

The Dreaded Wake

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The dreaded Wake and the No Wake Zone. A wake is defined as the wave pattern on the water surface downstream of an object in flow or produced by a moving object.

In our last trip on the boat our flotilla had the opportunity to really experience wakes and their effects on our boats. We were out during memorial weekend when there were many more boats on the water than we had ever seen. Many recreational boats were darting across, up and down with seemingly no awareness of what their wakes were causing to other boaters near them. I was very surprised by this as I believed they were trained and knew what their boat wakes can do. I was very wrong.

You must know that you are responsible for your boat wake and any damage it can cause. As an example, there was a man in a john boat (very small flat-bottomed boat) that had a large wake thrown at him by a passing boat and I was worried he was going to capsize. That was very scary. In our case, another boat's wake tossed us around and items have the potential to fly around if we have not secured them. The weather was beautiful the wind was low and current was low so we believed it was going to go great for us. Surprise!

We had boats pass us on both port and starboard at the same time very closely which offered us very little recourse but to take the brunt of the wakes and get tossed around. There were boats in the channel and not moving causing us to have to move about within the channel. I was very surprised by all this and wanted to share with you to be very cautious about your wake and the effects on other boaters.

You must know how much of a wake your boat produces at various speeds. Sometimes with some boats, going slower will cause a wake to increase. You also need to know that a "no wake" zone means you must reduce to idle speed or to the slowest speed you can travel while still maintaining the ability to steer so as to not throw a wake as you enter a no wake zone.

Another point, when I approach our marina for docking, I keep slowing in advance, so that by the time I arrive at the marina my wake is completely gone. Because when I am docking a wake is not something I need to add to the things to focus on.

So please take the time to learn your boat wake properties and become a safe boater and help others on the water by understanding your boat. And then practice consideration of other boaters.

This article is given courtesy of your local America's Boating Club of the Pamlico a great resource to help you increase your knowledge, navigation skill building and safety. We have short seminars and courses conducted throughout the year. We invite you to visit our website, <https://www.pamlicosailandpowersquadron.org>, or contact Kelly at pspsed@gmail.com to learn what opportunity is coming up this summer.