Humboldt Bay Water Trails Map

Humboldt Bay offers paddling trails at both low and high tides. Whether out viewing wildlife, exercising, fishing or sharing family time, find the route that is best for you. (Please note that paddleboarding follows the same safety requirements as personal watercraft.)

Grab your life jacket, whistle, light and weather radio, and safely paddle the bay!

HAZARD AREAS – Use Caution!
The Federal Navigation channel is heavily used by commercial and industrial boats – always yield to larger vessels and stay at least 100 feet from boat traffic.

Exercise extreme caution in the marina area. Paddlers are not visible to exiting boats.

The Humboldt Bay harbor entrance can be treacherous – swift currents, gusty winds, breaking waves and large shipping vessels are common.

5 Siglal Blasts: Immediate Danger!
**Tips While Boating on the Bay**

**Don’t Get Stuck in the Muck!**

- Mudflats become exposed below a 4-foot tide and can leave boaters stranded from main water channels. Know the tides and deep channel locations.

**Forecast Your Trip**

- Avoid hypothermia & over-exposure. Get the latest on weather, wind, wave, and tide conditions for Humboldt Bay.

**Tides & Currents**

- There are two high and low tides daily. Near full and new moons tidal fluctuations can be extreme up to 10 feet over six-hours, which equals fast-moving currents. Currents can exceed 5 miles per hour faster than many people can swim and paddle. Plan your trip around the tides to make sure you don’t have to travel against a strong current. Negative tides can bring fast-moving currents. Always check the tide tables!

**Wildlife Viewing Etiquette**

- Pass far so you do not impact animals.
- Avoid paddling too close or directly in front of other boaters.
- Approach indirectly and avoid direct confrontation.
- Give nesting birds a wide berth at least 150 yards.
- Leave resting and feeding birds undisturbed.
- Take the time to angle around birds on the water.
- Never let dogs chase or harass wildlife.

**Observe the Pacific Flyway**

- The Pacific Flyway is a migratory path for many water bird species. Birds are most sensitive to disturbance during late fall, winter, and early spring months (Jan. - Oct., but especially Jan. and Feb.).
- Avoid paddling too close or directly in front of other boaters - including people fishing or waterfowl hunting.
- Pack it in, pack it out. Keep the bay clean and do not litter - this includes human waste!

**REQUIRED Gear for Paddlers and Paddleboarders**

- Coast Guard approved life jacket for every paddler
- Sound or signal making device (whistle or a horn)
- Bilge pump and float
- Tide tables and map
- Drinking water/food
- First aid kit and sunscreen
- Extra paddle
- Float Plan left with family or friends (route & duration)
- BE VISIBLE: Wear bright colors, carry a white light

**Recommended**

- Navigational guides such as tide charts
- Throw bag with 50 feet (15 meters) of floating line
- Weather radio, a compass and/or GPS (in ziplock bag)
- Waterproof flashlight and reflective gear or markings
- Pocket knife
- Paddle Float

**Know the Laws**

- All paddlers are subject to state and federal navigation laws:
  - Vessels less than 16 feet in length, including paddleboards, must carry a Coast Guard-approved life jacket for each person onboard.
  - Vessels 16 feet and over, except canoes and kayaks, must have one Coast Guard approved wearable device for each person aboard, plus at least one Type IV throwable device.
  - A vessel of less than 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) in length is not required to carry a whistle or bell, but must be able to make an efficient audible signal sound.
  - All vessels must display navigation lights between sunset and sunrise and during times of restricted visibility.

**Commercial Vessels**

- The federal navigation channel (see map) is used by large commercial ships that maintain the right of way - lumber barges, tug boats, Coast Guard, government vessels and commercial fishing trawlers and trollers.

**Humboldt Bay Harbor Entrance**

- The entrance to Humboldt Bay is treacherous! Rogue ocean waves, high winds, commercial boat traffic and extremely fast currents pose a constant threat to small boats. Whenever possible, STEER CLEAR OF THIS AREA!

**Bay Hazards**

- Maintain a constant lookout for floating debris, dock remnants and pilings, partially exposed islands, rocks, logs in addition to erratic waves, currents and wakes.

**Docks & Marinas**

- There are two public marinas on Humboldt Bay, both located along the Eureka waterfront. Paddlers must stay clear of boat slips.

**Fishing & Hunting**

- Fishing and hunting require licenses. Ask local resource agencies or outfitters for locations and open seasons.