

# Salty Swims Environmental Policy



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Heading into the sea, rivers, and lakes to experience that unique sense of freedom being in the water gives us, is an adventure for any open water swimmer. However, it bears remembering that this must be done in a sustainable and conscious way, with total respect for the environment.

The most important thing we will keep in mind is to be completely aware of our presence in a natural environment. Try to alter it as little as possible remembering we are simply a visitor in an environment that is not ours. We are dedicated to treating it with respect to enable us to continue to enjoy it.

Salty Swims are committed to acting in an environmentally aware manner whilst undertaking its activities.

This will require us taking certain measures into account when practicing our favourite sport, so we don't harm the ecosystem that surrounds us, and we can continue to enjoy such an outstanding environment for many years to come.

### RESPECT FOR THE CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

We will bear in mind that, without an attitude of respect and consideration, we could end up causing great harm to the environment, without even realising it. We aim to leave no trace of our presence behind in the natural environment.

When it comes to swimming and enjoying the freedom that water gives us, we will remember and implement some basic practices:

#### **We are committed to eco swimming and will:**

- Use a sunscreen that is considered environmentally friendly. Many sunscreens contain chemical ingredients that, when dissolved in water, can affect marine fauna and flora.
- Leave nothing in the water or on the beach, whether it be leftover food or plastic bags and packaging.

- If we see litter, we will pick it up, carry it in our buoys, and then discard it in the appropriate container.
- Take nothing away from the natural environment.

## AVOID ALTERING NATURAL HABITATS

We are Aware our presence could alter the habitats of the animal and plant species that inhabit the area.

### **We are committed to protecting natural habitats and will:**

- Avoid climbing on rocks or walking on top of dry-stone walls and hedges, as these can be important living spaces for mammals, amphibians, birds and plants.
- Use the posted access points when entering the water, in order to avoid damaging delicate natural areas.
- Endeavour to consult individuals and agencies to ensure we take advice from people who know the area well and who support us to use appropriate access points and highlight the most sensitive areas.
- Pay special attention to not erode water margins when entering and exiting the water.
- Be aware of any protected areas we might be swimming in (sites of special scientific interest etc)

## PROTECTING BIRDS

When swimming in open water, we will be mindful of the presence of birds, especially during their breeding season.

### **For this reason, we are committed to:**

- Keep our distance from nesting sites, especially if swimming in lakes or rivers.
- Remain mindful that noise or movement near breeding grounds can have a negative impact and cause adults to abandon nests.

- Be aware that places such as riverbanks, trees, fallen wood, dunes and islands are common areas where birds build their nests to reproduce.

## VEGETATION

We are committed to being careful and respectful of vegetation found in lakes, rivers and natural reserve areas where swimming is permitted.

### **To protect this habitat we will:**

- Keep a safe distance from plants to avoid disturbing too much sediment which could impair their growth.
- Be aware that invertebrate species commonly live in areas with abundant vegetation and excessive movement could harm them.

## SEALS, DOLPHINS AND ANY CETACEANS

We are committed to protecting all whales, dolphins, porpoises and seals.

### **To support this we will:**

- Report any incidents and disturbances to the relevant authorities.
- Stay updated with relevant guidelines.
- Not approach any sea dwelling creatures.
- Monitor our interactions with marine life and report to the relevant authorities when needed.
- Actively educate others and remind others that many sea dwelling mammals are protected BY LAW and It is an OFFENCE to recklessly or deliberately cause disturbance.

We will always remember it is our privilege and not our right to see these amazing animals and we will behave in a way that promotes activities that protect them.

## PROTECT AND REPORT

Report marine strandings by contacting:

<https://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/our-conservation-work/at-sea/marine-strandings-network>)

It's an offence to disturb most marine mammals and other species to find out about this go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-marine-species>

The government marine and coastal wildlife code is also a good source of information go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-and-coastal-wildlife-code/marine-and-coastal-wildlife-code-advice-for-visitors>

Remember not to disturb wildlife on land or at sea by:

- approaching, moving or touching the animal
- crowding, circling, separating or chasing
- feeding them
- making noise
- damaging or changing habitats

## Breeding seasons

For different species include:

- June to January for seals
- February to September for birds
- March to September for seahorses
- summer months for dolphins, whales and porpoises
- all year round for sharks, rays and skates