

SECTION 6: Safety Afloat

NAVIGATION ON THE BROADS

The Broads Authority has legal powers to control and manage the navigation in the Broads and some adjacent waters. These are contained in four byelaws: i) Speed Limit Byelaws 1992; ii) Navigation Byelaws 1995; iii) Vessel Dimension Byelaws 1995; iv) Vessel Registration Byelaws 1997. Elements of these have been superseded by the Broads Act 2009. These are available on the BA website. The BA employs rangers in clearly marked launches. Their directions should be obeyed, and advice should be followed. BA officers have the right to board and inspect vessels.

HARBOUR AREAS:

Broads boaters should be aware that different regulations apply in the two harbour areas adjacent to the BA's navigation area: that part of the River Yare, downstream from its confluence with the River Bure, which is administered by the Great Yarmouth Port Company (Peel Ports Great Yarmouth), and the 'salt side' of Mutford Lock to Lowestoft Harbour, which is administered by Associated British Ports (ABP). Hire craft are prohibited from the sea-port areas, and in these harbour areas International Collision Regulations generally apply to private pleasure craft. In the event of any doubt, queries should be addressed to the BA, Peel Ports Great Yarmouth or Associated British Ports (ABP) at Lowestoft.

ALL AREAS:

- Craft keep to the RIGHT of the river or channel.
- All craft under power OR SAIL must keep clear of another restricted in its ability to manoeuvre.
- All craft have an overriding duty to take reasonable steps to AVOID COLLISION. There is a particular regulation concerning craft under sail avoiding the risk of collision with each other.
- Craft under power should slow down or alter course to give way to craft under sail alone. Always try to pass astern of a tacking sailing boat. Don't 'go for the gap'. Act as ADVISED BY THE SAILING BOAT'S HELMSPERSON.
- NAVIGATION LIGHTS are required after dark (defined as between sunset and sunrise).
- No water skiing or wake boarding is permitted except under certain conditions (see opposite and the BA website).
- All craft should be navigated at a speed safe in the conditions. Craft under power must observe the marked speed limits of 3, 4, 5 or 6 mph against the land. The maximum penalty for speeding is a £1,000 fine plus costs. Various methods of speed checks are used.

Boat owners can help combat speeding and bad behaviour by noting the name and number of the offending craft, together with its location and a description of the helmsperson, and calling Broads Control on 01603 756056. Witnesses may be called to give evidence if the BA brings a prosecution.

Channels on rivers and Broads are clearly marked to avoid shallows and hazards: going upriver, keep red on the left (port), green on the right (starboard); a yellow and black post marks a confluence. A hazard along the bank may be indicated by a single yellow marker (buoy or post). If you observe any unmarked hazards outside the channel please contact Broads Control to report the matter. Current activity throughout the Broads involves work on FLOOD defences, reconfiguring the banks and moving heavy plant and equipment around the waterways. Take note of warning signs and directions given and give the machinery and vessels a wide berth. Always take care where works have recently been completed until the new banks and reed beds are established. Any restrictions on navigation due to this work, dredging, maintenance of bridges and unplanned bridge failures, etc are shown in *Boating News* on the BA website.

Take special care while navigating the marked **water-ski zones**, keep well to the right and secure all objects and people that are likely to fall if heavy wash rocks the boat. Warning signs identify the zones' locations, and the times when skiing is permitted. There are 11 designated zones: five on the River Yare, downriver from Postwick, Brundall and Reedham, and upstream from Cantley and Hardley Dyke; on the River Waveney, five downriver from its confluence with Oulton Dyke; and one on Breydon Water.*

Competitive rowing/canoeing takes place throughout the year on rivers Bure, Waveney and Yare, on Oulton Dyke and Broad and also along the coast at Lowestoft (details on page 62).

When rowing vessels are sighted, helms of other craft should slow down in plenty of time. The boats may be converging quite fast and a fair distance may be rowed in the time it takes for another boat's wash to die down. Excessive wash can easily swamp a rowing vessel and may even sink it.

* Zone limits are marked by yellow signs; details for water skiing are on the BA website (see below) and for rowing, also, in a *BA Waterways Code* leaflet.