



The right of free passage and using common sense

Outdoor advice and tips for canoeists



Paddling on the Svartälven (Black River). Photo: Aulis Syväjärvi/A Taste of Media AB.

The right of free passage gives you and all others the right to venture out and enjoy nature. But this right comes with a responsibility—it is necessary to show respect towards animals, nature and other people. Harming nature, animal life or the property of others is forbidden. When you are out canoeing, there are a number of things to think about, which we will take up in this fact sheet. Because of the fact that there are many people who utilize our canoe routes each year, special rules and care are necessary.

Campfires

There are prepared fire rings along out canoe routes. Use them—do not start fires in other places. Remember that during the summer, there are chances for partial or total fire ban, when the ground is dry and there is risk for forest fire. Storm kitchens can be used at all times. Do not start fires directly on rocks—they can crack easily.

Be sure to extinguish fires and coals completely.

Firewood

Branches, pine cones and sticks found on the ground can be used as fuel for fires, but you may not remove twigs or bark from living trees. Firewood is often found at the rest areas. It is considerate to replace as much split wood as you use during your stay. Do not make larger fires than you need. Remember that it is costly to keep rest areas supplied with firewood.

Tenting

The right of free passage allows you to camp for one full day without the permission of the landowner. Be sure to not disturb the land or other people. If you are thinking about camping in a group or near a private residence, ask the landowner for permission. It is preferred if you use our designated camping areas.

Open fields

Avoid carrying or pulling canoes over planted fields, pastures, or other land that can be damaged. Do not pull the canoe over open fields either. Don't forget to close gates after you pass through them.

Rubbish

Carry your trash with you until you can dispose of it properly. Rubbish bins are only found at certain rest areas and starting off points. Never leave a garbage bag next to a filled rubbish bin—animals will spread the trash around the area. For toilet needs, it is preferable that you use the outhouses provided along the routes. When not possible, dig a hole and cover sufficiently afterwards.

Motor vehicles

Simply driving a car to the water's edge at any given place is prohibited. Operating a motor vehicle over off-road terrain is forbidden. Do

not assume that it is all right to drive on any forest vehicle road or one lane road. Respect signs that warn against driving!

Only use the starting points that are designated on the canoe route fact sheets.

Fishing

The right of free passage does not include fishing. A fishing license or permission is almost always required. Information about fishing licenses can be obtained from the municipal tourist offices or from the canoe rental agencies.

Bird protection

Many birds nest on islands or along the beaches. Travel by canoe means that you can silently and easily travel too close, possibly causing damage if you are not careful. The birds are especially sensitive during the spring and summer when they have eggs or babies. If the nest is disturbed or if the adults are scared away, it is quite difficult for the young birds to survive against various threats. A warm day can cause eggs or youngsters to dry out or become easy prey for birds like crows. Do not try to get close to the nests or the babies in order to observe or take pictures.

Arctic loons breed most often on islands and are very sensitive to disruptions. Their swimming near the beaches often means that there is a nest nearby. Most other birds behave in a similar fashion. If the birds do not seem afraid and do not fly away as you paddle closer, it more than likely means that there is a nest nearby. Stay away! Ospreys often build their large branch nests in pines on

isolated islands. Pay attention when you land and go ashore.

Do not follow too closely behind birds when paddling, so as to not split up young families. This is most important when in narrow passageways. Instead, slow to a stop and make sure that the chicks stay together. Wait a bit until they have gotten out of the way or have made it to safety. If a group of several canoes must pass a nesting area in a narrow waterway, it is best to keep the canoes together, wait until the birds have made it to safety and then pass as quickly as possible. A short, intensive disruption is better than several smaller ones that occur over a longer period.

Certain areas have especially sensitive birdlife and are therefore classified as birdlife protection areas. It is forbidden during certain times of the year to go ashore or paddle within a given distance of the shore. Birdlife protection areas are marked with signs that display regulations.

Common sense canoeing and safety

Everybody in the group should be able to swim. Lifejackets are a must. Sit still in the canoe and do not overload it.

Paddle along the shore, which is safer than being out on large, open currents. Paddling out onto a lake with a tailwind can be dangerous. Things may go just fine in the beginning, but as one gets further away from the shore, the waves grow larger, which heightens the risk of overturning. Use the topographical map 1:50 000 as a complement to the canoe route fact sheet.

Paddling tips

Pack the canoe correctly. Make sure that it is evenly balanced, or with a slightly heavy load at the back. Use water-tight containers for packing and storing. If you will be paddling in strong currents, it is best to tie all equipment to the canoe. On all routes in the county, we recommend having canoe trolleys. Nearly every route has rather long land transport stretches around dam facilities or rapids.

It is a good idea to have a sponge, which can be used to dry off seats and even mop up small amounts of water in the canoe. Also take along a water scoop or a pump.

Make sure that you are comfortable. A cushion is great to have if the seat is hard.

Don't paddle near power plants, dams or similar facilities. Never paddle under low bridges. Always inspect unknown streams before setting out. Better to carry the canoe than to be sorry.

If you are kayaking, make sure that you have practiced a controlled capsizing. Also practice righting yourself with your own strength. Make sure that you take along a paddle float and an extra paddle. Dry- or wetsuits are advisable during autumn or spring.

Use a line to fasten the paddle to the kayak during the journey. Otherwise, you may drop it when you check your compass or adjust your clothing.



REGIONFÖRBUNDET
ÖREBRO



The canoe routes are well suited for both kayaks and canoes. Photo: Aulis Syväjärvi/A Taste of Media AB.