



Go safely!



Messing about in boats

Boats are an essential part of the Broads, but whether you're a first-time boater or you've been boating all your life, please take care of yourself, your passengers, others on the waterways, the wildlife and the fragile world of the Broads.

The water looks inviting, but it's a natural place and the water is always cold, whatever the weather. There are underwater plants and other hazards such as obstacles, fast currents and occasionally during very hot weather, blue-green algae may be present.

So the Broads can be a wild and dangerous place...that's part of its attraction. But like other wild and dangerous things, it's best to treat it with a bit of respect.

Here's how...

Planning your visit

- Always allow for crossing Breydon Water at or close to slack water (one hour after low water) - check tide tables.
- Don't drink and drive on the water - judgement is impaired, awareness and reaction times reduced, you're more likely to trip, slip and fall - and if you fall overboard it's impossible to swim as well.

If you go ashore in the evening take a torch and spare batteries ... plan your route back, try not to return alone, and remember, due to tides, the water may be higher or lower when you return.

- The Broads is unsuitable for swimming, so don't be tempted even on a hot day.
- Be aware of areas used by waterskiers - slow down, give them plenty of space and keep a steady course.
- When crossing Oulton Broad during a powerboat race, stay in the designated area and follow any directions given by the officials.
- Sailing boats have the right of way and can be difficult to manoeuvre so slow down, keep to right hand side unless directed otherwise.



Getting on board

- Wear a life-jacket and be careful near and on the water. Always wear a life-jacket for boarding and leaving your boat as well as while it's underway. It's much easier to rescue a person wearing a life-jacket and much safer for the rescuer.
- Avoid rocking the boat by jumping on or off or running and avoid climbing on the cabin roof.

Go boating ... safely

- Keep an eye on everyone on board, particularly children, and avoid sitting on the front of the boat.
- Keep a good lookout.
- Overhead power cables - look out, look up!
- Give moored boats, small boats and anglers plenty of space when you pass and reduce your speed and wash.
- Boats don't have brakes - they take time to slow down and stop so think ahead.
- Keep all people inside whilst going under bridges and mind your heads. You are advised to use the bridge pilot provided at Potter Heigham and Wroxham. Most hire companies require this.
- Always moor up against the tide or current.



Clear the decks

- Keep the boat shipshape - trailing ropes can trip or tangle and sometimes get caught around the propeller.

Take care refuelling

- Always switch off the engine.
- Never refuel while a boat is underway.
- Fill cans away from your boat.
- During refuelling all naked lights should be extinguished - this includes pilot lights on fridges, etc.
- Hot surfaces can be hazardous so appliances should be given time to cool.

Rescue

- Never enter the water to get someone out - reach, or throw a rope or anything that will float.
- Remember the propeller! Approach carefully.



Help!

Try to take a mobile phone, make sure it is charged and know your number.

Useful numbers

Emergencies 999

Coastguard, Police, Ambulance, Fire

Problems/advice Broads Radio Control
Broads Authority 01603 756056

Police 0845 4564567
non-emergency number for crime and anti-social behaviour

If you have to telephone in an emergency be as specific as possible about your location. Give:

- the name of the boat
- how many people are on board
- the name of the river
- the nearest village
- any nearby landmarks/post number
- the nearest 24 hour mooring site - this may include a grid reference



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Further information, Byelaws and Better Boating DVD available from the Broads Authority, Dragonfly House, 2 Gilders Way, Norwich NR3 1UB tel 01603 610734 fax 01603 756069 broads@broads-authority www.broads-authority.gov.uk