

ALL ABOARD



Looking after the Medway Swale
Estuary's coastal environment



INTRODUCTION

The Medway Swale Estuary is an internationally significant coastal environment, not only supporting thousands of breeding and wintering birds, but also a diverse range of marine life, all of which rely in some way on the estuary's varied and often scarce habitats.

This importance to wildlife is recognised by the number of national and international designations that help safeguard estuary, such as the recent inclusion of both the Medway and Swale as Marine Conservation Zones.

Despite these designations protecting the estuary it remains a vulnerable environment and this leaflet contains a few simple ways, in which users can help safeguard it for future generations to enjoy.





1. RESPECT WILDLIFE

- Observe bird/marine life from a safe distance, at least 100m.
- Keep noise levels to a minimum. Move away if bird/marine become agitated or stop feeding.

For detailed information visit: www.birdwise.org.uk and www.thegreenblue.org.uk/guides-posters-and-activities/go-green-on-board

2. PROTECT HABITATS

- Use designated launch sites where possible.
- Observe the speed limits to minimise erosion to the estuary's shoreline and islands.
- Avoid dragging craft or riding hovercraft over the fragile saltmarsh, clay and seagrass habitats*.

* For maps of known seagrass areas in the estuary visit: www.msep.org.uk



3. PREVENT LITTER

Take all litter (including foodstuffs) home to dispose of/recycle. Where possible please help to keep the estuary clean, by removing any litter you come across as well.



4. SPILLAGES

Spillages of oil and fuel create a toxic film, which can suffocate aquatic life. You can help to avoid such an occurrence by:

- Checking before you pump your bilge.
- Installing a filter.
- Using a bilge sock to mop up any spills.



5. PREVENT INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Boat users can unknowingly introduce invasive species to the estuary. Help to avoid this by following the Check Clean Dry code and taking the opportunity to learn how to identify the various species.

Visit: www.nonnativespecies.org/gallery/index.cfm or *Beneath the Water* at msep.org.uk/our-work/publications

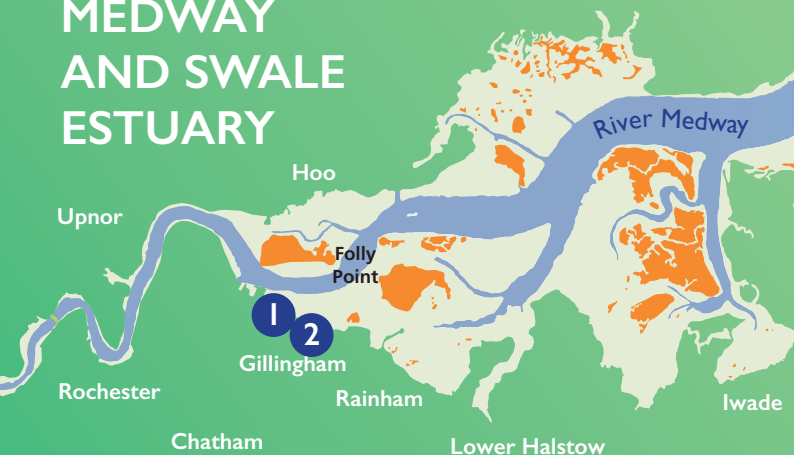


6. REDUCE SEWAGE AND GREY WATER

- Where available use pump out facilities to dispose of your sewage. Alternatively use either a self-contained composting toilet or a portable toilet and dispose of the waste correctly on land.
- Minimise the use of soaps and detergents on board and use those that are environmentally friendly, avoiding chlorine, bleach and products containing phosphates.



MEDWAY AND SWALE ESTUARY



 Private islands - No landing

Public launch sites

-  1 Gillingham Pier, Gillingham (charges apply)
-  2 Commodores Hard, The Strand, Gillingham
-  3 Queenborough slipway
-  4 Isle of Sheppey Sailing Club slipway, Sheerness
-  5 Minster Shingle Bank
-  6 Oare



Speed limits

A six knot speed limit operates west of Folly Point.

No speed limit east of Folly Point.

An eight knot speed limit operates in The Swale.

SOME KEY SPECIES AND HABITATS



Mediterranean gull



Mussel bed



Mudflats



Common Tern



Lapwing



Curlew



Seagrass (zostera) bed



Oystercatcher

STOP THE SPREAD



**Are you unknowingly spreading
invasive species on your water
sports equipment and clothing?**

**For more information visit:
www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry**



CHECK

Check your equipment and clothing for live organisms - particular in areas that are damp or hard to inspect.

CLEAN

Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothes thoroughly. Use hot water where possible. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.

DRY

Dry all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.



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