



**Yorkshire**  
Wildlife Trust

# OIL & FUEL POLLUTION

## BEACH (Better Estuaries and Coastal Habitats) Esk Project

The BEACH project in Whitby is delivered by The Environment Agency, Groundwork NE & Cumbria and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and is supported by Scarborough Borough Council to find ways to reduce pollution and improve ecology in the Esk Estuary.

Whitby is a beautiful place with a range of important habitats and wildlife. The river Esk is home to freshwater pearl mussels (the only river in Yorkshire to have them) and migrating salmon and trout. The estuary however, which migratory animals must move through, is not currently meeting the required standards specified in the Water Framework Directive and we don't yet know why. More and more often we are seeing oil spills around Whitby harbour and the estuary, but simple preventative measures taken by boat owners and businesses can reduce this.



**1 litre of oil can pollute 1 million litres of water!**

Only 5% of oil and fuel pollution in the water is from large oil spills, the majority comes from everyday sources such as re-fuelling, engine emissions and oil leaks.

The most frequently reported type of water pollution incident involves fuels and oils. By following this guidance, you can minimise the risk of your boat or business being a cause of such pollution.

## Oil and fuel can:

- Smother birds' feathers, preventing them from flying.
- Cover fish gills, stopping them from breathing.
- Poison wildlife and humans if ingested.
- Cover plant life, restricting sunlight from reaching them.

## Boat owners:

- Place a drip tray under the engine (this is a requirement on many waterways).
- Ensure you use a large enough funnel if you must refuel on board.
- Maintain your boat's fuel lines, connections and seals.
- Transfer waste oil and fuel in containers designed for this purpose.
- Avoid over filling the fuel tank.
- On shore, try not to use oil and fuel within 10 metres of water in case of accidental spills.
- Check the engine bilge for oil before pumping and use an absorbent sock to remove oil and fuel in the bilge.
- Use a fuel collar to put over fuel nozzles to catch unwanted drips.
- Install an in-line bilge filter to remove oil automatically when pumping out.

## Businesses:

If you have a business on the harbour or seafront, any waste you produce may affect water quality. You have a duty of care to store your waste securely and dispose of it responsibly. Use waterproof containers that don't let in rain and check if you need a permit to dispose of your waste.

If a spill does occur, use booms and absorbent materials to contain it and contact the Environment Agency's number below. **DO NOT** attempt to clean it up with detergent or emulsifiers as these will increase the risk of harming the environment.

If you see an environmental incident, including oil spills, please contact the Environment Agency on **0800 80 70 60** to let them know. This service is available **24/7**.

We would like to hear your feedback regarding water quality in the Esk Estuary. To get in touch, please email [livingseas@ywt.org.uk](mailto:livingseas@ywt.org.uk).