

Kayakers' Guide to Minimizing Impact on Wildlife

Keep a minimum distance of 100m (300ft) away from wildlife. Moving in closer may interfere with their behaviour.

For example, oystercatchers will fly away, leaving their young vulnerable to predators. Seals will hastily enter the water, not only risking injury on the rocks, but also ceasing to nurse their young.

Whales: Majestic from the Distance

- Scientific evidence suggests that when vessels (including kayaks) hinder the whales' progress, they may be deterred from foraging, resting, or socializing.
- Avoid approaching closer than 100 metres, positioning your boat within 400 metres in the direction the whales travel, and being less than 200 metres offshore when whales are approaching.
- Launching kayaks from the beach as whales approach often contradicts all of these guidelines.

Camping Amongst Carnivores (www.env.gov.bc.ca/beparks/explore/safety/visit_safe)

- Attacks on humans by bears or cougars are uncommon, but introducing predators or other animals to our food can lead to conflict in which people are injured or the animals 'removed' for safety.
- Remember, you are no longer at the top of the food chain when hiking or camping in wilderness areas. Cougars, wolves, and bears are powerful and magnificent animals and deserve your respect.
- Camp in designated areas where provided, keeping your ecofootprint as small as possible.
- Avoid camping near running water, thick brush, animal trails or berry patches.
- Check the beach upon landing for tracks and spoor and other signs of recent activity. If in doubt, choose a different beach.
- Limit your impact by avoiding encounters and by managing your food, food smells and garbage.
- Keep yourself and campsite odour free by setting up cooking, eating and food storage areas at least 100 metres from your tent and consider wind direction.
- Keep tents and contents free of food, food odours or beverages. Hang food, toiletries and garbage from a rope between two trees at least 4 metres above the ground and 1.3 metres from top and side supports.
- Using kayak hatches is controversial as bears have been known to 'open' boats, having smelled the contents. Wolves have been reported removing personal and other nonfood items from campsites.
- Wash dishes in a container (if using soap, make it environmentally friendly), and put them away immediately after use. Dispose of grey water at sea where there is tidal exchange. Carry out garbage; do not burn or bury it.
- Use areas below hightide mark, away from camp, in an area of high tidal exchange for toilets. Do not use the upland areas as wolves will feed on human excrement.
- Hike in groups of two or more. Make enough noise to prevent surprising an animal.
- Watch for animal tracks and signs. They will return to uneaten portions of their kills, often covering them with soil and leaf litter. Avoid these food caches.
- If you do stumble upon young kittens or cubs, do not approach or attempt to pick them up. Leave the area immediately, as a female will defend her young.
- Bear spray can be effective with some bears when used properly. Be aware that wind, spray distance, rain, freezing temperatures and product shelflife can influence its effectiveness. Familiarize yourself with the proper use of bear spray.

Intertidal Life: Unique, Fascinating, Fragile

- Plants and animals of the intertidal regions live within particular ecosystems, often depending on each other for survival. Moving a creature only a few feet is like relocating a polar bear to Vancouver. Moving rocks or sand will cause animals to die; ecosystem recovery is slow.
- When viewing animals, turn rocks over carefully and put them back to their original position and correct orientation. A change in tidal zone or beach type will diminish an animal's chance of survival.
- Animals from moist locations, such as under seaweed, must be covered again.
- When digging for animals, fill in the holes afterwards as they will either die or float away when the tide returns.

- Piles of mud and sand may smother clams or other animals whose burrows get blocked.
- When walking on rocks, try not to crush barnacles and other life forms.
- Do not collect live animals, as their survival in captivity is unlikely.
- Obey the local wildlife regulations on the size and catch limits for all sea life, intertidal included.

Let's Tread Lightly on Salmon Habitat

- Litter may leech poisonous chemicals into streams, or alter the chemistry of the water.
- Don't use nonbiodegradable detergents or harmful soaps.
- Whatever you do upstream will ultimately affect the ecosystems downstream.
- Do not tread on salmon spawning grounds. If you are forced to walk in a stream, be careful where you step. Depending on the time of year, salmon redds may contain eggs or alevins that are still living within the gravel. They are very sensitive to sedimentation, so even if you aren't stepping on them directly you may be stirring up enough silt to suffocate them.
- When watching salmon spawn, sit quietly. Be aware that fish can see you before you see them (a consequence of an effect called Snell's Window – consider a wide angle lens on your camera); any sudden movements will scare the fish and may force them into areas of low water flow where they can become stranded.
- Report: If you come across sources of pollution or destruction, such as abandoned oil drums in a stream, notify the local community fisheries office so that proper action may be taken.