

West Wilts Fly Fishers Guild
RISK ASSESSMENT

Activity: Chew reservoir boat day

Participants: Guild members age 18+

Preliminary visit by organiser / lead person

The following Risk Assessment to be reviewed by the organiser / lead person prior to the activity taking place

Chew reservoir is a familiar venue for many Guild members and a Guild social fishing day has been held there for many years. At 1200 acres it is a very large expanse of water and subject to extremes of weather coming up from the Bristol Channel. Winds can become very strong and waves can be too high for the small boats used. Weather conditions can change quickly. Bristol Water monitors this closely so that if extreme weather is anticipated boats are called-in. A fast safety boat is used to recall boats. This has been necessary on previous Guild occasions.

Boat fishing on Chew is strictly controlled and monitored by Bristol Water staff to ensure the safety of anglers. It has been the Guild's experience that the boats are in good condition, fully equipped and well maintained but as stated below Anglers must check their boat has all the equipment in the checklist in bullet point 4 below. It is essential that Guild members comply fully with the rules and regulations in place. Experienced Guild members are asked to help make sure in-experienced members are made aware of these and assisted with complying with them.

Identification of HAZARDS and their management to eliminate or minimise RISK to participants

Bristol Water Safety requirements of all boat anglers:

All anglers must watch the safety video showing continuously in the main reception area and sign that they have watched it and will abide by Bristol Water Health & Safety guidance and regulations. They are (as quoted from 2014 edition of 'Buzzer') :

- Before going to your boat be aware of the weather and water conditions and finishing times. This information is available in the Lodge. Check the weather forecast and note the possibility of deteriorating conditions. There may also be notices warning of dangerous areas of the lake due to shallow water, obstructions or strong winds. Be extra careful in these areas.

- Make sure your lifejacket is fit for purpose. **ALL ANGLERS MUST WEAR LIFE JACKETS AT ALL TIMES WHEN ON THE JETTIES OR IN A BOAT.** Ensure your jacket is worn correctly. Take a mobile phone with you and **note the emergency number 01275 332481.** We suggest placing your phone in a waterproof pouch. These are available from the Lodges.

- When going to your boat take only a sensible amount of tackle. Do not leave tackle on the jetties as it is a hazard for other users. Enter the boat by stepping into the centre from the front. Do not lean over the sides to lift in equipment. Load your boat carefully by passing to a colleague or ask the ranger for help. The maximum load for your boat is 300kg. If staff think your boat is overloaded or unbalanced you may be asked to remove some tackle. If you are using boat seats fit them centrally so that they do not tilt the gunwales near the water.

■ Check all boat equipment is present - 2 oars and rowlocks, baler, anchor and that the bilge pump is working. Check the petrol container has sufficient petrol. DO NOT REMOVE THE ANCHOR as this is a vital piece of safety equipment. Pump the bilges regularly through the day.

■ Do not untie your boat until your engine is running. If you do not know how to use the engine ask the staff for assistance. We recommend you wear the kill cord on your wrist whilst motoring. Cast off, but be aware of other boats or obstructions before engaging gear. Do not use full speed until clear of the jetties.

■ Be aware of other lake users and give way to yachts and drifting boats. Keep at least 50m from bank anglers and the sailing Club. We recommend sitting while fishing. NEVER STAND ON THE SEATS. Do not anchor in prohibited areas. If your anchor becomes fast unclip the rope and buoy and report the area to staff. Do not fish in areas where yachts are racing. If they race past you, stop fishing until they pass. Avoid motoring near the shallow areas of Nunnery Point, The False Island and the Point of the Island.

■ The emergency number, 01275 332481, is on display in all the boats. If your engine breaks down or will not re-start put out your anchor from the bow to stop any drift. Try the following to start: Check the kill cord is in position. Do not use choke or prime the engine when warm. If after about ten pulls the engine fails to fire ring the emergency number stating your boat number and area and a rescue boat will attend as soon as possible.

If your boat swamps through rough weather always stay with the boat. Inflate your life jacket and ring the emergency number if you can. Try to attract a near boats attention by waving, shouting or blowing a whistle. Watch out for the rescue boat.

■ If the weather deteriorates while afloat you may be recalled by phone, by the rescue boat or by another fishing boat. If safe return immediately to the jetties. If you pass other boats please tell them to return also. If it is too rough, head for the nearest safe shore and beach your boat. Ring the Lodge and staff will collect you as soon as possible. On return to the jetties staff will assist you to tie up and get out of the boat. Leave your tackle in the boat until told by staff that it is safe to remove it.

■ BOAT FISHING ENDS AT SUNSET. When finishing fishing you must return to the jetties no later than fifteen minutes after finishing time. Approach the jetties slowly and keep your engine running until tied up. Do not unload all your tackle on to the jetty, just remove enough to carry ashore in one journey. Return any BW lifejackets to the drying room. Report any problems to the rangers.

Life jackets must be worn as soon as someone steps on the jetty. These are supplied by Bristol Water but members can use their own. They must be worn on top of any other clothing in order for them to operate correctly. Members must ensure they are adjusted correctly for fit.

Extremes of weather

On even the most pleasant day the weather can deteriorate drastically and a boat is a very exposed location so it is essential that anglers take with them into the boat head-to-toe waterproof and wind proof clothing. A sudden downpour coupled with wind chill can quickly lower body temperature and become very uncomfortable.

NB: A spare set of dry clothing kept in the car is also a good back-up.

Similarly, sun lotion is an essential preventative against skin cancer. In the angling press there have been reports of reservoir anglers developing cancer of the chin/neck from reflection off the water. Wearing a broad-rimmed hat and using sun lotion only on the face is not sufficient.

Good safety practice when boat fishing:

- i) Fishing in pairs
- ii) Sunglasses (preferably of wrap-around type) and a hat are essential protection against stray hooks from your boat partner's casting
- iii) Carry a mobile phone in a water proof bag – the emergency number is displayed on the boat.
- iv) Do not stand whilst casting - avoid standing at any time if possible
- v) Carry a pair of side-cutting pliers for hook removal
- vi) The engine operator must securely attach the automatic engine cut-out cable to themselves in case they fall overboard.

Novice boat anglers

On Guild events novice boat anglers are paired with experienced boat anglers for their overall safety and to acquire specific safety aspects of:

- Boat handling
- Fishing from anchor and drifting
- Tackle organisation on a boat

NB: If you are not familiar with boat handling or fishing from a boat please make the Chew Day organiser aware so that you can be paired with an experienced member and have any questions answered. It'll be much safer and you'll have a better day.

.....**END**.....

