



Basking Shark Code of Conduct

KAYAKERS

The following guidelines have been designed to help kayakers reduce the risk of injuring or harassing Basking Sharks, as well as for your own safety.

Do not approach within 100m of Basking Sharks – but if you do find yourself close to Basking Sharks:

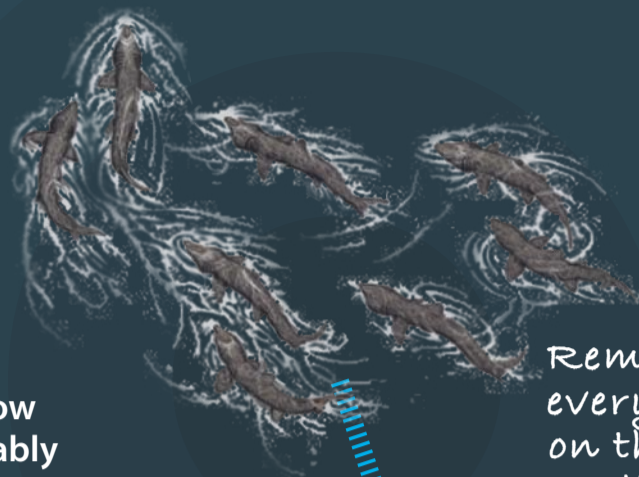
- Remain calm and quiet.
- Never paddle your kayak directly towards the sharks or allow several kayakers to surround them, as such actions will probably frighten them and make them dive or act unpredictably. Stay in a group, rather than stringing out around the sharks.
- Kayakers should not cross the path of the shark so the sharks can maintain their course without changing direction or speed.
- Avoid sudden movements which will disturb the sharks. Never use your paddle or kayak to touch a shark.
- Avoid pairs or large numbers of sharks following each other closely. This may be courting behaviour and they should not be disturbed.
- Although Basking Sharks are filter-feeders and mostly placid, they can startle if disturbed, often thrashing their tail with enormous power. Also be aware that Basking Sharks **do** breach.
- Sharks appear attracted to kayakers and often swim alongside and below, very close to the hulls. If you stay calm, still, and observe, there is a good chance they will come to you.

Tips

- Take time to observe the direction(s) of movement of the sharks and then quietly position your kayak alongside their anticipated course for a safe and enjoyable view.
Wait for them to come to you.
- Don't forget to take pictures of the fins for the photo-identification project.

As a kayaker, you should also be aware that Basking Sharks are legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Northern Ireland Wildlife Order 1985, making it illegal to kill, injure or recklessly disturb Basking Sharks in British waters. Further protection against disturbance and harassment is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Any person committing such an offence could face up to 6 months in prison and a large fine.

Internationally, Basking Sharks are listed under CITES Appendix II, CMS Appendix I and II and UNCLOS Annex I.



Remember that for every shark visible on the surface there are likely to be more hidden below



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