



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!

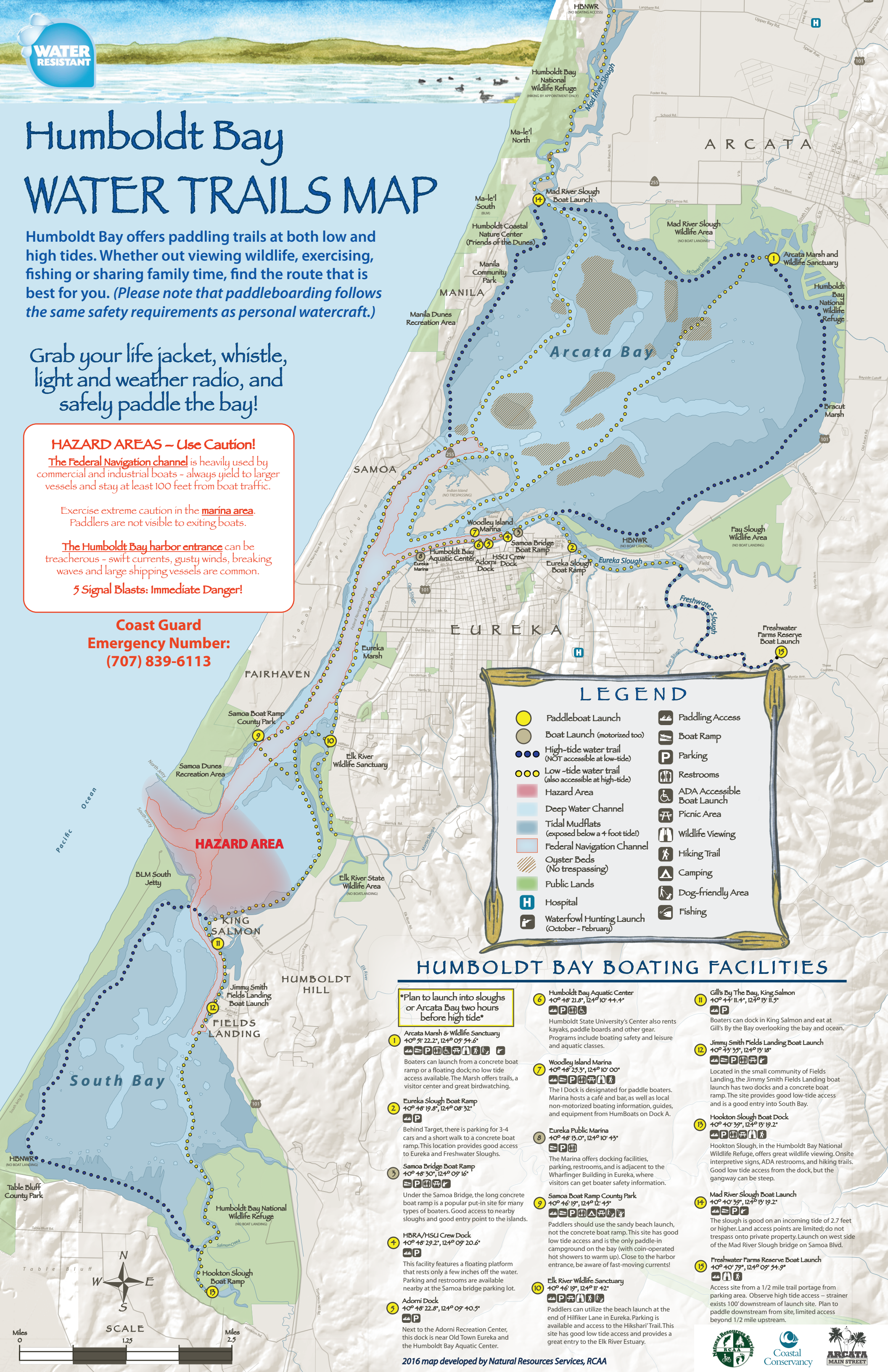
The **Federal Navigation channel** is heavily used by commercial and industrial boats – always yield to larger vessels and stay at least 100 feet from boat traffic.

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 Signal Blasts: Immediate Danger!

**Coast Guard
Emergency Number:
(707) 839-6113**



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| | Paddleboat Launch | | Paddling Access |
| | Boat Launch (motorized too) | | Boat Ramp |
| | High-tide water trail (NOT accessible at low-tide) | | Parking |
| | Low-tide water trail (also accessible at high-tide) | | Restrooms |
| | Hazard Area | | ADA Accessible Boat Launch |
| | Deep Water Channel | | Picnic Area |
| | Tidal Mudflats (exposed below a 4 foot tide!) | | Wildlife Viewing |
| | Federal Navigation Channel | | Hiking Trail |
| | Oyster Beds (No trespassing) | | Camping |
| | Public Lands | | Dog-friendly Area |
| | Hospital | | Fishing |
| | Waterfowl Hunting Launch (October – February) | | |

HUMBOLDT BAY BOATING FACILITIES

Plan to launch into sloughs or Arcata Bay two hours before high tide

1 Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary
40° 51' 22.2", 124° 09' 54.6"

Boaters can launch from a concrete boat ramp or a floating dock; no low tide access available. The Marsh offers trails, a visitor center and great birdwatching.

2 Eureka Slough Boat Ramp
40° 48' 19.8", 124° 08' 32"

Behind Target, there is parking for 3-4 cars and a short walk to a concrete boat ramp. This location provides good access to Eureka and Freshwater Sloughs.

3 Samoa Bridge Boat Ramp
40° 48' 30", 124° 09' 16"

Under the Samoa Bridge, the long concrete boat ramp is a popular put-in site for many types of boaters. Good access to nearby sloughs and good entry point to the islands.

4 HBRA/HSU Crew Dock
40° 48' 29.2", 124° 09' 20.6"

This facility features a floating platform that rests only a few inches off the water. Parking and restrooms are available nearby at the Samoa bridge parking lot.

5 Adomi Dock
40° 48' 22.8", 124° 09' 40.5"

Next to the Adomi Recreation Center, this dock is near Old Town Eureka and the Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center.

6 Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center
40° 48' 21.8", 124° 10' 44.4"

Humboldt State University's Center also rents kayaks, paddle boards and other gear. Programs include boating safety and leisure and aquatic classes.

7 Woodley Island Marina
40° 48' 25.3", 124° 10' 00"

The I Dock is designated for paddle boaters. Marina hosts a café and bar, as well as local non-motorized boating information, guides, and equipment from HumBoats on Dock A.

8 Eureka Public Marina
40° 48' 13.0", 124° 10' 43"

The Marina offers docking facilities, parking, restrooms, and is adjacent to the Wharfinger Building in Eureka, where visitors can get boater safety information.

9 Samoa Boat Ramp County Park
40° 46' 19", 124° 12' 45"

Paddlers should use the sandy beach launch, not the concrete boat ramp. This site has good low tide access and is the only paddle-in campground on the bay (with coin-operated hot showers to warm up). Close to the harbor entrance, be aware of fast-moving currents!

10 Elk River Wildlife Sanctuary
40° 46' 19", 124° 11' 42"

Paddlers can utilize the beach launch at the end of Hilfiker Lane in Eureka. Parking is available and access to the Hikshari Trail. This site has good low tide access and provides a great entry to the Elk River Estuary.

11 Gill's By The Bay, King Salmon
40° 44' 11.4", 124° 15' 11.5"

Boaters can dock in King Salmon and eat at Gill's By the Bay overlooking the bay and ocean.

12 Jimmy Smith Fields Landing Boat Launch
40° 43' 35", 124° 15' 18"

Located in the small community of Fields Landing, the Jimmy Smith Fields Landing boat launch has two docks and a concrete boat ramp. The site provides good low-tide access and is a good entry into South Bay.

13 Hookton Slough Boat Dock
40° 40' 39", 124° 15' 19.2"

Hookton Slough, in the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge, offers great wildlife viewing. Onsite interpretive signs, ADA restrooms, and hiking trails. Good low tide access from the dock, but the gangway can be steep.

14 Mad River Slough Boat Launch
40° 40' 39", 124° 15' 19.2"

The slough is good on an incoming tide of 2.7 feet or higher. Land access points are limited; do not trespass onto private property. Launch on west side of the Mad River Slough bridge on Samoa Blvd.

15 Freshwater Farms Reserve Boat Launch
40° 40' 79", 124° 09' 54.9"

Access site from a 1/2 mile trail portage from parking area. Observe high tide access – strainer exists 100' downstream from site, limited access beyond 1/2 mile upstream.



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.

Avoid Mudflats, Salt Marshes & Oyster Beds

Fragile mudflats are teeming with kelpcrabs, nudibranchs, isopods and pipefish, and provide rearing habitat for fish. The salt marshes ringing the bay are remnants of nearly 9,000 acres lost to diking in the early 1900s. Avoid underwater oyster beds, corners are marked with pvc or wood stakes. Stay in the main water channels.



Wildlife Viewing Etiquette

Pass far so you do not impact animals.
Approach indirectly and avoid direct confrontation.
Discreetly view from a distance.
Defer when you observe behavior changes.
Leave wildlife alone.
Explain that protecting wildlife protects paddling.

(PADDLE guidelines adapted from the Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association)

Respect Harbor Seals

The bay provides "haul-out" and pupping areas for harbor seals. Seals are most sensitive to disturbance during molting and breeding seasons. Use extra caution January-March.

- Stay at least 100 yards away from haul-outs.
- Make parallel (not head-on) approaches.
- Travel slowly, calmly and quietly.
- Use binoculars for close-up viewing.



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.).

- Give nesting birds a wide berth - at least 150 yds.
- Leave resting and feeding birds undisturbed.
- Take the time to angle around birds on the water.
- Never let dogs chase or harass wildlife.

Forecast Your Trip

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

National Weather Service Forecast
707-443-7062
www.wrh.noaa.gov/eka/

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!

Tips for Safe & Legal Boating

REQUIRED Gear for Paddlers and Paddleboarders

- Coast Guard approved life jacket for every paddler
- Sound or signal making device (whistle or a horn)

Strongly Recommended

- Bilge pump with 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



Boating Etiquette

- 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! Restroom facilities on the bay are limited.

Horn Blast? Paddlers, Act Fast!

- 1 short blast (1 second): Boat wants to pass on its port side (Hint: PORT/1 syllable /1 short blast)
- 2 short blasts: Boat wants to pass on its starboard side (Hint: STARBOARD/2 syllables/2 short blasts)
- 3 short blasts: Engine is in reverse
- 5 short blasts: DANGER, or boat does not understand your boat's intentions
- 1 long blast (4-6 seconds): Warning! (Entering/exiting a blind turn, nearing an obstructed area, leaving a dock)
- 1 long blast every 2 minutes: Power-driven vessel operating in low or restricted visibility

Know the Laws

All paddlers are subject to state and federal water navigation laws:

- Vessels less than 16 feet in length, including paddleboards, must carry a Coast Guard-approved lifejacket for each person on board.
- 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.

For more information and a complete set of guidelines and regulations, see the ABCs of CA Boating Law, available from the CA Department of Boating and Waterways (1-888-326-2822).

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. Be aware of wakes and small waves created by larger vessels. Stay at least 100 yards from vessels.

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.

Artwork by
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