

Any boater that has spent time around the Great Marsh knows its waters, beaches, and mud flats offer a variety of outdoor activities.

Boaters, perhaps more than anyone, also know how important clean water and proper safety are for an enjoyable recreational experience.

Having Fun and Taking Care

Municipalities and conservation organizations are working to protect and restore the Great Marsh and have made great strides in reducing pollution, re-opening shellfish beds, and restoring marsh habitat.

Many boaters have also helped protect the marsh through their use of pumpout facilities and responsible boating practices. The primary threats to the Great Marsh that come from boating activities include:

- Pollution
- Shoreline Erosion
- Noise

This brochure offers some tips on caring for the Great Marsh so it can be enjoyed for years to come.



Photo by Katie Buser

"The Great Marsh is an exceptional resource and we all can help keep it that way."

- Bob Durand, Secretary
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Jane Swift, Governor

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

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Photo by Andrew Cooper

BOATERS' GUIDE TO THE GREAT MARSH

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8 Towns & The Boy Committee

BOATERS' GUIDE TO THE GREAT MARSH

A Fragile Ecosystem

With over 20,000 acres reaching from New Hampshire to Cape Ann, the Great Marsh is the largest contiguous stretch of salt marsh in New England. Fresh water flows from several major rivers and smaller streams to mix with salt water in the estuaries of Essex Bay and Plum Island Sound.

In this area of immense biological productivity, millions of juvenile fish become the mainstay of commercial and recreational fisheries. The Great Marsh is also home to commercially important shellfish beds and is an important stopover on the Atlantic Flyway bird migration route.

The Great Marsh is a coastal treasure in your backyard with significant environmental, economic, and recreational values.

photo by Robert Beakham



Keep It Clean!

Boaters can help reduce pollution to Plum Island Sound and Essex Bay. With eight marinas, over 1,000 boats on moorings, and hundreds of visiting boats using the waterways, boat-related pollution is one reason for declining water quality in the Great Marsh. Fortunately, eliminating pollution from boats is one of the easiest ways to help protect our waterways.

Pollutant	Boating Source	How to Help
trash	blown or tossed overboard	dispose of trash onshore
oil	bilges	use oil absorbent pads or bilge socks in bilges to avoid oil leaks
gasoline	refueling spills	avoid spills—they really add up!
bacteria, viruses, harmful nutrients	human waste	use pumpout boots to dispose of sewage
hazardous chemicals	rain runoff from boat yards	clean up after working on boats of the boat yard—leave nothing for the rain to wash away!

For more information on how to help, contact CZM's Robin Lacey at (617) 626-1220

Be Safe and Protect the Marsh!

Due to an increasing number of people using the Great Marsh waterways, responsible boating is more important than ever.

Swimming Areas:

Distance and speed

All vessels are prohibited from operating within 150 feet of shorelines used as swimming areas and within 75 feet of markers designating swimming areas.

No Wake Zones

No wake zones are important for personal safety and protection of the fragile marsh shoreline. Wakes contribute to marsh erosion, leading to a loss of stopover habitat for migratory shorebirds. The sound of outboard motors and personal watercraft can also make shorebirds fly away, causing them to spend extra energy needed for their flight to wintering grounds in Central and South America.

The Great Marsh is internationally recognized as an important habitat for migratory birds.

photo by Georgia Wang

