





# Tidal Delaware River Water Trail

Philadelphia Section  
River Miles 113-90

## Map & Guide

[www.tidaltrail.org](http://www.tidaltrail.org)

Water trails are recreational waterways on a lake, river or ocean between specific points, containing access points and day-use and/or camping sites for the boating public. Water trails emphasize low-impact use and promote resources stewardship. Explore this unique Pennsylvania water trail. This three-map set focuses on the river from Trenton to Marcus Hook.



### For your safety and enjoyment:

- Always wear a life jacket.
- Obtain proper instruction in boating skills.
- Know fishing and boating regulations.
- Be prepared for river hazards.
- Carry proper equipment.



### THE TIDAL DELAWARE RIVER

The tidal Delaware River flows over the fall line between the Piedmont Plateau and the Coastal Plain as it passes between the cities of Trenton, New Jersey and Morrisville, Pennsylvania. Here the river meets a tidal surge that rises and falls over the next 130 or more miles before emptying into the Atlantic Ocean. The Delaware deepens and widens as it crosses the flat, sandy reaches of the Coastal Plain, allowing for the passage of larger ocean-going vessels.

Shipping and trade routes existing since the early days of American history support vibrant port and industrial centers. Colonial-era town centers such as Bordentown, Bristol and Philadelphia continue to thrive into the 21st century, and offer opportunities to experience history and culture. Revolutionary War battlefields including Fort Mifflin and Red Bank hug the river banks. Near the river's edge are the mansions and estates of famous Americans such as William Penn and Walt Whitman.

The industrial and residential water pollution that plagued the tidal Delaware in the past century has been steadily ameliorated by an engaged citizenry empowered by the Clean Water Act. This Act is allowing the river towns and boroughs to turn the river back into a "front yard" for public recreational uses such as boating, fishing, birding, walking trails and other eco-tourism and heritage activities. Waterfront stadiums, aquariums, entertainment amphitheatres, museums, restaurants and more can be found in the larger cities such as Trenton, Camden and Philadelphia.

Many ecological resources are found along the river. Wetlands and forested riparian edges offer important fish and wildlife habitat, including food and shelter for anadromous fish, waterfowl and wading birds. As fish return in greater numbers, there are opportunities to catch striped bass, smallmouth bass, American shad, catfish and white perch.

### FLOATING THE RIVER

The tidal Delaware is a working river, with a buoy-lined shipping lane and anchorages plied by muscular tugboats that tow container ships full of produce, raw materials and manufactured goods. But recreational powerboaters and sailboaters have a long-established presence on the river, including a well-developed network of boat clubs, marinas and boat access ramps. The Delaware River Yachtsmen's League includes 29 boat, yacht, sailing and canoe clubs as member organizations. Private marinas offer boating berths, fuel, pumpout facilities and other services.

The tidal Delaware River presents a host of safety challenges for motor, sail and paddling craft. Large commercial boats traverse the shipping lane that runs the length of the tidal river (lane marked by green and red buoys). These ships can be fast-moving and cannot stop or slow down easily. In addition to avoiding ships, recreational boaters need to be alert for the large wakes generated by ships. Kayakers can paddle the main-stem tidal Delaware, but a high level of expertise is required to negotiate wakes, including those churned by maneuvering tugboats. In addition to large ships and wakes, boaters must contend with river hazards such as tides and currents, boat traffic both large and small, floating debris, river walls, piers and bridge abutments.

The tidal surge up the Delaware River is so powerful that the river changes direction four times daily. Boaters, particularly those in human-powered craft, must consider the changing tides. Boaters should carefully review daily tide change forecasts for specific river sections they plan to traverse. Paddlers should plan their one-way or roundtrip excursions so they paddle with the tide the entire length of their trip. Paddlers need a high level of caution, planning and experience to be sure that the tidal current is traveling with them from start to finish. Before you get on the river, make sure you have clearly identified rest stops and emergency bailout locations along the way.

Boaters negotiating powerful tides and currents may also face stiff headwinds that can both tire and chill. Small boats and paddlers crossing the river should know where the shipping lanes are located. They should monitor ship traffic to be sure the lane is clear, and cross directly and expeditiously. Be sure to be visible. Boaters should stay out of the river during a big rain or thaw that raises water volumes and increases the amount of river debris such as logs and ice. Stormwater may also be poor or even hazardous near combined stormwater-sewer overflow discharge points (large sewer pipes) after rainstorms.

Additional Coast Guard regulations restrict boaters from operating within prescribed distances from certain vessels. Maintain at least 500 yards distance from larger vessels, and get permission to come within 100 yards of naval vessels and escorted ships. In addition, boating is restricted on certain river sections during events such as fireworks displays, regattas and specific work projects. Boaters are encouraged to carry marine radios and monitor VHF channel 16. Emergency telephone contact numbers are listed under the "In case of Emergency" section.

Do not anchor in the shipping lane, at designated large ship anchorages or under bridges. Other places to avoid include active port, industrial and pipeline facilities. It is recommended that you maintain a 25- to 50-foot distance from such areas, and do not tie on to private piers. The area between the Walt Whitman and Ben Franklin bridges has particularly heavy ship traffic, anchorages, terminals and piers, and along this stretch the shipping lane is not marked. Stay alert and aware and stay in the shallowest water

possible when moving through this area. Also, watch out for ferry and tour boat activity near Penn's Landing and Bristol. Steer clear of utilities and other structures such as pipelines.

### FISHING OPPORTUNITIES

Springtime fishing in the Delaware River around Philadelphia includes action for striped bass and channel catfish. The anadromous striped bass makes an appearance in the river based on water temperature and available prey. The striped bass usually show up in significant numbers in late March or early April to spawn. The type of water areas that the striped bass prefer for spawning include strong current, rocky shorelines or hard-packed gravel or sand. The best time to catch stripers is during an incoming or outgoing tide. Striped bass in the Delaware range from about 7 inches to about 42 inches.

Throughout the summer and into the fall, the fishing is good for channel catfish, white catfish and even some carp fishing. In late May through September there are opportunities to catch both yellow and white perch. The white perch are more plentiful than the yellow perch. Fishing for largemouth bass can be excellent in the shallow areas between the piers where the river meets the hustle and bustle of Center City. At the mouth of the Schuylkill River, you'll find anglers targeting smallmouth bass.

### BOATING AND PADDLING SAFETY TIPS

- Wear your life jacket. Some 80 percent of all recreational boating fatalities happen to people who are not wearing a life jacket.
- Expect to get wet. Even the best paddlers sometimes capsize or swamp their boats. Bring extra clothing in a waterproof bag.
- Be prepared to swim. If the water looks too hazardous to swim in, don't go boating.
- If you capsize, hold on to your boat, unless it presents a life-threatening situation. If floating in current, position yourself on the upstream side of the capsized boat.
- Scout ahead whenever possible. Know the river. Avoid surprises.
- Be prepared for the weather. Get a forecast before you go. Sudden winds and rain can turn a pleasant trip into a risky, unpleasant venture.
- Wear wading shoes or tennis shoes with wool, polypropylene, pile or neoprene socks.
- Never take your boat over a low-head dam.
- Portage (carry) your boat around any waterway section about which you feel uncertain.
- Never boat alone. Boating safety increases with numbers.
- Keep painter lines (ropes tied to the bow) and any other ropes coiled and secure.
- Never tie a rope to yourself or to another boater, especially a child.
- If you collide with an obstruction in a kayak, lean toward it. This will usually prevent capsizing or flooding the boat.
- File a float plan with a reliable person, indicating where you are going and when you will return. Remember to contact the person when you have returned safely.

### PENNSYLVANIA BOATING REGULATIONS

- One wearable, Coast Guard-approved life jacket (personal flotation device PFD) in serviceable condition and of the appropriate size is required for each person in your boat. If your boat is 16 feet or longer, one throwable device (seat cushion or ring buoy) is required. Canoes and kayaks, regardless of length, are not required to carry a throwable device.
- Life jackets must be worn by all children 12 years old and younger on all boats 20 feet or less in length while under way, and on all canoes and kayaks. Others are strongly encouraged to wear a life jacket at all times on the water.
- All boats must display an anchor light (a white light visible for 360°) when at anchor between sunset and sunrise. Boats can use a lantern or clip-on battery-powered unit to meet this requirement.
- All powered boats must show running lights between sunset and sunrise. Between sunset and sunrise, unpowered boats must carry a white light (visible for 360°), installed or portable, ready to be displayed in time to avoid a collision.
- All motorboats are required to carry a sound-producing mechanical device audible for a half-mile. Athletic whistles meet this requirement.
- All motorboats must be registered, regardless of where they launch.
- Unpowered boats using Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission access areas must either be registered OR display a valid launch permit. Launch permits can be purchased on the web at [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com) Click on "Permits & Forms" and then "Boat Registration."
- Operating watercraft, including kayaks, and rafts, under the influence of alcohol or drugs is illegal. The law is strongly enforced for user safety. For further information on boating regulations, contact the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission at [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com)



### STEWARDSHIP

Help care for the land, water and cultural resources along the Tidal Delaware River Water Trail by respecting wildlife, nature and other people. "Leave No Trace," a national outdoor ethics program, provides some guidelines to minimize your impact. For more information about "Leave No Trace" outdoor ethics, visit [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org).

#### Leave no trace for camping and day use:

1. Plan and prepare.
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
3. Dispose of waste properly.
4. Leave what you find.
5. Minimize campfires.
6. Respect wildlife.
7. Be considerate of other visitors.

### WILDLIFE ALONG THE RIVER

Aquatic, wetland and upland areas in and along the Delaware Estuary provide a rich variety of habitats for invertebrates, fish, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. Freshwater tidal marshes located in the water trail area provide important feeding areas for migratory birds, especially red-winged blackbirds; waterfowl such as pintails, black ducks, mallards and blue-winged teal; and wading birds. Freshwater wetlands also provide migration, spawning and nursery areas for anadromous fish such as shortnose sturgeon, American shad and American eel.

### PRIVATE LAND

Much of the shoreline along the tidal Delaware is urbanized and privately owned. Plan and make stops on shorelines open to the public. Respect the privacy and rights of landowners by obtaining permission before entering any privately owned land. Avoid loud behavior and making loud noises. Remember that sound carries across water much more clearly than on land. Share the same courtesy that you would want others to provide. A friendly wave or quiet greeting is always welcome.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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### ALONG THE WAY

Points of interest are listed on the map with this icon and their corresponding river mile.

**112.5 Andalusia mansion** features Greek Revival architecture and was home to the nation's most powerful early 19th-century banker, Nicholas Biddle. The house contains American and European furnishings once owned by Biddle, while the grounds include grapevines and a modern rose garden. Visit [www.andalusiahousemuseum.org](http://www.andalusiahousemuseum.org).

**111 Glen Foerd** is a turn-of-the-century Italianate house that served as a country home for wealthy Philadelphians. Buildings on the grounds include the mansion, rebuilt boathouse and 100-year-old carriage house. The lush grounds also feature a variety of flowers, shrubs and trees, including 300-year-old white oaks. Visit [www.glenfoerd.org](http://www.glenfoerd.org).

**108 Disston & Sons Complex** is a former saw factory. For more than 100 years, Henry Disston & Sons was America's leading saw maker. Visible on the shoreline at Unruh Street are old grindstones used in the manufacture of Disston saws.

**107 Palmyra Cove Nature Park** encompasses 250 acres of ecological treasures including woodlands, wetlands, a tidal cove and river shoreline. More than 250 bird species have been observed there. The Environmental Discovery Center includes interactive displays and educational workshops. Visit [www.palmyracove.org](http://www.palmyracove.org).

**105 Griffith Morgan House** is a Pennsauken museum dedicated to the local community's history including artifacts from the last 300 years, fossils and items from the Leni-Lenape culture. Visit <http://historiccamdencounty.com/gm3.shtml>.

**104 Richmond Power Station** was built by the Philadelphia Electric Power Company in the early 20th century. It once housed the world's largest Westinghouse turbo-generator. The plant is now closed.

**102 Ore Pier at Port Richmond Rail Yards** is a last vestige of the once-great Richmond Coal Wharves. Extending 875 feet into the river, Pier 18 carries two railroad tracks and was used for loading coal and ore. The now-defunct wharves encompass a mile of shoreline and 12 abandoned piers.

**101 Delaware Power Station** was built by the Philadelphia Electric Company in 1920 to avert a predicted power shortage. Its last turbine units were silenced in 2004.

**100.2 Flag Mural**, one of Philadelphia's famous murals, is the only one visible from the Delaware River. Painted after the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the flag is 2,881 square feet, about one square foot for each World Trade Center victim.

**100 Campbell's Field** houses the Camden Riversharks baseball team, with views of the Philadelphia skyline and Ben Franklin Bridge. Visit [www.riversharks.com](http://www.riversharks.com).

**99.8 Walt Whitman Cultural Arts Center and Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts** (separate buildings) feature performing and visual arts, and showcase a range of artists and performers of international prominence and local celebrity. Visit [www.waltwhitmancenter.org](http://www.waltwhitmancenter.org) and [www.rutgerscamdenarts.org](http://www.rutgerscamdenarts.org)

**99.6 Independence Mall** historical area houses the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Independence Visitors Center and the National Constitution Center, the only museum dedicated solely to our nation's guiding document. Visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

The Liberty Bell most famously chimed to announce the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. It was named the Liberty Bell by groups trying to abolish slavery.

Independence Hall is where the Declaration of Independence was adopted and U.S. Constitution was drafted. It features George Washington's original "rising sun" chair, used as he presided over the Constitutional Convention. Visit [www.nps.gov/inde/](http://www.nps.gov/inde/).

**99.5 Penn's Landing**, where William Penn first touched ground, quickly became a hub of maritime activity. Today the riverfront park features historic ships such as the Gazela, USS Becuna, and USS Olympia; The Great Plaza Amphitheater overlooking the river; Independence Seaport Museum; World Sculpture Garden; Veterans Memorial Park; Moshulu Ship Restaurant; Chart House Restaurant; and the Hyatt Regency Towers. Visit [www.pennslandingcorp.com](http://www.pennslandingcorp.com).

**99.4 Adventure Aquarium & Camden Children's Garden** are family attractions. Enter the realm of fish, birds and mammals from around the world at the aquarium. Visit [www.adventureaquarium.org](http://www.adventureaquarium.org). Then, explore the children's garden next door. Visit [www.camdenchildrensgarden.org](http://www.camdenchildrensgarden.org).

**99.3 Walt Whitman House**, once owned by the famed poet, is now a National Historic Landmark and a museum to Whitman's life, 856-964-5383.

**99.1 Susquehanna Bank Center & Wiggins Park** attract music lovers. Concert goers flock to the Center's outdoor amphitheater. Visit [www.livenation.com](http://www.livenation.com). A smaller venue, Wiggins Park offers free concerts and other activities along the waterfront promenade. Visit [www.ccparks.com](http://www.ccparks.com).

**99 USS New Jersey**, America's most decorated battleship, serves as a museum offering tours of the ship and overnight stays. Visit [www.battleshipnewjersey.org](http://www.battleshipnewjersey.org).

**98.8 Gloria Dei (Old Swedes Church)** is PA's oldest church, built by the Swedes. It was among the first to bring Christianity to Africans and Native Americans. Visit [www.nps.gov/gld/](http://www.nps.gov/gld/).

**97.7 SS United States** became the fastest passenger ship ever built and the largest built in the U.S., upon her maiden voyage in 1952. Boat tours are not available, but it is visible from the river. Visit [www.ss-united-states.com](http://www.ss-united-states.com).

**94 Sports Complex** features Citizens Bank Park (Phillies), Lincoln Financial Field (Eagles) and the Wachovia Complex (Flyers and Sixers, and other events). The sports complexes are visible from the river but not accessible by river.

**92 Red Bank Battlefield** is the site of a Revolutionary War battle won by American troops. Troops wounded during battle were brought to the Whittall House, a field hospital. Call ahead to inquire about access from the river. Visit [www.nj-searchroots.com/gloucesterco/redbank.html](http://www.nj-searchroots.com/gloucesterco/redbank.html).

**91.3 Fort Mifflin** is "the fort that saved America." Although the American Army was defeated here during the Revolutionary War, the battle gave Washington's troops time to make camp in Valley Forge. The fort contains 14 restored historic structures, barracks and officers' quarters. Call ahead 215-685-4167 to arrange access from the river. Visit [www.fortmifflin.us](http://www.fortmifflin.us).

See Philadelphia-to-Marcus Hook section for description of the Schuylkill River points of interest.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### Recreational Information

The **Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation** web site at [www.gophila.com](http://www.gophila.com) showcases things to see and do for boaters and others in the multi-county region.

Visit South Jersey web site at [www.visitsouthjersey.com/index.asp](http://www.visitsouthjersey.com/index.asp) to learn more about what to see along the tidal Delaware.

The **Outdoor Club of South Jersey** is the largest outdoor club in NJ and provides an active schedule of safe, organized paddling trips. See [www.ocsj.org](http://www.ocsj.org) for activity schedules.

Check **National Canoe Safety Patrol** for on-water safety training, and to learn safe, effective paddling techniques. The patrol also performs river rescues and assists. See [www.ncspdc.org](http://www.ncspdc.org).

The **Philadelphia Canoe Club** has been in existence since 1905, and is a dedicated group of canoeists and kayakers. See [www.philacanoec.org](http://www.philacanoec.org).

The **Delaware River Yachtsmen's League** works to promote true Yachtsmanship on the Delaware River, and surrounding territory. See <http://www.dryl.org>.

Schuylkill River Water Trail Map guides paddlers along the non-tidal portion of the Schuylkill River. Visit [www.schuylkillriver.org/Paddling.aspx](http://www.schuylkillriver.org/Paddling.aspx) for maps.

#### Kayak Rentals

**Schuylkill River Development Corporation** offers kayak tours by Hidden River Outfitters, [www.hiddenriveroutfitters.com](http://www.hiddenriveroutfitters.com) and Schuylkill Banks River Tours, [www.schuylkillbanks.org](http://www.schuylkillbanks.org), presented by SCA Americas, on the lower Schuylkill River in Center City. Tours run May-November. Advance reservations required. Call 1-888-Riv-Phil.

### IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

For distress calls, contact captain of the Port Delaware Bay, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay:

- Marine radios are recommended. Use VHF channel 16 for distress calls.
- If you need to use a cell phone, call 215-271-4940 for the search and rescue controller, 24 hours per day.

#### Other emergency contacts include Marine Police:

- NJ Marine Police, 609-387-1986.
- Philadelphia Marine Police, 215-685-1766.
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, 302-739-9913.

#### Calling 911 on the river

Calling 911 on the river works, but the use of a cell phone from a boat has many disadvantages including:

- Frequently misdirected to police or fire departments, which may delay any water rescue response.
- Area geography may limit or block a cell phone signal, making the cell phone unusable.
- Caller's location cannot be determined using radio direction finders.
- A cellular call cannot be monitored by other boaters.
- It may not be possible for the caller to be contacted by rescue boats or aircraft.

For these reasons, use of marine radio VHF channel 16 for distress calls is recommended.

#### Other important contacts:

- Coast Guard at [www.navcen.uscg.gov/lmn/d5/default.htm](http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/lmn/d5/default.htm) (for navigation notices).
- For boater safety classes, contact 1-800-336-2628 or [www.5nr.org](http://www.5nr.org) (click on boating safety courses).
- Burlington County Bridge Commission, 856-829-3002.

#### Camping on the river

**Fort Mifflin at river mile 91.3:** Camping and rustic lodging in old barracks, 215-685-4167.

