



Introduction

The Royal Yachting Association (RYA) is the national body for all forms of recreational and competitive boating. This RYA position paper is intended to enable policy makers and their advisors to take account of recreational boating concerns when developing proposals for the regulation of end life of boats. This position refers to both inland and coastal boats that have reached the end of their life, rather than boats that have been abandoned. Boats at the end of their life means those which are unseaworthy and beyond economic repair.

Boats that have reached the end of their life may in due course be abandoned, but not all abandoned boats have reached the end of their life. There are mechanisms to enable occupiers of land, including clubs and marinas, to dispose of abandoned boats, however in practice this may be more difficult if the boat has reached the end of its life and has no economic value. As boats reach the end of their lives, consideration will need to be given as to how they will be disposed of. Currently, it is generally assumed that the responsibility for disposal of a boat at the end of its life falls to the final owner who, in most cases, may not be the wealthiest. This assumption does not recognise that the boatbuilding industry has its part to play. The final owner of the boat may not be the person who originally bought the boat, its value will have depreciated, and the cost of disposal may make owning even a second hand boat unaffordable.

The RYA Position

The RYA believes that there is a need for more objective evidence in order to establish whether boats that have reached the end of their life in the UK are a potential problem that requires a regulatory solution to be put in place.

Whether a regulatory solution is required or not, the RYA believes that disposal of boats that have reached the end of their life should not be seen purely as a user problem. The RYA believes that industry should now recognise that part of the solution is to develop more sustainable boat design, building techniques and materials.

Key Issues

The RYA considers that three key issues critical to recreational boating interests need to be addressed with regards to the end life of boats:

1. The need for sound risk and evidence analysis
2. The need for further research and development
3. Provision of information to boaters and the industry

1. The need for sound risk and evidence analysis

- There is little sound evidence regarding the size or shape of the problem. The RYA is not aware of any objective evidence to show that boats at the end of their life are causing a current or immediate nationwide problem in the UK.
- More work is required to determine whether there is a potential problem. Solutions that are proposed should be supported by a clear understanding of the scale of the problem.
- Sound risk and evidence analysis would be required to support a requirement for regulatory solutions.

- Any regulatory solution must be transparent, proportionate and consistent, and recognise that industry has a key part to play.

2. The need for further research and development

- Further research is needed to identify sustainable recycling solutions for boats that have reached the end of life.
- In the longer term, development of marine products that are more sustainable throughout their life cycle must be incentivised.

3. Provision of information to boaters and the industry

- In the absence of evidence that demonstrates the current scale of the problem, our preferred approach is the provision of information to boaters and the industry on the ways in which sustainable solutions can be sought.
- The Green Blue¹ has a key role to play in developing and promulgating advice on sustainable and practical options for boats reaching the end of their life as part of its ongoing work.

About the RYA

The RYA is the national body for all forms of recreational and competitive boating under sail or power. It represents dinghy and yacht racing, motor and sail cruising, RIBs and sportsboats, powerboat racing, windsurfing, inland cruising and personal watercraft. The RYA manages the British sailing team and Great Britain was the top sailing nation at each of the 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2016 Olympic Games and at the 2012 Paralympic Games.

The RYA is recognised by Government as being the primary consultative body for the activities it represents. The RYA currently has over 110,000 personal members, the majority of whom choose to go afloat for purely recreational non-competitive pleasure on coastal and inland waters. There are an estimated further 350,000 boat owners nationally who are members of over 1,400 RYA affiliated clubs and other organisations.

The RYA also sets and maintains an international standard for recreational boat training through a network of over 2,400 RYA Recognised Training Centres over 58 countries. On average, approximately 240,000 people per year complete RYA training courses. RYA training courses form the basis for the small craft training of lifeboat crews, police officers and the Royal Navy and are also adopted as a template for training in many other countries throughout the world.

Consultations

The RYA's Head Office in Hamble is the primary point of contact for matters concerning end life of boats and the recreational boating sector. To ensure a uniform approach across the UK, the RYA's Head Office works closely with RYA Scotland, RYA Cymru Wales and RYA Northern Ireland, who work directly with the relevant administrations.



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¹ [The Green Blue](#) is a joint initiative by the [RYA](#) and [British Marine](#). The project helps boat users, boating businesses, sailing clubs and training centres to reduce their environmental impact on coastal and inland waters.