.	
I empty these tanks ashore at the provided pump out stations, or find an acceptable alternative far away from the water.	
I select the most eco-friendly options for disposing of waste.	
I never dump waste from chemical toilets overboard.	
When I notice a lack of pump out stations, I alert my local authority to the issue.	



CLEAN BOAT

I ensure that the trailer, boat and all other equipment are clear of plants and debris every time I take them out of the water. I am especially careful about this when changing from one body of water to another. This helps to reduce the spread of invasive species.	
I use water and bio-friendly cleaners and substances to maintain our craft and equipment. <i>NOTE: Even if a product says it is biodegradable, it might not be bio-friendly. (Look for phosphate free).</i>	
I know that hydrogen peroxide, vinegar, lemon juice, Borax paste, baking soda, elbow grease and a high-pressure hose are all bio-friendly cleaning alternatives.	
When I wash my equipment, I do so away from the water's edge so that it does not drain directly back into the water.	

FLORA AND FAUNA

I minimize my presence (e.g., by not making too much noise) to show respect to wild areas and other water users.	
I am respectful of the fact that there may be sensitive or endangered species and habitats in my local area.	
As per the Best Practices Around Marine Mammals, I understand how to react if I find myself in proximity to sensitive habitats or endangered species.	
I enjoy looking for wildlife, but I try not to disturb it.	



CONSERVATION

I use a reusable water bottle instead of single-use plastic ones.	
I bring my lunch in a container instead of single-use plastic bags.	

DIVING AND SNORKELING

I do not bring anything into the water that could contaminate it.	
If I bring an item into the water, I bring it with me when I return to land.	
I take special care not to touch or damage fragile habitats and species.	
I never remove specimens from the water.	

FISHING

I have a fishing licence and catch only the species I need. I avoid unnecessary bycatch overfishing.	
I return undersized and undesirable fish to the water unharmed.	
I take care not to leave snagged, broken fishing net behind, because nets, hooks and monofilament are virtually indestructible and continue to "ghost fish" wildlife long after it is lost.	
I do not empty bait buckets into the water. I empty them ashore, and always prior to moving to a new body of water.	



ANCHORING AND/OR CAMPING

I avoid landing on especially small islets of 75 meters diameter or less as they are especially sensitive habitats and nesting areas.	
I understand that anchoring is damaging to wildlife and choose other options whenever possible, such as regular defined anchoring areas, moorings, and tying my boat to a durable surface on the shoreline.	
When I must pull my craft ashore, I consider its impacts on the landing site. I try to land as close to my campsite as possible.	
When I camp, moor or anchor outdoors I apply a "leave no trace" approach.	
I use predefined camping spots whenever possible.	
I treat my stopping site with respect and never alter it to suit my needs.	
I stop on durable surfaces, such as campsites, gravel, dry grasses and snow.	
If I have to wash while afloat I use PH neutral and phosphate free shampoo.	

ADOPT

I encourage my group or family to adopt a local river, lake or shoreline, because this helps them develop personal connections with their local environment.	
I encourage my group or family to join a wildlife watch program, because these programs help specialists keep track of species and habitats across Canada.	



***NOTE:** This includes marine mammals in the water, like whales and porpoises, as well as those on land, like seals and sea lions. We must also protect sensitive spots like bird colonies and nesting areas (Small islets are especially sensitive areas).

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

I understand that it is illegal, according to Canada's <i>Fisheries Act</i> , to disturb marine mammals.	
I will report harassment of marine mammals to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (1-800-465-4336).	
As I plan my trip, I will use a nautical chart to check for any special protected areas along my route and find out if there are specific regulations about approaching animals in these areas.	

DISTANCE*

***NOTE:** These are precautionary guidelines. Regulations in your area may vary.

I will stay 200 metres away from whales, dolphins and porpoises in the water.	
I will stay 200 metres away from areas where there are seals, sea lions and bird colonies on land.	
I slow down to less than seven knots when I see a marine mammal or sensitive area within 400 metres.	
If I accidentally end up closer than 200 metres to a marine mammal or pod, I will stop my vessel and drift or stay stationary until the animal(s) pass.	
I will increase my distance if an animal acts agitated or alarmed.	



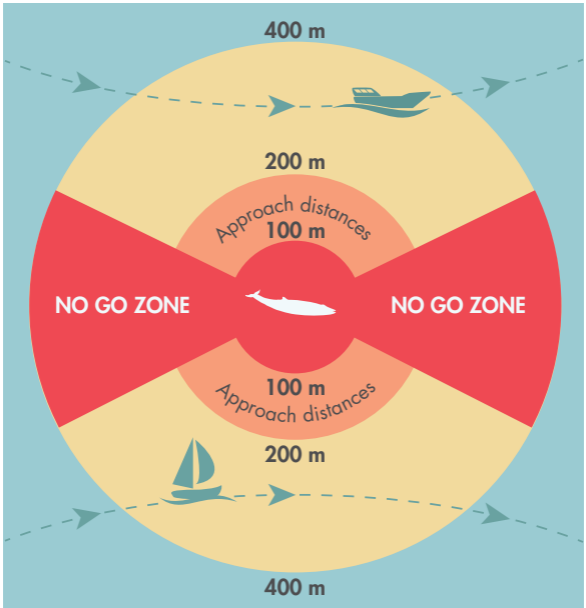
TRAVEL

I do not cut off or cross a marine whale, dolphin or porpoise's path (for motorized boats, this helps reduce propeller injuries).	
I always travel parallel to the direction of any whale, dolphin, porpoise or pod and stay out their path.	
I avoid chasing, sneaking up behind or approaching a whale, dolphin, porpoise or pod head on.	
I stay on the seaward side of marine animals when they are close to shore.	

DISTURBANCE

I am cautious and observant in areas known to have marine mammals.	
I reduce the noise from the engine and wake as much as possible when marine animals are present.	
I stay quiet when viewing marine mammals (e.g., no yelling, whistling or clapping).	
I stay in my vessel and do not swim with marine wildlife.	
I do not feed marine wildlife.	
I do not touch marine wildlife.	
I do not attempt to handle or rescue any marine animals myself. I will call a local rescue group if an animal seems to be abandoned, sick or injured. Visit CWFWildAboutSports.org for a list of such organizations.	
I limit my observation time to 30 minutes or less, out of respect for the animals and other viewers.	

BEST PRACTICES AROUND MARINE ANIMALS*



100 m Minimum approach distance

200 m Approach distance in the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park and the future St. Lawrence Estuary MPA







ON THE WATER

I have learned the rules of my sport, and I know how to be prepared.	
I never throw litter over the side of the boat; my garbage does not belong in the water.	
Anything that I bring onto the boat must come back off the boat with me.	

CLEAN VENUE

I report any problems I see, such as a lot of litter or spilled oil.	
I clean up the beach or water area as necessary, but only with adult supervision, and I always wear gloves.	
I put my trash in garbage buckets, and when I recycle I place things in the correct bins.	
We regularly update and check the Best Practices for clubs and chalets on the water.	

CLEAN BOAT

I make sure that I clear the trailer, boat and other equipment of plants and other debris every time we take it out on the water, especially if we are transferring from one body of water to another. This helps to reduce the spread of invasive species.	
I use bio-friendly cleaners.	

FLORA AND FAUNA

I respect wild areas and other water users by not making too much noise.	
I am respectful of the fact that there may be sensitive habitats or endangered species in my local area, and I try to learn about them.	
As per the Best Practices Around Marine Mammals, I understand how to react if I find myself in proximity to a sensitive or endangered species.	
I enjoy looking for wildlife, but I try not to disturb it.	
If I see an injured animal or damaged habitat I inform someone responsible.	

CONSERVATION

I use a reusable water bottle instead of single-use plastic ones.	
I bring my lunch in a lunch box instead of plastic bags.	
I put paper fish on the drains and sinks at home to remind everyone that our liquids end up in the sea.	
I use only the water I need; then I turn off the tap.	



ADOPT

I adopt a local river, lake or shoreline.	
I have joined a wildlife watch program.	

GENERAL

I have defined my personal vision and list of environmental objectives.	
I enjoy going outside.	
When I go camping or on adventure I apply the "leave no trace" approach.	
I love learning about the world around me, and I ask lots of questions about it!	



CLUBHOUSE

Designate an Environmental Officer.	
Coordinate the club or chalet's environmental activities with local and regional programs.	
Ensure Eco certification is up to date.	
Best practices for clubs and chalets on the water are posted and maintained.	
Emergency telephone numbers are posted.	
Up-to-date seasonal and environmental information is posted, such as local MPAs, pump out stations, et cetera.	
Recycling bins are available and clearly marked.	

OUTSIDE GROUNDS

This area is clear of litter.	
Oil spill kits are ready to use if necessary.	
Used oil and hazardous material recovery is available.	

SHORELINE AND LAUNCH SITE

This area is clear of litter.	
Our boat-washing facilities drain into water recovery systems or a natural filter zone.	
Marsh land has been retained on the waterfront as a natural filter for drainage.	
We maintain a water monitoring program.	

EVENTS

Our events are environmentally friendly.	
Our events are environmentally certified.	
We have a Plastic Footprint Offset program.	
Drinking water refill stations are provided for participants.	
Single-use bottles are not permitted for use during our events.	
Race, rally or event have been checked with the Canadian Wildlife Federation to highlight potential conflicts with sensitive species or habitats.	

ON THE WATER

There is no obvious pollution.	
There is no visible litter.	
Sensitive areas have been marked.	
Habitats are being treated with care.	

TAKE ACTION



Show that you care for Canada's rivers, lakes and oceans by taking action.

1. **FOLLOW** best practices as an integral part of your daily activities on and around the water.
2. **REPORT** wildlife species that you have seen and correctly identified while on the water. This information can help scientists learn more about these species and their habits.
3. **HELP** rescue sick or injured marine mammals that you encounter by calling rescue organizations.
IMPORTANT: Never attempt to handle these types of emergency situations directly.
4. **ADOPT** a waterway. Join a local group and take responsibility for a stream, river, lake or shoreline near you.

To find out more, visit: CWFWildAboutSports.org



Marine Animal Response Society

3 PHOTOS: ISTOCK





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