

The Severn Bore



Publicity from media organisations and the Environment Agency has seen a significant rise in the number of people drawn to the Severn when large Bores are predicted.

Many people line the banks at popular viewing spots to see the spectacle and large numbers of surfers and kayakers come to test their skill at riding the wave.

We want everybody, whether on shore, riding the wave or driving a power boat, to enjoy the experience safely and with consideration for others and have drawn up some guidelines on do's and don'ts. The full text is available below but these are important points to remember.

Power Boat Operators

We have been particularly concerned recently about the behaviour of a small number of power boat operators using their craft without consideration for others on the bank or in the water, disregarding basic safety rules. The Gloucester Harbour Trustees, as the navigation authority for this part of the Severn, has Byelaws which are designed to protect the safety and well-being of both river users and people on-shore. These impose a 12 knot speed limit and require vessels to be navigated with care and caution and not cause danger to other vessels and those in the water, nor give grounds for annoyance to spectators on the banks of the river.

When boats ride in or on, or in the immediate vicinity of the Bore other vulnerable users, such as a surfer who has fallen from a board, are put at risk. It is not always possible to see people in the water between or ahead of waves.

Power boats should stay at least 200m behind the Bore waves and not exceed the 12 knot speed limit. They should also ensure the safety of people in the water and not cause the break-up of waves near popular viewing spots.

Surfers

Surfers should make careful preparations before they attempt to ride the Bore and research the area and potential hazards before setting off. The Guidance Notes below give details of suitable access points, the best route to follow and the hazards, often unseen, which may be encountered in each stretch of the route. The experience of riding the Bore can be thrilling but it is not something to be undertaken lightly without thorough preparation and assessment of the risks.

Spectators

People on the bank should be wary of standing too close to the edge of the bank. The wave can cause water levels to rise sharply as it passes and give the unwary a soaking or even knock them off their feet in extreme cases. The river levels can remain high for some time after the wave passes. Spectators and their vehicles have occasionally been cut off by rising waters necessitating rescue by the police.

People should never be tempted to walk out on to exposed sandbanks as the surface is often soft and mud-like and they risk becoming stuck in quicksand as the wave approaches