

# The Waterside Code

Respect • Protect • Enjoy



# The Waterside Code

Wales has amazing rivers, lakes and estuaries, which are great places to visit and enjoy. When you visit, remember it is your responsibility to find out where and when you can and cannot go.

These are special places so make sure that you:

- **respect** other people
- **protect** the natural environment
- **enjoy** the outdoors safely



## Respect other people

Please respect the local community and other people using the outdoors.

Remember that your actions can affect people's lives and livelihoods.

- Don't trespass. You shouldn't assume that you have access onto private property without the owner's permission and do not interfere with the rights of others, such as fishing, farming or shooting rights.
- Do not obstruct roads, gateways to fields or entrances to buildings when parking your vehicle.
- Don't climb over fences and walls as this can damage them. Use gates and stiles and always leave them as you find them.
- By law, you must control your dog so that it does not scare or disturb farm animals. Always keep your dog on a lead when you are close to livestock and only let go of the lead if it would be dangerous for you to keep hold of it.
- Be aware of other people in, on or around the water and try not to get in their way.
- Try to keep the size of your group to a level that is appropriate to the place you are visiting, keep noise levels to a minimum and if you need to change your clothes, do this discreetly.

## Protect the natural environment

The natural environment is sensitive to pollution, damage and disturbance. You should always try and leave no trace of your visit.

- Take care not to alarm fish, birds and other animals as they may be very sensitive to disturbance.
- Fish lay their eggs in the shallow parts of the river between autumn and spring; they may be very vulnerable at this time and it is an offence to harm them.
- Take care not to damage plants in and around the water. Stick to established paths or bare rock and, if available, use guidebooks, local information or signs to find out the best places to get in and out of the water.
- Introducing invasive species of plants and animals to watercourses may have very serious effects on the habitats found there. You can prevent this by checking, cleaning and drying your clothing and equipment thoroughly before going to a new place.
- Take your litter home with you and don't leave human or dog waste as it can pollute watercourses, harm animals and spread diseases.
- Do not drop matches or lit cigarettes. Consider if a fire or a barbecue is really necessary. If it is, remove any remains and dispose of them safely.

## Enjoy the outdoors safely

Rivers, lakes and estuaries can be unpredictable and dangerous. Find out as much as you can about where you are going and plan ahead.

- You are responsible for your own safety. Know your limits, let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return, and always have a way of raising an alarm if you need help.
- Check the weather forecast before you leave home. Remember that water conditions may change while you are out.
- Take care around the water's edge as rocks, grass and mud can be slippery and unstable.
- Always follow the advice on warnings signs on or around water, particularly around man made features such as reservoirs.
- There can be hidden dangers in water and it may be faster, shallower, deeper or colder than it looks. Always make sure you know how to get in and out safely.
- Try to avoid swallowing any water as it may carry bacteria and viruses.

You can report any pollution or other wildlife crime by calling 0800 807060 and you can contact the police for non-emergencies such as access issues and property damage on 101.