

Broads Authority

12 May 2023

Agenda item number 13

Safety on the Broads- update

Report by the Director of Operations

Purpose

To update Members on the recent improvements, changes and additions to the safety management of the Broads' waterways and how these measures are bringing improvements for our users.

Broads Plan context

C4 Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways.

Recommended Decision

Note the report and ongoing progress in safety matters.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Safety has always been a strategic priority for the Broads Authority. The organisation is a competent Harbour Authority, operating under the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC). The Authority maintains a dedicated Safety Management System (SMS) and both the PMSC and SMS systems are independently audited basis regularly to ensure compliance.
- 1.2. The Authority is also a licensing authority, utilising powers under the Broads Authority Act 2009 and the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907, relating to vessels let for

hire, and information on safety incidents is collated and reviewed by the Boat Safety Management Group (BSMG).

- 1.3. The Chair of the Navigation Committee is appointed as the Lead Member for Safety and has direct access to the Head of Safety Management. They also chair the Boat Safety Management Group on behalf of the Authority. Safety is a standing item on the Broads Authority meeting agenda (under the heading PMSC) and the Authority operates an internal Safety Committee, to allow a review of incidents and accidents, and to bring changes where needed. The Safety Committee has representatives from each directorate and a Management Team representative to ensure full compliance across all areas of the Authority's work.

2. Incident Review

- 2.1. After the British Government relaxed national lockdown restrictions (4 July 2020) outdoor activities significantly increased across the UK and the Broads' waterways became a popular choice for many families who were still unable to access foreign holidays.
- 2.2. This popularity saw an increase in first-time pleasure boat hirers, increased day-boat hires and a huge rise in entry-level water sports like stand-up paddle-boarding, canoeing and kayaking. This surge of users to our waterways also saw an increase in reported waterway incidents and tragically an increase in boat-related fatalities. (Fatality involving the Diamond Emblem 1, August 2020, and fatality on the River Bure September 2020).

3. Actions

- 3.1. At the March 2022 Broads Authority, a paper "[Safety on the Broads](#)" was presented providing an update on safety actions to date, and these include:
 - Increased Ranger staff and patrols between April & November maintaining a 7-day launch presence on the network to encourage safety. The additional patrolling days started in the 2020/21 season.¹
 - Increased Hire Boat Licensing Officer time from 1 day a week to 3 days to allow for more auditing, investigation and licensing compliance checks. Effective from December 2021.
 - Delivery of a suite of free online instructional videos, developed in conjunction with the Broads Hire Boat Federation, RNLI, Maritime Coastguard Agency, and the British

¹ 2023/24 agreed navigation charges allow for the additional seasonal Rangers and the Senior Compliance Ranger posts to continue.

Canoeing to provide free safety advice and instruction. These free videos have been viewed thousands of times and are available via this link [Broads Authority - YouTube](#)

- Increased number of 'Super Safety Events' where random spot checks are conducted for vessels on our waters. These multi-agency events help educate and inform boaters on a variety of safety issues from boat handling, and speed as well as looking for vessel defects, non-wearing of buoyancy aids and hazardous boat issues.
- Closer ties with third-party organisations relating to hiring boats and safety, with regular meetings with Broads Hire Boat Federation, RYA, British Marine, and the Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association, as well as Broadbeat, the Coastguard and the Drowning Prevention Forums.
- The March 2022 report also made further recommendations to fully adopt the Code for the Design, Construction and Operation of Hire Boats (Hire Boat Code) in full and to adopt the Quality Accredited Boatyard Scheme (the QAB, administered by British Marine) into the Broads Authority Hire Boat Licensing Conditions from 1 April 2023².

4. Further Actions

4.1. As part of the Broads Authority's continuous improvements to the health and safety of waterway users the following have also been introduced:

- A new licensing requirement for all operators letting for hire non-powered craft ([Broads Authority December 2022](#))
- Introduction of a Hire Boat Questionnaire (2021/22), conducted by Rangers on randomly selected hirers to gauge key aspects of their hire experience from hand-over to their confidence at the helm.

5. Hire Boat Questionnaire

- 5.1. During the 2021/22 season Rangers were tasked to undertake the Hire Boat Questionnaire at Super Safety Events and at other random times when an opportunity existed. The purpose of the questions is to gauge key aspects from the helm of the hire craft, such as how often they hire vessels, whether have they seen the safety videos, did they get a handover, what was the duration of the handover and how confident do they feel to helm the vessel.
- 5.2. During the 2022/23 season 724 questionnaires were completed. The questionnaire will be utilised again during the 2023/24 season.

² The addition of the QAB to Hire Boat Licensing was a recommendation made to the Broads Authority by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) upon the conclusion of their investigation [Diamond Emblem 1 - Section 5 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

5.3. The full results of the 2022 survey are in the appendices. Highlights to report are:

- 30% who participated were first-time hirers, and 27% questioned had over 6 previous hiring experiences.
- 74% had viewed the online safety videos, with 64% having watched the videos before collecting their hired vessel.
- 88% had received a copy of the Broadcaster and were signposted to the pages relating to safety on the Broads.
- The handover duration lasted between 20-30 minutes for 40%, with 20% receiving a handover of between 30 and 45 minutes.
- 40 % reported that the handover lasted less than 20 minutes.
- 12% reported that they did not receive an in-water trial of their vessel ³
- During hand-over, good percentages were recorded against key aspects of boat handling, for example, judging speed, passing under low bridges, person overboard procedures, use of life jackets and mooring against the tide and stern on.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. Health and safety improvements on our waters cannot be proven by a recognisable metric or statistics, so making direct comparisons to the raft of improved safety measures and online instructional material brought into our safety management systems and incident rates cannot be made.
- 6.2. We have not seen a repeat of the tragic fatalities experienced in 2020; we know the reassurance provided to waterway users by a Ranger on patrol and the added engagement via safety events, improving licensing requirements and better processes by Hire Operators at hand-over has on boat user's knowledge and confidence.
- 6.3. Through our incident logs we know the commonest reported incidents continue to be slips, trips and falls; these incidents are significantly higher when mooring or disembarking a mooring, and we still observe many people on the water without personal floatation devices. Work to mitigate and reduce these incidents continues. The gentle waterways of the Broads are a safe and enjoyable environment for users. The Broads Authority, in conjunction with key partners, is proactive in finding mitigations to safety issues and we continue to monitor, review and adapt when incidents occur.

Author: Rob Rogers

³ Under the new Hire Boat Code (April 2021) even experienced helms will have to demonstrate competence during a compulsory in-water trial.

Date of report: 11 April 2023

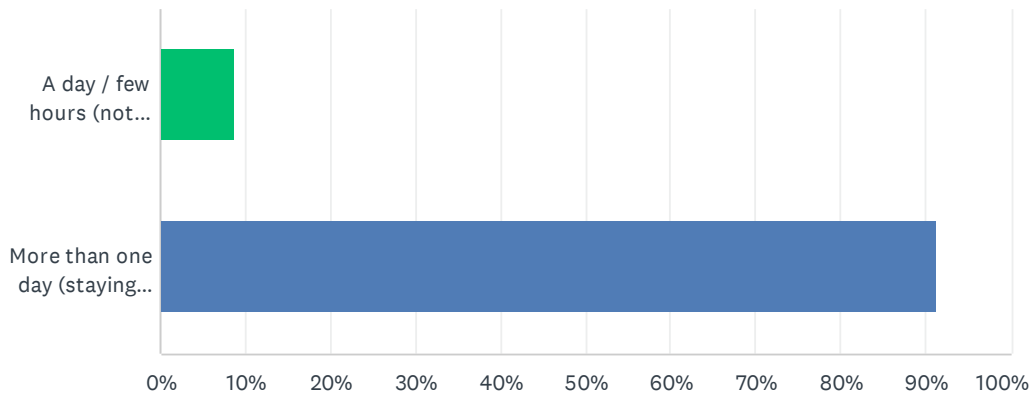
Background papers: Linked within main report

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: Theme C4 - Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways

Appendix 1 – Broads Hirers Survey 2022

Q1 Are you hiring a boat for:

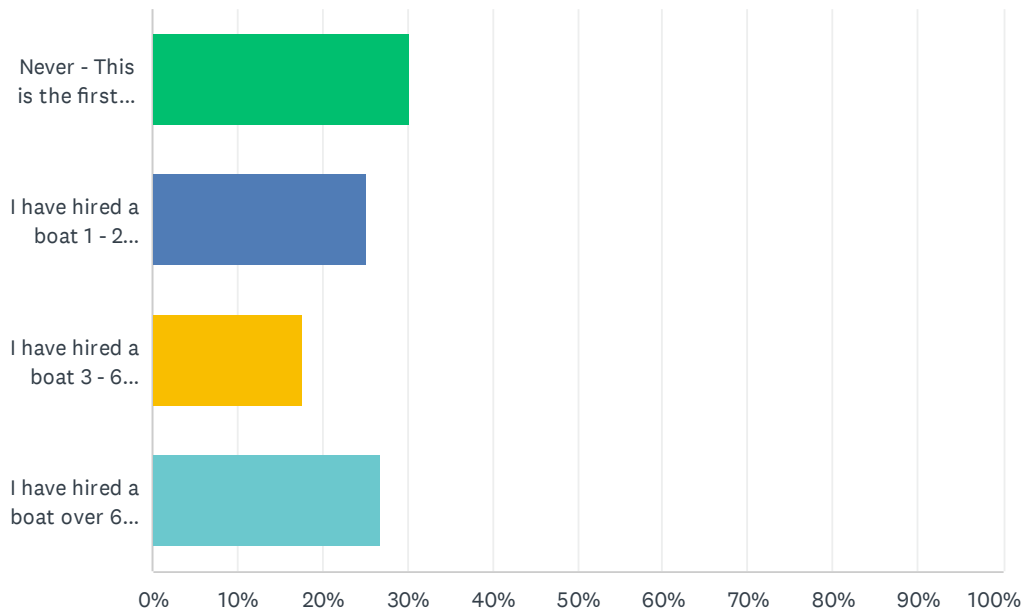
Answered: 721 Skipped: 9



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|-----|
| A day / few hours (not staying in the boat overnight) | 8.74% | 63 |
| More than one day (staying overnight in the boat) | 91.26% | 658 |
| TOTAL | | 721 |

Q2 How often have you hired a boat on the Broads before this occasion

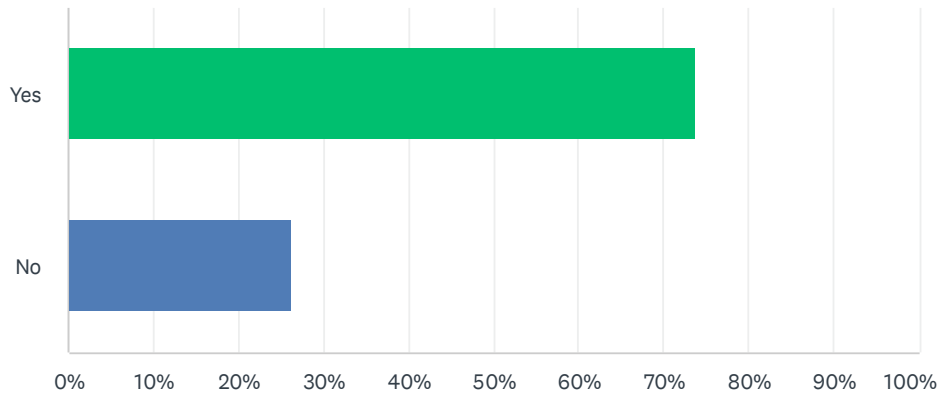
Answered: 722 Skipped: 8



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Never - This is the first time I have hired a boat on the Broads | 30.33% | 219 |
| I have hired a boat 1 - 2 times before | 25.07% | 181 |
| I have hired a boat 3 - 6 times before | 17.73% | 128 |
| I have hired a boat over 6 times before | 26.87% | 194 |
| TOTAL | | 722 |

Q3 Did your boat hirer recommend viewing the Broads Authority animated safety videos?

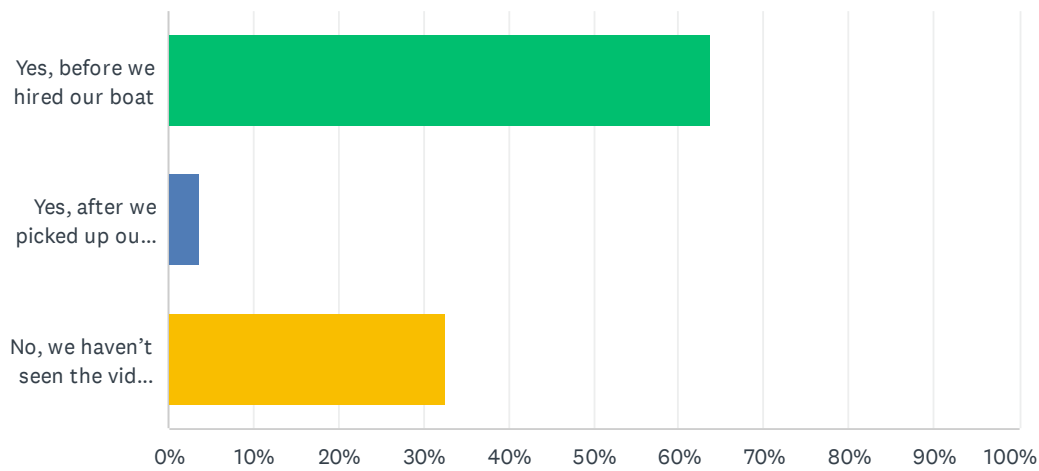
Answered: 721 Skipped: 9



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|-----|
| Yes | 73.79% | 532 |
| No | 26.21% | 189 |
| TOTAL | | 721 |

Q4 Have you watched the Broads Authority animated safety videos?

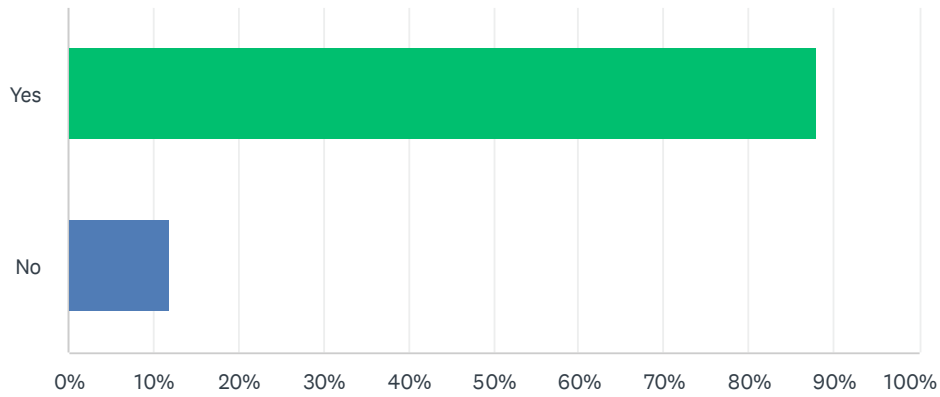
Answered: 723 Skipped: 7



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes, before we hired our boat | 63.76% | 461 |
| Yes, after we picked up our boat | 3.60% | 26 |
| No, we haven't seen the videos yet | 32.64% | 236 |
| TOTAL | | 723 |

Q5 Did your boat hirer provide you with a copy of Broadcaster and point out the safety information it contains?

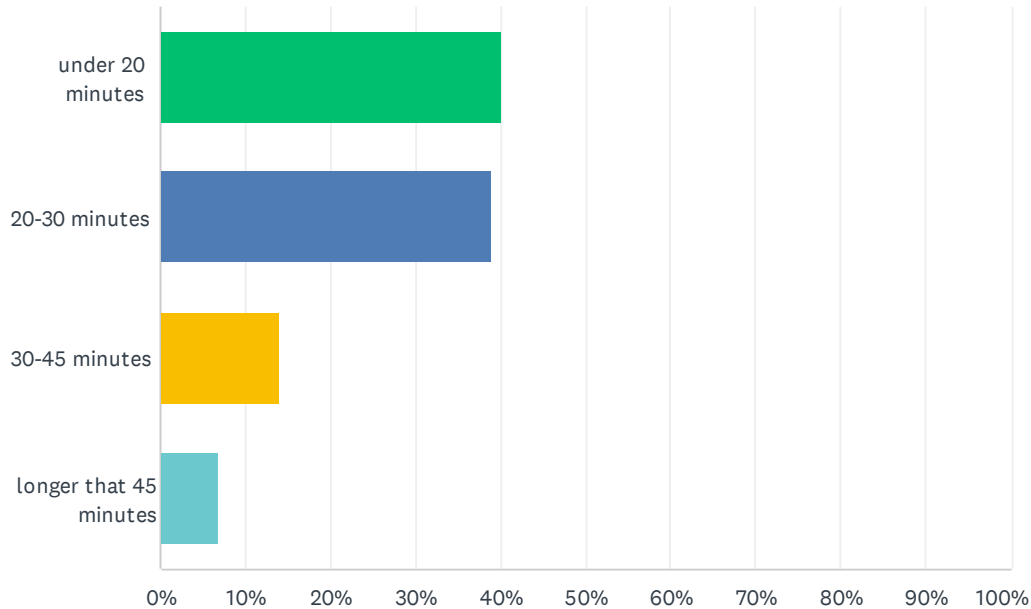
Answered: 721 Skipped: 9



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|-----|
| Yes | 88.07% | 635 |
| No | 11.93% | 86 |
| TOTAL | | 721 |

Q6 On your boat handover with your hirer, how long approximately did you spend onboard being shown how to operate the various onboard systems, not including the trial run?

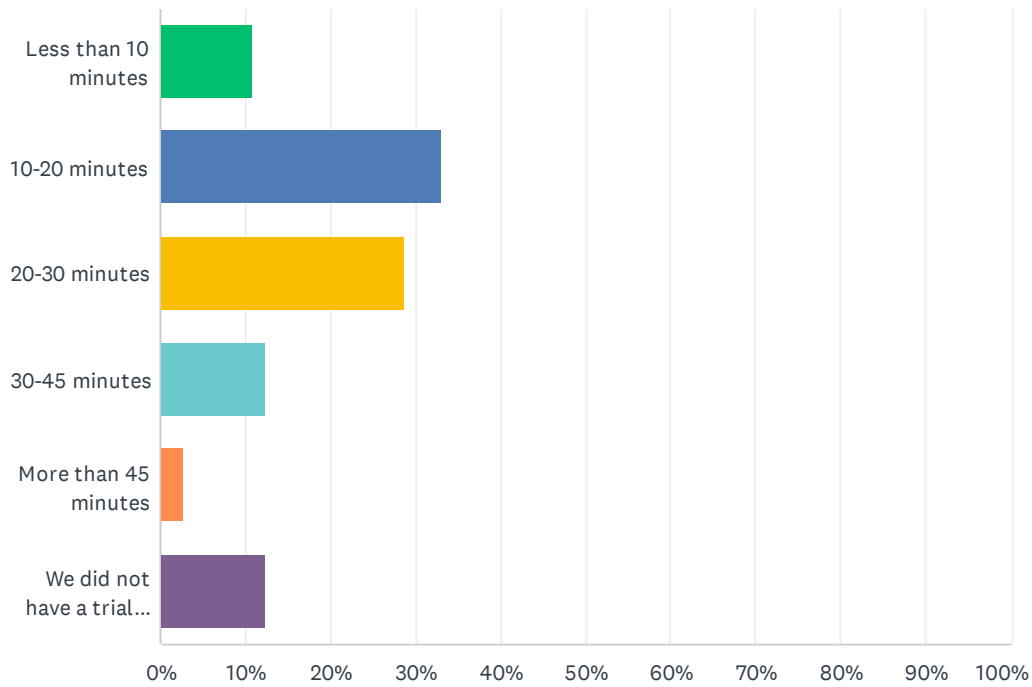
Answered: 722 Skipped: 8



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| under 20 minutes | 40.17% | 290 |
| 20-30 minutes | 38.92% | 281 |
| 30-45 minutes | 14.13% | 102 |
| longer that 45 minutes | 6.79% | 49 |
| TOTAL | | 722 |

Q7 How long approximately did your trial run/show out last?

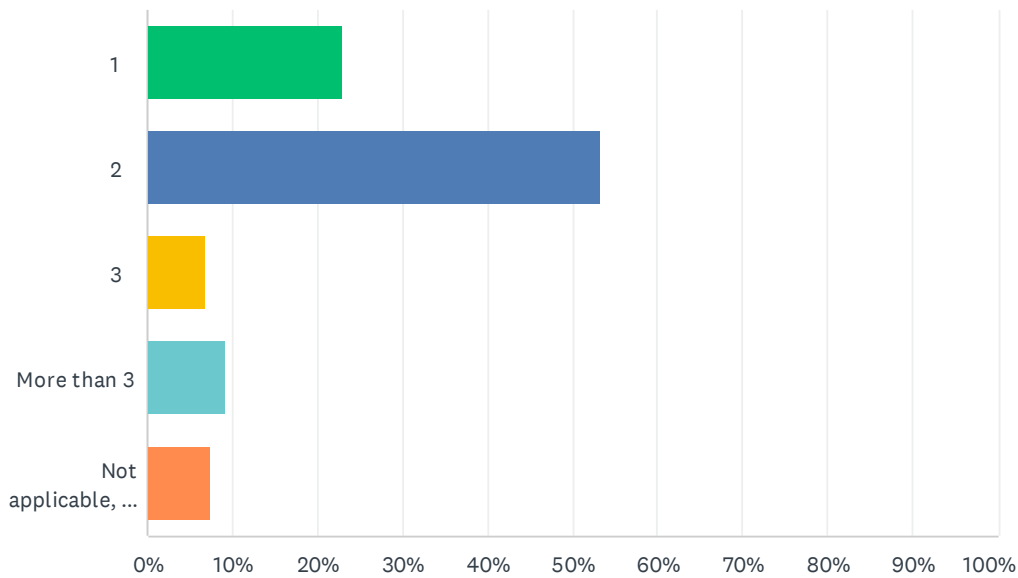
Answered: 722 Skipped: 8



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Less than 10 minutes | 10.80% | 78 |
| 10-20 minutes | 32.96% | 238 |
| 20-30 minutes | 28.81% | 208 |
| 30-45 minutes | 12.33% | 89 |
| More than 45 minutes | 2.77% | 20 |
| We did not have a trial run (for example because you were experienced boaters or were only hiring a dayboat) | 12.33% | 89 |
| TOTAL | | 722 |

Q8 How many of your group were actively involved in the trial run/show out demonstration?

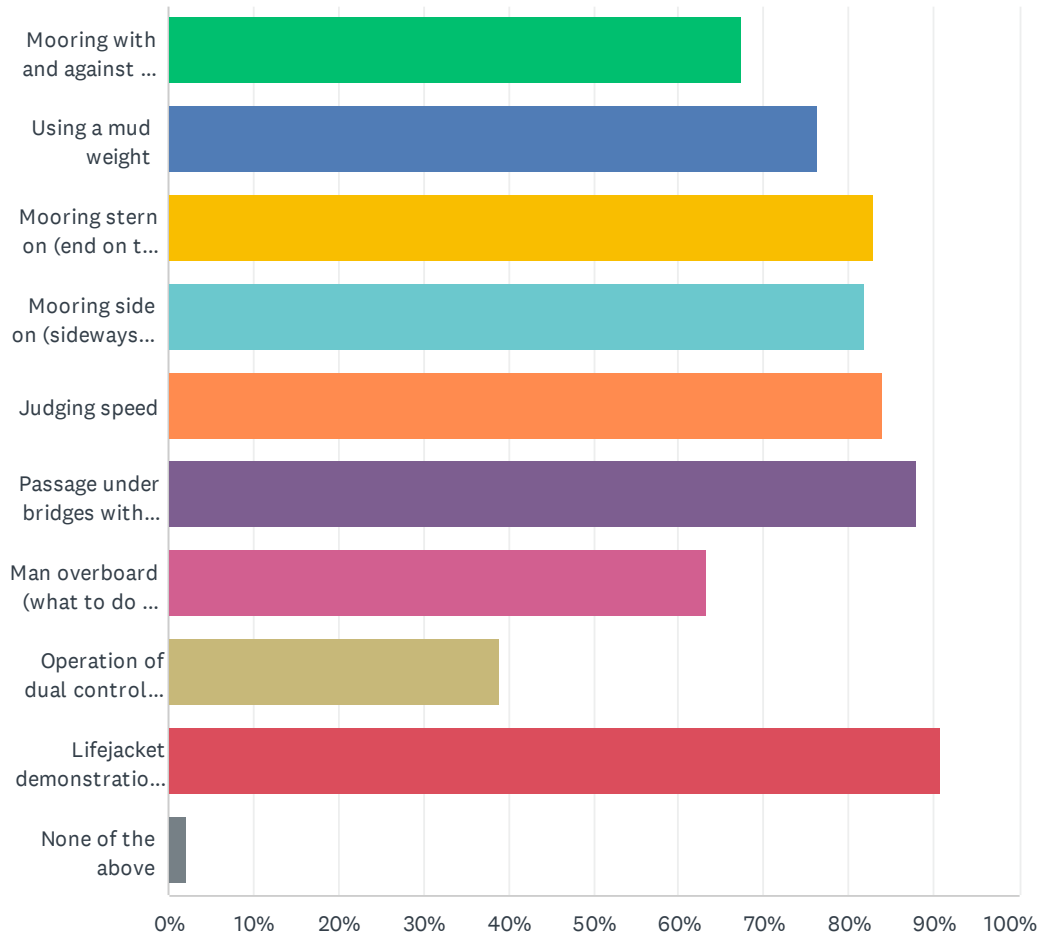
Answered: 722 Skipped: 8



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|------------|
| 1 | 23.13% | 167 |
| 2 | 53.32% | 385 |
| 3 | 6.93% | 50 |
| More than 3 | 9.14% | 66 |
| Not applicable, we did not have a trial run | 7.48% | 54 |
| TOTAL | | 722 |

Q9 Thinking about your handover / trial run, did the yard staff member explain clearly how to control the boat in the following circumstances? (please tick all those that apply)

Answered: 724 Skipped: 6

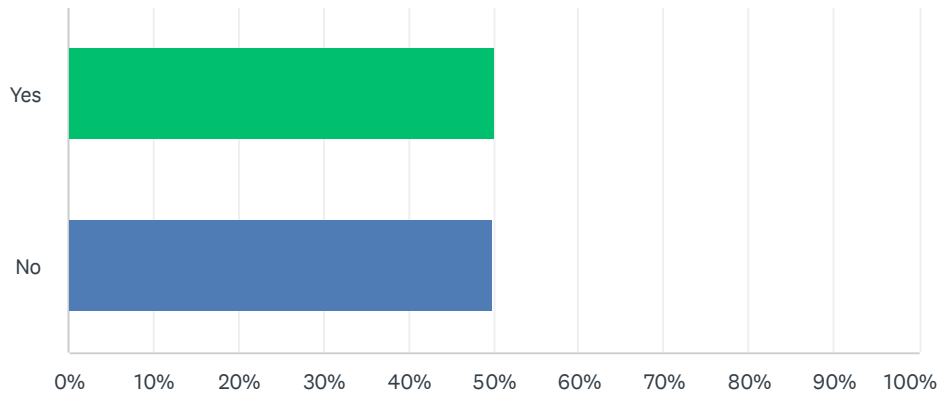


Broads Hirers Survey 2022 (Ranger Version)

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|-----|
| Mooring with and against the tide. | 67.40% | 488 |
| Using a mud weight | 76.38% | 553 |
| Mooring stern on (end on to the mooring) | 82.87% | 600 |
| Mooring side on (sideways to the mooring) | 81.91% | 593 |
| Judging speed | 83.98% | 608 |
| Passage under bridges with particular reference to air draft (the space needed for your boat to pass under a bridge safely) | 87.98% | 637 |
| Man overboard (what to do if someone falls into the water) | 63.26% | 458 |
| Operation of dual control and method of switching | 39.09% | 283 |
| Lifejacket demonstration – how to fit it correctly and when to wear it | 90.88% | 658 |
| None of the above | 2.21% | 16 |
| Total Respondents: 724 | | |

Q10 Did the yard staff discuss the dangers of boating with alcohol consumption with you?

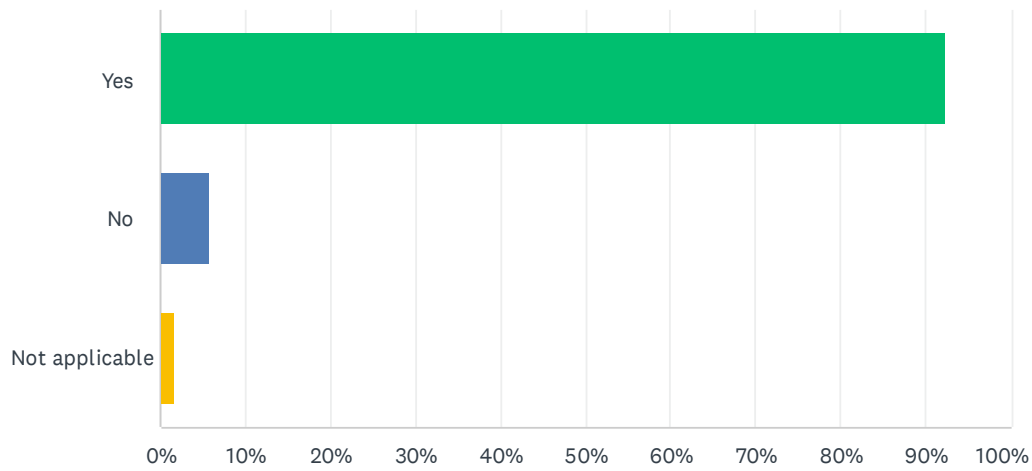
Answered: 723 Skipped: 7



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|-----|
| Yes | 50.07% | 362 |
| No | 49.93% | 361 |
| TOTAL | | 723 |

Q11 On completion of the trial run did you sign anything to say you were satisfied with your ability to handle the boat?

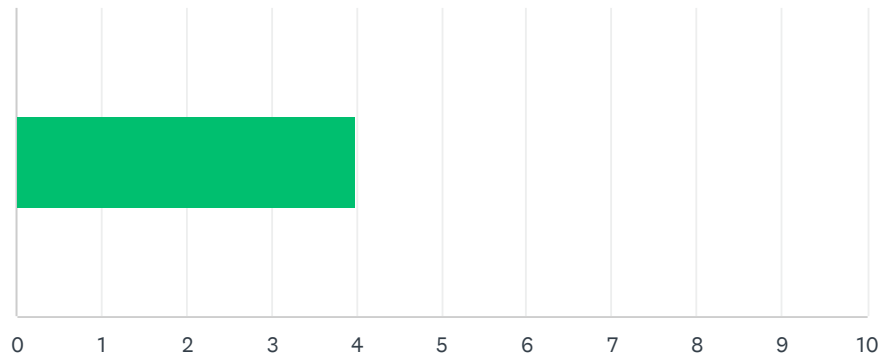
Answered: 722 Skipped: 8



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 92.38% | 667 |
| No | 5.82% | 42 |
| Not applicable | 1.80% | 13 |
| TOTAL | | 722 |

Q12 How confident did you feel operating the boat when you first left the boatyard? 1 is not confident at all and 5 is very confident

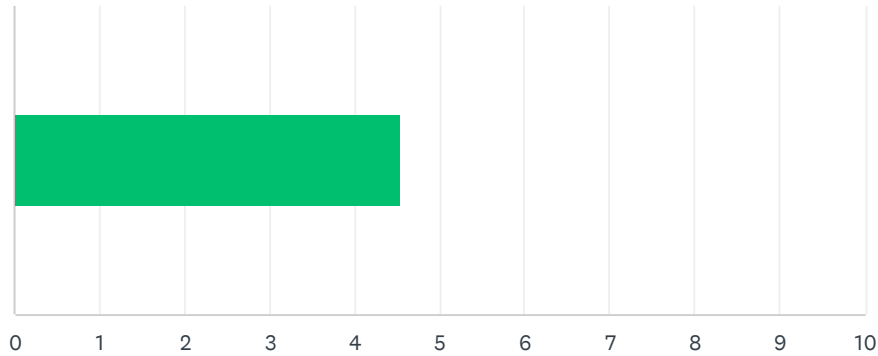
Answered: 691 Skipped: 39



| ANSWER CHOICES | AVERAGE NUMBER | TOTAL NUMBER | RESPONSES |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------|
| | 4 | 2,755 | 691 |
| Total Respondents: 691 | | | |

Q13 How confident do you feel operating the boat now? 1 is not confident at all and 5 is very confident

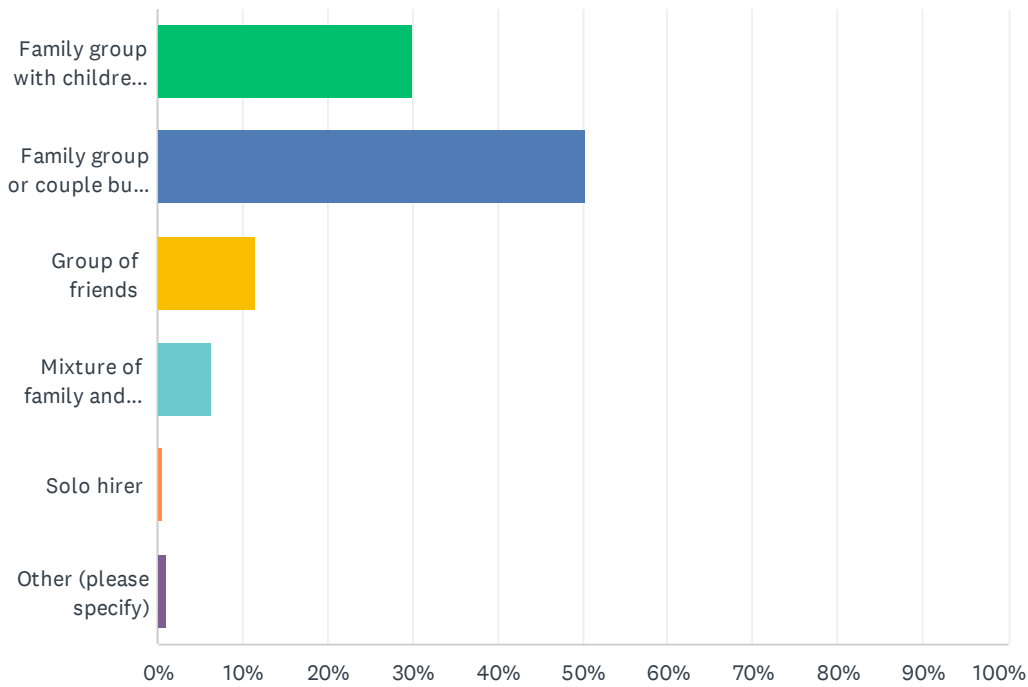
Answered: 720 Skipped: 10



| ANSWER CHOICES | AVERAGE NUMBER | TOTAL NUMBER | RESPONSES |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------|
| | 5 | 3,265 | 720 |
| Total Respondents: 720 | | | |

Q15 Which best describes your group?

Answered: 724 Skipped: 6



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Family group with children under 16 years old | 29.97% | 217 |
| Family group or couple but no children under 16 years old | 50.41% | 365 |
| Group of friends | 11.46% | 83 |
| Mixture of family and friends | 6.49% | 47 |
| Solo hirer | 0.69% | 5 |
| Other (please specify) | 0.97% | 7 |
| TOTAL | | 724 |