

Take Action

Boat Respectfully

Paddle Wisely

Observe, Don't Disturb

Explore

Georgia Sea Turtle Center

<https://gstc.jekyllisland.com>

Georgia Outdoor Map

www.georgiaoutdoormap.com

Georgia River Network

<https://www.garivers.org>

Connect

Clean Marina Program

www.cleanmarina.org

Clean Coast

www.Cleancoast.org

**Georgia Department of
Natural Resources**

<https://Gadnr.org>

Coast Guard Auxiliary

<http://www.cgaux.org>

**Rivers Alive
Annual Cleanup**

<https://riversalive.georgia.gov>

STEWARDSHIP SHORT: Boat the Coast

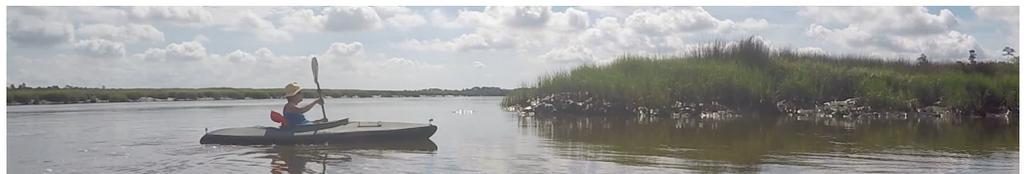


One of the best ways to experience the beauty of the Georgia coast is by water. Be aware of local weather, tides and currents. Georgia has a 6–10 foot tidal range. At low tide many tidal creeks become impassable. The speed and direction of currents will also change rapidly during the tidal cycle. If you travel the coast by motorboat, kayak or paddleboard, be sure to keep some of these tips in mind.

Action 1 | BOAT RESPECTFULLY

You are responsible for your speed and wake. Unchecked, both can be dangerous to people, habitats and wildlife by increasing the chance of a collision or causing shoreline erosion.

- Take a boat safety class.
- Always observe no wake zones.
- Don't speed through tidal creeks. It reduces your ability to avoid hazards and causes shoreline erosion.
- Wear polarized sunglasses to decrease glare from the water and improve vision.
- Direct a passenger to look for obstacles in the water as there is often low visibility in Georgia's coastal waters.
- Avoid discharging oil or dumping plastics in U.S. waters. These actions are illegal under federal law.



Satilla Riverkeeper

Action 2 | PADDLE WISELY

When paddling through an estuary, follow safety guidelines to ensure that your trip is enjoyable and accident-free.

- Always wear a lifejacket, and carry water, first aid, a whistle, and a cell phone or marine radio.
- Check the weather forecast and tides before heading out, and plan your trip accordingly.
- Only launch and land at designated access points.
- Never paddle alone. Consider joining a guided trip to learn about local conditions in certain areas.
- Always file a float plan with a friend or family member.



Action 3 | OBSERVE, DON'T DISTURB

While out on the water, do not disturb shorebirds, marine mammals or turtles. If you accidentally collide with an animal or come across a dead or injured marine mammal or sea turtle in the water, call Georgia DNR at 1-800-2-SAVEME.

Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles

Boaters should be aware of sea turtles, dolphins and manatees when out on the water. In 2017, 29 percent of sea turtle injuries and deaths in Georgia were attributed to boat strikes.

- Always observe marine life viewing guidelines at www.fisheries.noaa.gov.
- Don't approach animals in your boat, as this can be dangerous for both them and you.
- Don't feed marine mammals or sea turtles. Not only is this illegal, but it changes their behavior and can be detrimental to their survival.
- It is illegal to harass or harm marine mammals or sea turtles under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act.
- Navigate responsibly by following channel markers. When in shallow water, stay particularly alert for well-camouflaged manatees

Shorebirds

When boating inshore or anchoring your boat near the shore you may encounter shorebirds, which are highly sensitive to disturbances.

- Leave dogs at home. It is illegal to bring dogs to certain islands. Even if they are allowed, they should not be permitted to chase or harass shorebirds.
- Walk in wet sand below the high tide line. Many shorebirds nest directly on the beach above the high tide line. Even brief disturbances of the adult birds can impact egg survival, particularly during hot summer months.
- Observe from afar with binoculars to avoid disturbing resting, feeding or nesting behavior.



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Boat the Coast References

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