

CLEAN MARINE BC  
GUIDE TO  
**CLEAN**  
BOATING



Georgia Strait Alliance



# Georgia Strait Alliance

The Strait of Georgia lies between Vancouver Island and the British Columbia mainland, with the Canada-US border running to its south. Along with Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, these waters are called the Salish Sea, in recognition of the Coast Salish peoples who historically inhabited its shores and still live here today.

## Knowing & respecting the lands

As boaters, we can navigate and plan trips with a deep sense of awareness and respect to the territories that Indigenous Peoples have stewarded and lived in harmony with since time immemorial until the present. The Salish Sea and surrounding lands are deeply immersed in cultural and historical significance for the Coast Salish peoples, and as visitors, we must honor the sanctity and practices of these lands by leaving it as we find it. Be mindful that even small actions such as digging or foraging could disrupt cultural sites including middens, and pollutants can impact many different Coast Salish food sources. It is imperative to be aware of cultural protocols before you travel and avoid the disturbance of lands and sacred sites.

**First Peoples' Map of B.C. (fpcc.ca)** is a great resource for planning your trips and is provided by the First Peoples' Cultural Council.



These waters provide some of the most fabulous cruising in the world for visitors and residents alike. Despite its outward beauty, all is not well with the Salish Sea. The Salish Sea and its watersheds face serious environmental problems—the bulk of these caused by the region's rapid population growth and the urbanization and development that has come with it. Marine life in this region faces many threats including toxic chemicals from industry and municipalities, oil spills (small and large), climate change, destruction of critical habitat, mismanagement of fisheries and marine resources, and many others. As boaters, we only contribute a small portion of the overall pollution entering the Salish Sea, but it often concentrates near sensitive foreshore areas and in confined bays.

**There's a lot we can do to ensure the future health of the Salish Sea. This guide outlines some of the steps we can take to minimize our environmental impacts.**

## What You Will Find Inside

Boating is a popular pastime! With roughly 700,000 boaters in BC, many in the Salish Sea, we need to minimize our impacts, especially in areas where boats congregate such as marinas, anchorages and marine parks.

**You can make a big difference, by pledging to follow these guidelines:**

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Check out [georgiastrait.org](http://georgiastrait.org) for more ways you can help protect these cruising waters.

# Feeling Flush

## DILUTION ISN'T THE SOLUTION

In busy or poorly flushed anchorages, sewage from boats harms the environment. Each year, discharge of sewage results in shellfish closures, increases risks to human health, and is unpleasant to other boaters. Raw sewage discharge is legally prohibited and no longer acceptable.



## KEEPING IT CLEAN:

- ☑ It is illegal to release sewage at the dock, in anchorages or near sensitive areas such as shellfish beds.
- ☑ Use pump-out services where available (see following pages), otherwise the law requires that where possible you are at least 3 nautical miles offshore before emptying your holding tank or portable toilet.
- ☑ Use shoreside facilities whenever possible.
- ☑ Avoid using chemical additives or bleach in your holding tank. Safer products include enzyme or bio-active treatments. Never use products containing formaldehyde, ammonia or chlorobenzene.
- ☑ Don't use your boat's head to dispose of anything it isn't intended for. Kitchen wastes, solvents, detergents, paints, and other foreign objects will cause problems for you and the environment.
- ☑ Consider using a composting toilet in your boat which means no pump-out, no smell, no holding tank or macerator, and no sewage discharge.
- ☑ Pick up after your pet, and store the waste for composting or disposal in shoreside receptacles.



**The Canada Shipping Act 2001 prohibits the discharge of raw sewage within three nautical miles of shore.**

# Sewage Waste Disposal

## PUMP-OUT STATIONS AROUND THE SALISH SEA

Please check with the facility for current operations.

For an always up to date list & map please visit:  
[georgiastrait.org/pumpouts](http://georgiastrait.org/pumpouts)



## Lower Mainland

FACILITY	CONTACT
<b>Bayshore West Marina</b>   Coal Harbour, Vancouver	(604) 689-5331
<b>Burrard Civic Marina</b>   Vancouver	(604) 733-5833
<b>Crescent Beach Marina</b>   Surrey	(604) 538-9666
<b>False Creek Harbour Authority</b>   Fishermen's Wharf, False Creek, Vancouver	(604) 733-3625   VHF 66A
<b>False Creek Mobile Pump-out – City of Vancouver</b> False Creek, Vancouver	(778) 683-7867 pumpout@skookumyacht services.com
<b>False Creek Yacht Club</b>   Vancouver	(604) 648-2628   VHF 66A
<b>Heather Civic Marina</b>   False Creek, Vancouver	(604) 874-2814
<b>Ladner Harbour Authority</b>   Delta	(604) 940-6432
<b>Mosquito Creek Marina</b>   North Vancouver	(604) 987-4113
<b>Point Roberts Marina</b>   Point Roberts, Washington	(360) 945-2255   VHF 66A
<b>Quayside Marina</b>   Vancouver	(604) 681-9115   VHF 66A
<b>Reed Point Marina</b>   Port Moody	(604) 937-1600
<b>Shelter Island Marina</b>   Richmond	(604) 270-6272
<b>Squamish Harbour Authority</b>   Squamish	(604) 892-3725
<b>Vancouver Marina</b>   Richmond	(604) 278-9787

## Sunshine Coast

FACILITY	CONTACT
<b>Gibsons Landing Harbour Authority</b>   Gibsons	(604) 886-8017   VHF 66A
<b>Gibsons Marina</b>   Gibsons	(604) 886-8686   VHF 66
<b>Harbour Authority of Pender Harbour</b> Madeira Park	(604) 883-2234
<b>Lund Harbour Authority</b>   Lund Public Dock	(604) 483-4711   VHF 73
<b>Harbour Authority of Porpoise Bay</b> DFO Government Dock, Porpoise Bay	(604)740-7528
<b>Powell River Harbour Authority</b>   Powell River	(604) 485-5244
<b>Union SteamShip Company Marina</b>   Bowen Island	(604)-947-0707 Ext.1   VHF 66A

## Vancouver Island & other islands

FACILITY	CONTACT
<b>Angler's Anchorage Marina</b>   Brentwood Bay, Victoria	(250) 652-3531
<b>Campbell River Harbour Authority</b>   Campbell River	(250) 287-7931
<b>Coast Harbourside Marina</b>   Victoria	(250) 360-1211
<b>Comox Harbour Authority</b>   Comox	(250) 339-6041 info@comoxharbour.com
<b>Cowichan Bay Fisherman's Wharf</b>   Cowichan Bay	(250) 746-5911   VHF 66A
<b>Deep Bay Harbour Authority</b>   Bowser	(250) 757-9331
<b>Fairwinds Schooner Cove Marina</b>   Nanoose Bay	(250) 468-5364   VHF 66A
<b>Ganges Coast Guard Dock</b>   Salt Spring Island	(360) 301-9999 flyingfedup@aol.com
<b>Greater Victoria Harbour Authority</b>   Victoria	(250) 383-8326   VHF 66A
<b>Oyster Bay Marina</b>   Ladysmith	(778) 787-1801
<b>Malcom Island Lions Harbour Authority</b>   Sointula	(250) 973-6544
<b>Maple Bay Marina</b>   Maple Bay, Duncan	(250) 746-8482 info@maplebaymarina.com
<b>Mill Bay Marina</b>   Mill Bay	(250) 743-4303   VHF 66A
<b>Port Alberni Fishermen's Harbour</b>   Port Alberni	(250) 723-2533 fishermensharbour@alberniport.ca
<b>Port Hardy Harbour Authority</b>   Port Hardy	(250) 949-0336   VHF 66A
<b>Port McNeill Harbour Authority</b>   Port McNeil	(250) 956-3881   VHF 66A
<b>Port of Nanaimo   Eco-barge</b>   Nanaimo	(250) 754-5053   VHF 67
<b>Port Sidney Marina</b>   Sidney	(250) 655-3711   VHF 66A
<b>Salt Spring Island Harbour Authority</b> Breakwater Dock, Salt Spring Island	(250) 537-5711 harbour@hassi.ca
<b>Sayward Harbour Authority</b>   Sayward	(250) 282-0178
<b>Tofino Harbour Authority</b>   Tofino	(250) 725-4441
<b>Ucluelet Harbour Authority</b>   Ucluelet	(250) 726-4241
<b>Van Isle Marina</b>   Tsehum Harbour, Sidney	(250) 656-1138

# “Are we sure oil and water don't mix?”

Yeah, we're sure.  
The only answer for used motor oil is recycling.

Keep your boat and the waterways clean. Find the closest Public Recycling Centre for your motor oil and oil filters.  
[interchangerecycling.com/recycling](http://interchangerecycling.com/recycling)



### In Washington?

Find a pump-out near you with the Washington Sea Grant Pump-out Nav App



# Fill 'Er Up

## EVERY DROP COUNTS!

Even tiny amounts of gas, diesel and oil can kill or harm marine plants and animals, and repeated small fuel spills cause irreparable harm to the environment. Chemicals present in fuel react with sunlight to become up to 50,000 times more toxic. Rainbows on the water aren't pretty and can be fatal to the many tiny creatures that live in the water's surface layer. Juvenile fish and shellfish depend on this surface "microlayer." Let's keep it healthy for them!

Spills during fueling are common—fuel vent overflow from a 100-litre tank can be as much as 1/2 litre and this increases for larger tanks. Most marina fuel pumps are able to supply fuel much faster than small and medium sized boats are able to take it. The "kickback" effect or "burping" is a major source of fuel spills. The advice from marina operators is "don't rush your fueling and don't worry about keeping other boats waiting for an extra minute or two".



**Remember:**  
"Topping off the tank" means waiting for a spill to happen.



Half a litre of oil will cover an acre of surface water. If every one of the 700,000 boats in BC spilled just 1/2 litre, the oil slick would cover over 2800 square kilometres. Every drop counts!

## Spills aren't Slick Report All Spills!

**It's the law to report all spills, regardless of how small**

1-800-OILS-911 (1-800-6457-911) British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California  
Canadian Coast Guard VHF 16, Dial #16 on cell phone in Canada or 1-800-889-8852

### Be prepared to answer the following:

- ➔ Where, when and how did the spill occur?
- ➔ What kind of pollution is it?
- ➔ How much was spilled?
- ➔ What's the name of the person or vessel that caused the spill? Don't worry, taking responsibility for your own spill is looked upon favourably rather than getting caught. Small spills are also tracked and help us address chronic causes and hotspots.

## KEEPING IT CLEAN:

- ☑ Fill carefully! Plan to avoid spilling even one drop of fuel into the water.
- ☑ Have fuel absorbent materials ready, and use a spill pad or fuel collar to catch drips.
- ☑ Don't rely on any automatic shutoffs and don't try to top off your tank. That is when spills often occur.
- ☑ Know how much fuel you need, and feel for an increase in air-flow from the vent—this means the tank is full. Remember: fuel expands on warm days!
- ☑ Put a "fuel saver or vent whistle" over your vent to catch spills and alert you that the tank is full.
- ☑ Don't transfer fuel between tanks when on the water. Carry reserve fuel in a container that connects to your engine.
- ☑ Check fuel lines and fittings to ensure there are no leaks—this may save your life as well as the fish!
- ☑ Reduce fuel consumption. Slow down and go with the tides, currents and weather where possible. Keep your bottom and propeller clean. Choose the right propeller for your use and replace when needed. Reduce excess weight onboard.
- ☑ When boating season is over, fill tanks and add fuel stabilizer to protect engines and avoid the need to dispose of "bad fuel" in the spring.



**Never use soap to disperse fuel spills! It is toxic to marine life, doesn't eliminate the spill, makes it impossible to clean up—and it's illegal.**

## In Case of a Spill

- ➔ Stop the source of the spill and extinguish any igniters.
- ➔ If you are at a fuel dock, inform the fuel attendant and leave the area when gasoline is spilled.
- ➔ Use absorbent pads to clean up and help contain the spill. Dispose of used spill materials as hazardous waste (see Disposal section).
- ➔ Spills at risk of spreading must be contained with a spill kit—these should be available at all marinas. Do not contain a gasoline spill—it's flammable!

## Battle of the Bilge

Oil, fuel, antifreeze and other fluids collect in the bilge and are then pumped overboard, often by automatic pumps. Bilge cleaners, degreasers and soaps—even biodegradable ones—increase harmful effects. These cleaners spread the pollution over a greater area, harming even more fish and other marine life.



### KEEPING IT CLEAN:

- ✓ Don't pump oily bilge water overboard—if it discolours surface water, it is pollution. This is a criminal offence! Large amounts of fuel or oil in the bilge must be pumped into a closed container and properly disposed of—ask your marina or marine mechanic for advice.
- ✓ Secure an oil absorbent pad or sock in your bilge and check it often.
- ✓ Turn off the bilge pump during fueling.
- ✓ Chronic fuel or oil in the bilge indicates a leak—check all fittings.
- ✓ To clean the bilge, pump out uncontaminated water and then wipe out the rest using an EcoLogo cleaner. Don't flush bilges with cleaners.
- ✓ Fit a drip tray under your engine to catch any leaks.
- ✓ Install a bilge filtration system.
- ✓ Check you bilge after heavy rains.



**Oil absorbing pads soak up the oil in your bilge, but not the water. These pads are very effective at keeping your bilge and the environment clean. When the pads are saturated, use gloves and wring out the oil into a container for recycling. Re-use the pad. To dispose of worn out pads, see page 17.**

## Engine Maintenance

### KEEPING IT CLEAN:

- ✓ Keep your engine well tuned. Inspect and fix any leaks or drips.
- ✓ Use an oil change pump to transfer oil to a spill-proof container, then cap this tightly.
- ✓ Slip a plastic bag over the oil filter before removing to prevent oil spilling into the bilge.
- ✓ Keep oil-absorbent pads handy to wipe up spills.
- ✓ Dispose of oil, filters, contaminated absorbent pads and other materials correctly (see page 17).
- ✓ Use biodegradable oils whenever possible.
- ✓ Antifreeze is harmful to marine life—use only when necessary. Propylene Glycol is the less toxic alternative.
- ✓ Choose the least toxic sacrificial anodes for your needs, and avoid toxic zinc anodes whenever possible.

## Completely Exhausted

Conventional 2-stroke outboards discharge up to 25% of their fuel straight into the water—if you used 20 gallons of fuel you might as well have poured a 5 gallon can of gas straight into the water!

### KEEPING IT CLEAN:

- ✓ Always keep your engine well tuned.
- ✓ Choose 4-stroke or oil injected 2-stroke, electric or propane outboards. They are all less polluting than conventional 2-strokes, better for the environment, save fuel costs, and are quieter.
- ✓ Some new inboard diesel and gas engines produce less air pollution, or consider an electric engine if it could work in your boat.



**Motorized personal watercraft (jetskis) can be bad for wildlife, water and air quality. They can spill up to one-third of their fuel, discharge significant amounts of air emissions, churn up sensitive habitat, and can be noisy.**

# Swabbing The Decks

## REDUCING GREYWATER DISCHARGES

Substances that are toxic to marine life are present in many products used to clean boats—even “biodegradable” products often contain harmful ingredients and biodegradable simply means it breaks down, not necessarily into elements that are safe. Chlorine bleach is dangerous to marine life and can be a health risk for people.

Choosing environmentally friendly cleaning products can be confusing. In Canada, manufacturers must substantiate claims such as “green” or “environmentally friendly”, however, unless their claims are independently verified, caution is still warranted. The best cleaning option is to use the alternatives on the following page. If you are buying cleaning products, here are some of the terms you may encounter.

TERM	EXPLANATION
<b>EcoLogo</b>	Eco-certifications such as EcoLogo can indicate a degree of acceptability, but do not mean the product is harmless.
<b>Biodegradable</b>	Product naturally breaks down, but often into harmful components.
<b>Surfactants</b>	Surface active agents are in all soaps and detergents to create suds—they attach to fish’s gills, destroying their ability to breathe.
<b>Chlorine</b>	Found in bleach and other cleaning products, chlorine forms the basis of dioxins and other deadly compounds that cause cancer, and damage growth, development and reproduction in humans, fish and other wildlife.
<b>Phosphate-Free</b>	In Canada, phosphates have been banned in cleaning products, however, these products can still contain up to 0.5% phosphates.

## KEEPING IT CLEAN:

- Read labels and look for non-toxic, chlorine-free, phosphate-free products. Use the EcoLogo symbol as a guide to less harmful products.
- Minimize your use of soaps and detergents, and use alternative cleaners (see next page).
- Keep your boat waxed and wash with fresh water and a brush. Remember: use water carefully, as the Gulf Islands and other areas often have water shortages in the summer.

# Alternative Cleaners

Many non-toxic cleaners for your boat can be made from ingredients found in your galley. Try these inexpensive alternatives!

TASK	ALTERNATIVE CLEANERS
<b>Decks</b>	1 part vinegar to 8 parts water
<b>Fibreglass</b>	Baking soda and salt (in wet paste)
<b>Aluminum</b>	1 tbsp. cream of tartar in 1/2 litre hot water
<b>Brass</b>	Worcestershire sauce, vinegar and salt solution
<b>Chrome</b>	Vinegar and salt solution
<b>Chrome/metal</b>	Polish with baby oil
<b>Copper</b>	Lemon juice and salt solution
<b>Clear plastic/glass</b>	1 part vinegar to 2 parts water
<b>Mildew</b>	Vinegar and salt solution or tea tree oil
<b>Wood (interior)</b>	Polish with olive oil
<b>Bleaching</b>	Hydrogen peroxide bleach (NOT chlorine bleach)
<b>Scouring</b>	Baking soda and water paste
<b>Hair</b>	Baby shampoo (phosphate-free & pH balanced)
<b>Shower</b>	Wet area & scour with baking soda
<b>Toilet</b>	Baking soda
<b>Dishes</b>	Use minimal amounts of dish soap. Choose non-petroleum based soaps (eg. Nature Clean)



Learn more about decoding eco-labels on cleaning products:

[resilientcoasts.ca/resource/decoding-eco-labels-on-cleaning-products](https://resilientcoasts.ca/resource/decoding-eco-labels-on-cleaning-products)



## Protect Your Bottom

One of the greatest potential sources of pollution is the dryland area in marinas where boats are hauled out for cleaning. Most of us enjoy blasting away with the pressure washer to clean the bottom. Unfortunately, the paint residue that we remove is toxic and if we wash it down the storm drain it goes straight into the water.

Not all marinas have installed recirculating systems because of the cost and the difficulty of disposing of the toxic sludge that is collected. If these systems are not in place, boaters can minimize the problem by using a drop sheet to collect residue from cleaning, sanding or painting. Responsible marinas insist on this. Don't feel shy about suggesting this practice to other boaters.



**Have your boat hauled out annually and plan to do any substantial work on dry land, where you can contain waste products and keep them out of the marine environment.**

### KEEPING IT CLEAN:

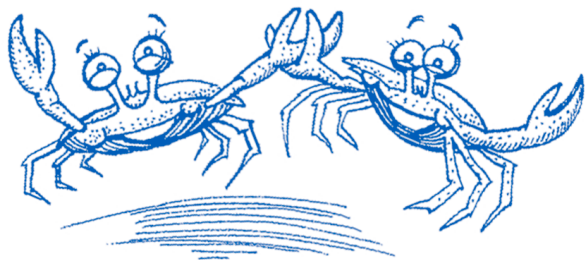
- ✓ Choose hard antifouling or non-fouling paints.
- ✓ Avoid copper based paints and look for more environmentally friendly silicone based paints that are biocide-free.
- ✓ Only use a soft brush or cloth to clean your hull in the water—this prevents the release of toxic paint into the environment. Paint is being released if cleaning causes the water to be discoloured.
- ✓ Don't buy more paint than you need. Reseal and keep for future use.
- ✓ Avoid tide grids for sanding, scraping or painting. If other options are not available, use a drop cloth to collect spills and residue from sanding or scraping, then dispose of this properly. Shrouding and tarps can also be used to contain dust. Avoid sanding during windy days.



**Before doing any work on your boat, become familiar with where to dispose of paints, solvents and other wastes (see page 17).**

## Topside Work

Any foreign substance entering the water can hurt marine life. To minimize the risk, you should do most of your work on land. Follow these steps when minor dockside work can't be avoided—check with your marina for its policy on topside work.



**Never pour paint or other liquid wastes down storm drains or any other drain.**

### KEEPING IT CLEAN:

- ✓ Don't let anything fall in the water, including sanding dust, solvents, strippers etc. Choose water-soluble solvents.
- ✓ Ensure that sanders, grinders and other tools have dust collection fittings in place.
- ✓ Be prepared! Always have absorbent pads or rags on hand to contain spills.
- ✓ Contain the mess! Use tarps on the dock and between the dock and the boat to catch spills and other materials.
- ✓ Mix paints and other liquids on shore and have only small amounts open on the dock or boat at any time.

**Under the federal Fisheries Act, the water and residue from washing, scraping and sanding your hull is considered a deleterious substance. It is a criminal offence to release deleterious substances into waters frequented by fish, with penalties up to \$1 million and 3 years in prison.**







## Garbage In — Garbage Out

Trash is ugly and kills fish and wildlife. Plastics can foul props or engine intakes and cause expensive repairs. Organic food waste, whether it sinks or floats, is classified as garbage under the Canada Shipping Act, 2001, and should not be thrown overboard.

36,000+ volunteers clean up 1,400+ km of shoreline, collecting 67,000+ kgs of trash in 1,600+ Ocean Wise Shoreline Cleanups each year. Tiny plastic or foam, and cigarette butts were the two most collected items of litter.



### KEEPING IT CLEAN:

- ☑ Don't let trash get thrown, blown or washed overboard.
- ☑ Many remote areas do not have garbage facilities, so plan to bring back everything you take with you.
- ☑ Eliminate as much waste as possible before you embark, such as removing excess packaging.
- ☑ Refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle—and compost! Bring a sealed container to store your compostables.
- ☑ Don't be a butthead! Always properly and safely dispose of cigarette butts.



The Vancouver Aquarium estimates that at any given moment, there are 400 sea lions entangled in marine debris.

## Disposal Information

The following substances are listed as special household wastes and should only be disposed of at the appropriate facilities. Never mix hazardous substances!



SUBSTANCE	DISPOSAL INFORMATION	NOTES
<b>Used oil</b>	<a href="http://interchangerecycling.com">interchangerecycling.com</a> Some public docks and marinas	Confirm disposal location before changing oil. Do not mix fuel and oil!
<b>Oil filters</b>	<a href="http://interchangerecycling.com">interchangerecycling.com</a> Canadian Tire Automotive centres Some service stations	Drain first and dispose of oil as above.
<b>Oil absorbents</b>	<a href="http://interchangerecycling.com">interchangerecycling.com</a> Many places that collect oil filters.	Wring out and reuse, disposing of the liquid with used oil. Dispose of when no longer useable.
<b>Antifreeze</b>	<a href="http://interchangerecycling.com">interchangerecycling.com</a> Some service stations	All antifreeze is harmful to marine life and should be recovered and recycled.
<b>Stale or contaminated gas</b>	<a href="http://productcare.org">productcare.org</a> Some service stations	Store and transport only in "ULC" approved containers. Keep fuel out of oil collection facilities!
<b>Solvents and thinners</b>	<a href="http://productcare.org">productcare.org</a>	Allow sediments to settle and then re-use.
<b>Paints and vanishes etc.</b>	Some retailers <a href="http://productcare.org">productcare.org</a>	Share product if still useable. (Some recycling depots have a paint sharing service.)
<b>Antifouling paint</b>	<a href="http://productcare.org">productcare.org</a>	Store carefully and save for future use rather than disposing.
<b>Batteries</b>	Battery retailers Local recycling depot	

### B.C. RECYCLING HOTLINE:

1-800-667-4321  
[info@rcbc.ca](mailto:info@rcbc.ca)  
[rcbc.ca](http://rcbc.ca)



Contact the B.C. Recycling Hotline for disposal information or download the BC Recycling mobile app.

# Boat Disposal



Abandoned, derelict and wrecked vessels are a serious problem on our coast. They pose environmental contamination and safety risks, and are also eyesores and a burden to coastal communities. Untended vessels end up adrift, washed ashore or sunk, releasing fuel and other toxins into the marine environment. This puts marine life and habitat at risk, endangers mariners and beachgoers, and can cause damage to shoreline facilities.

## Do you have a retirement plan for your boat?

Have the maintenance costs of your vessel become more of a burden than the boat is worth? Is your vessel unsafe to operate, or is it no longer seaworthy? If so, then it is time to responsibly retire your boat. If your boat is still in reasonable condition, consider donating it to a worthy organization, such as S.A.L.T.S. Sail and Life Training Society, before it becomes a serious problem.

### KEEPING IT CLEAN:

- ✓ If you decide to dismantle a boat on your own, ideally at a Clean Marine BC certified boatyard, be sure to contain all waste and prevent the release of pollutants.
- ✓ Remove and dispose of all hazardous materials in a safe and appropriate manner.
- ✓ Recycle, repurpose or sell as many components as possible.
- ✓ Once the vessel is stripped of hazardous materials and anything that can be recycled, reused or repurposed, remaining materials should be sent to a landfill.
- ✓ If you hire someone to dispose of your boat, be sure to use a reputable company that will complete the job in the most environmentally responsible manner possible.
- ✓ Visit [boatingbc.ca/boatdisposal](http://boatingbc.ca/boatdisposal) for more resources to help you retire your boat at the end of its useful life, including a list of BC businesses that offer boat disposal and transport services.
- ✓ Always report vessels of concern (see page 27).



## DO YOU HAVE A RETIREMENT PLAN FOR YOUR BOAT? WE CAN HELP.

Too many boats in British Columbia are left to grow old on moorages, in marinas and along our beaches and coastlines. In time, these abandoned boats contaminate our marine environment, pose hazards to navigation and detract from the beauty of our waterfront communities.

Good captains don't abandon their ship. So when your boat comes to the end of its useful life, make sure you do the responsible thing and retire it properly.

Learn how and where to dispose of your old boat at [boatingbc.ca/boatdisposal](http://boatingbc.ca/boatdisposal).



**Unless you have the resources to repair, maintain and operate a vessel, never take a "free" boat. It will likely turn out to be more headache than it is worth!**



@BoatingBC

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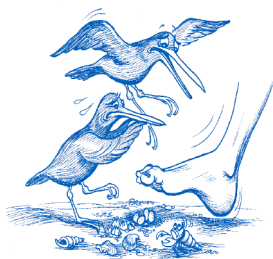
**BOATINGBC**  
ASSOCIATION™

# Wildlife Interactions

All wildlife are sensitive to disturbance from people, boats and pets. Approaching whales and other marine life too fast, getting too close, and producing noise can cause stress, inhibit communication and interrupt essential behaviours like feeding, mating, socializing, resting and nurturing young. Once disturbed, birds often abandon their nests and young. Wildlife are also impacted by aquatic invasive species, which can damage habitat and kill native species.

## MARINE BIRDS

- ✓ Always maintain a distance of at least 100 metres of bird colonies.
- ✓ If boating near bird colonies, slow down to minimize your wake and engine noise.
- ✓ Pets can easily kill young birds. Do not allow pets to access bird colonies and nesting habitat.
- ✓ Marine birds often nest on the ground or in burrows on small islets, cliffs and shorelines. Be careful—these nests are difficult to see. For more information contact the Canadian Wildlife Service: 1-800-668-6767.
- ✓ Respect ecological reserves (identified on charts) and Important Bird Areas: [ibacanada.com](http://ibacanada.com)



**Oystercatchers build inconspicuous nests near the shoreline, small islets and spits between April and August. Watch where you step, as it is easy to accidentally disturb or crush their nests.**

## Watch for the Whale Warning Flag

There has been a resurgence in the number of humpback whales in the coastal waters around British Columbia and Washington—and these whales are very large. Their size and unpredictability increase the risk of collision and injury to whales and to boaters. If you see this flag (in yellow, red and black), whales are in the area. Reduce your speed and proceed with caution. **Get your Whale Warning Flag from the Marine Education & Research Society at [mersociety.org](http://mersociety.org).**



**As of 2024, only 73 endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales remain from a historic population of 200.**



## MARINE MAMMALS

- ✓ The Marine Mammal Regulations of the Fisheries Act make it illegal to disturb marine mammals. Do not interact with, touch, feed, swim or dive with marine mammals.
- ✓ **Always maintain a distance of at least 400 metres from killer whales** in Southern BC coastal waters from Campbell River to Ucluelet.
- ✓ Keep 200 metres from killer whales in the rest of BC coastal waters, and all whales, porpoises or dolphins at rest or with calf. A distance of at least 200 metres is recommended for large whales due to the increased risk of collision and injury.
- ✓ Stay at least 100 metres from all other marine mammals.
- ✓ **NEW Voluntary Speed Reduction Zone:** From June 1 to Nov 30, reduce speed to no more than 10 knots in Tumbo Channel off of Saturna Island, when safe to do so.
- ✓ If whales approach you, turn your engine off or to idle neutral until they pass, then move away as soon as it is safe to do so and keep your distance.
- ✓ No fishing or boating is allowed (with some exceptions) within the killer whale interim sanctuary zones of Swiftsure Bank, Saturna Island and Pender Island (June 1st to November 30th).
- ✓ Stop fishing within 1000 metres of killer whales (do not haul gear), and always check fishing regulations before harvesting seafood.
- ✓ Turn off echosounders and fish finders when not in use.
- ✓ Slow down and minimize your wake, wash and engine noise. When within 1000 metres of marine mammals, it is encouraged to slow down to 7 knots or less.
- ✓ Avoid erratic manoeuvres. Do not chase, cut across, stop in front of, or approach whales or other marine mammals head-on.
- ✓ Avoid splitting up groups of marine mammals or trapping them between your vessel and shore or other vessels.
- ✓ Put your dog below decks if they become agitated when you encounter marine mammals.
- ✓ It is illegal to approach or disturb marine mammals with a drone. Drones must stay above an altitude of 1000 feet within a radius of one-half nautical mile (approx. 3000 feet).
- ✓ It is mandatory to report contact between your vessel or fishing gear and a marine mammal. See page 27 for reporting contact with marine mammals.

## Steer Clear From Sensitive Habitats

Sensitive marine habitats are crucial zones for a myriad of marine life and ecological systems, by offering shelter and protection, habitat, sustenance and foraging opportunities for many species of birds. Additionally, they serve as natural defenses that can reduce coastal erosion and play a significant role in carbon sequestration. These areas include:

### ESTUARIES: WHERE RIVERS & STREAMS MEET THE SEA

Up to 80% of BC's wildlife relies on estuaries. This sensitive habitat is especially important to juvenile and spawning salmon and marine birds.

- ✓ Keep all pollution out of the water.
- ✓ Reduce your wake in all estuaries and avoid running motors in shallow waters.

### ENCLOSED BAYS & NARROW CHANNELS

These areas experience very little exchange of water and can easily accumulate pollution.

- ✓ Never discharge sewage or other pollution in these areas.

### EELGRASS & KELP BEDS

These sensitive habitats shelter and create a safe haven for many species, including juvenile salmon, herring, and crab. Eelgrass often grows along shorelines and in estuaries, thriving in shallow and soft intertidal areas. Boaters can inadvertently damage these areas with anchors, props, keels, rudders and paddles. Important considerations for boaters, when it comes to kelp and eelgrass meadows that might not always be visible, include:

- ✓ Use fixed moorings instead of anchors where possible.
- ✓ When in doubt, anchor out - by anchoring more than 7 metres (23 feet).
- ✓ Adhere to voluntary no-anchor zones.
- ✓ Prior to your trip, conduct research on locations where eelgrass grows.
- ✓ Refrain from running your boat's engine near these areas to prevent prop entanglement
- ✓ While paddling, swimming, or simply enjoying the beach, please be mindful of the surrounding habitats and strive to keep disturbances to a minimum.



Eelgrass and kelp shoreline mapping in B.C. provided by the Pacific Salmon Foundation

## SHELLFISH AREAS

Clams and oysters are an important ecological and economic resource. These and other filter feeders are very sensitive to pollution.

- ✓ Never discharge sewage or other pollution in these areas.
- ✓ Take care not to damage shellfish beds with anchors, dinghies or other activities.

## Protecting Marine Habitat

In British Columbia, more than 15% of the land has protected status, but only 3% of coastal waters are protected.

Protecting marine habitat works. A survey of approximately 100 marine reserves around the world showed that after just two years of protection, the number of fish present increased on average by 91%, and the average size and number of species increased as well. These changes were seen in surrounding areas as well, benefiting fishers.

**Protection of marine habitat can come in many different forms and no two will be exactly alike.**

- ➔ **Marine Protected Areas:** There are currently 5 federal MPAs in BC: Endeavour Hydrothermal Vents (Canada's first MPA, designated in 2003), Bowie Seamount (2008), and 3 MPAs protecting the Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound Glass Sponge Reefs (2017). Race Rocks Ecological Reserve is being considered for designation and would be the first federal MPA in the Strait of Georgia.
- ➔ **Rockfish Conservation Areas:** 164 small areas in BC have interim closures on some types of fishing in order to conserve rockfish. Be sure to familiarize yourself with RCA locations and regulations before you go fishing. Descender devices are now mandatory when releasing rockfish anywhere.
- ➔ **Glass Sponge Reef Marine Refuges:** BC's ancient glass sponge reefs are a globally unique ecosystem that provide important habitat for many marine animals including spot prawns, rockfish, herring, halibut and sharks. The Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound Conservation Initiative implements measures to protect and conserve glass sponge reefs on BC's south coast. Familiarize yourself with restrictions in various areas of the Refuges, which can include no bottom contact fishing, and no downrigger gear use. Learn more at [glasssspongereefs.com](http://glasssspongereefs.com)



Eelgrass and kelp mapping of the the San Juan Islands provided by Friends of the San Juans

## Prevent the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

Transport of invasive species is illegal. AIS are non-native plants, animals and parasites that can cause economic or environmental harm and spread quickly to new areas. They can be introduced by hitching a ride on boat hulls, buoys, ropes, anchors, trailers, and fishing gear. Some AIS are microscopic and can be transported in water (i.e. ballasts, bilges and wells). Also, they can be introduced by anglers stocking non-native game fish.



**As of May 17, 2024, it is illegal to transport boats or other watercraft without removing the drain plug. All watercraft should be clean and will also have to dry out for 24 hours before entering new waters.**

### KEEPING IT CLEAN:

- ✓ Clean all plant parts, animals, debris and mud from your boat, trailer and equipment (fishing gear, ropes, anchors, buoys) before moving to a new waterbody.
- ✓ Dispose of removed material on land in an appropriate compost or garbage bin.
- ✓ Drain all items that can hold water (e.g. buckets, wells, bilge and ballast) on land, before moving to a new location.
- ✓ Dry all parts of your boat and gear completely and pull the plug when storing or transporting your watercraft.
- ✓ Play, Clean, Go! Give invasive species the brush off after an adventure on land. Make sure to check for invasive plants or animals trying to hitch a ride on you, your pets, or your gear.
- ✓ Don't Let it Loose! Never release your pets into the wild or dump aquariums into waterbodies or storm sewers.
- ✓ Stop for inspection. It's the law! All watercraft must report to designated watercraft inspection stations in BC.
- ✓ Report invasive species by visiting [gov.bc.ca/invasive-species](http://gov.bc.ca/invasive-species) to download the Report Invasives BC app, or see page 27 to report invasives sightings.
- ✓ Learn more from the Invasive Species Council of BC ([bcinvasives.ca](http://bcinvasives.ca)).



**Invasive freshwater zebra and quagga mussels are an alert species. They attach to any hard surface, and their larvae can live in standing water for up to 30 days. They pose a serious threat to BC's aquatic ecosystems.**

## CLEAN MARINE BC

Clean Marine BC is Georgia Strait Alliance's innovative, award winning, voluntary eco-certification program that recognizes marinas, boatyards, yacht clubs and other boating facilities for environmental best practices.

Together we have celebrated many success stories with our Clean Marine BC certified facilities—with innovative improvements in day to day marina operations as well as exciting projects including improving hatch rate of herring eggs, restoring eelgrass beds and Garry Oak meadows and helping bring Purple Martins back from near extinction!

**Is your marina Clean Marine BC certified?** Enrollment in the award winning program starts with a simple commitment to the Clean Marine BC policy and provides immediate benefits as we guide the participants towards certification in environmental best practices.

## COME ABOARD!

You can reach our program coordinator at [cmcbc@georgiastrait.org](mailto:cmcbc@georgiastrait.org) and 250-753-3459, or visit our website for more details at [georgiastrait.org/cmcbc](http://georgiastrait.org/cmcbc)

## Spills Aren't Slick

Georgia Strait Alliance is a member of the Pacific Oil Spill Prevention and Education Team (POSPET, a working group of the Pacific States—British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force). POSPET members include representatives from state and federal agencies, industry associations, and nonprofit groups from Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California. Together we spread the Spills Aren't Slick message to reduce chronic small spills from recreational boating, and to promote the oil spill reporting hotline 1-800-OILS-911. POSPET members also eco-certify marinas and boat yards under our Clean Marine and Clean Marina programs. GSA also collaborates with Clean Marine programs in Ontario and Quebec.

# Protecting the Salish Sea

Georgia Strait Alliance created the Guide to Clean Boating to help boaters like you minimize your impacts where you cruise. As a charitable organization, GSA relies on your support as you appreciate the beauty and rich marine life of the Salish Sea, and you want to do your part to protect the natural environment of this boaters' paradise.

**Your tax deductible donation** will help ensure that future generations get a chance to enjoy these magnificent waters too, truly one of the world's finest cruising grounds.

## Please donate today!

**Online:** [georgiastrait.org/donate](http://georgiastrait.org/donate)

**By mail:** Georgia Strait Alliance

PO Box 88277 RPO Chinatown, Vancouver, BC V6A 4A5

**Or call:** 250-753-3459

Charitable registration #13994-2254-RR0001  
All donations are tax deductible.



Solutions for a healthy Salish Sea depend on you. We welcome your comments and feedback.

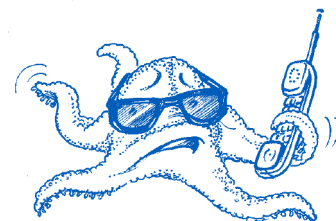
Please contact  
**Georgia Strait Alliance**  
at 250-753-3459 or  
[gsa@georgiastrait.org](mailto:gsa@georgiastrait.org)

Cover photo by Sara Goncalves, original Guide to Green Boating illustrations by Dee Gale and vector icons by Freepik and Flaticon.

Much of the material in this booklet is adapted from Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Protecting BC's Aquatic Environment A Boater's Guide as well as information provided by Environment and Climate Change Canada. Other sources include Canadian Power Squadron's Enviro Boater Guide and Sound Information: A Boater's Guide by the Puget Soundkeeper Alliance. Our thanks to all.

For commercial operators please refer to the TBuck Suzuki Foundation's Ocean Smart Green Boating Guide: [bucksuzuki.org/oceansmart\\_publication](http://bucksuzuki.org/oceansmart_publication)

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## Who To Call

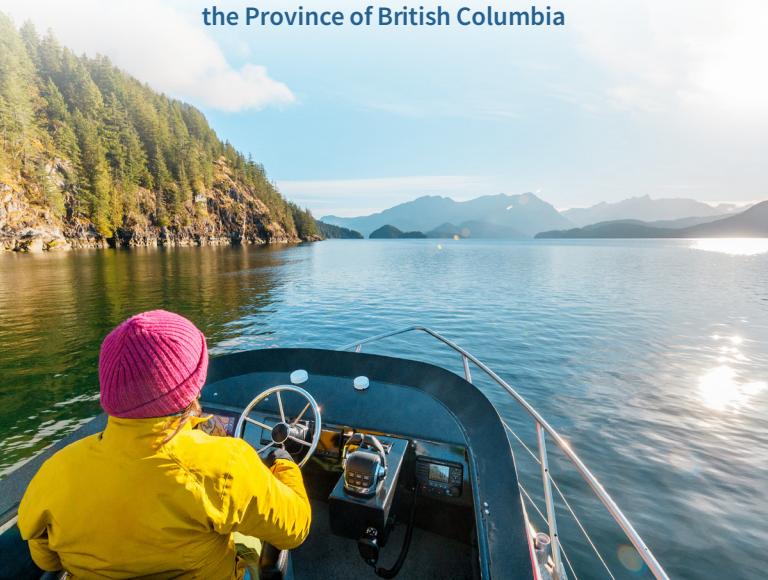
REASON	NUMBER
<b>In an emergency</b>	VHF 16, Dial #16 on cell phone in Canada or call 911
<b>Marine spills (24 hours)</b>	Oil Spill Reporting Hotline 1-800-OILS-911 (1-800-6457-911)
<b>Marine spills and pollution (24 hours)</b>	Coast Guard VHF 16 or 1-800-889-8852
<b>Report a disaster or emergency including spills of dangerous materials (24 hours)</b>	Provincial Emergency Program 1-800-663-3456
<b>Office of Boating Safety</b>	(604) 666-2681
<b>Violations of fishing &amp; shellfish regulations, and harassment of marine mammals</b>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, BC number 1-800-465-4336
<b>Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP), as well as invasive Zebra or Quagga mussel sightings</b>	1-877-952-7277
<b>Canadian Wildlife Service</b>	1-800-668-6767
<b>Marine mammals in distress, and mandatory reporting of collisions or entanglement</b>	BC Marine Mammal Response Network (observe, record, report) 1-800-465-4336 <a href="mailto:DFO.ORR-ONS.MPO@dfo-mpo-gc.ca">DFO.ORR-ONS.MPO@dfo-mpo-gc.ca</a>
<b>Whale, dolphin, porpoise or sea turtle sightings</b>	BC Cetacean Sightings Network 1-866 I SAW ONE (1-866-472-9663)
<b>Recycling Hotline and Household Special Wastes</b>	1-800-667-4321
<b>Report marine invasive species</b>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada 1-888-356-7525
<b>Report all invasive species</b>	Invasive Species Council of BC 1-888-933-3722
<b>Report lost and abandoned fishing gear</b>	Use the Ghost Gear Reporter app by Global Ghost Gear Initiative
<b>Report abandoned, derelict vessels or vessels of concern</b>	1-800-889-8852
<b>Encountering or disturbing cultural sites</b> - Archaeology Branch, BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations	(250) 953-3334



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**Georgia Strait Alliance**  
[GeorgiaStrait.org/CMBC](http://GeorgiaStrait.org/CMBC)

