

HOW TO NAVIGATE IN BARK LAKE FOG

The safest way to travel in Bark Lake fog is, DON'T.

When the air temperature drops over the warmer lake, condensation forms making visibility almost impossible. This generally happens in the spring and fall in the mornings and at night. The thing is, fog never forms uniformly on Bark Lake and it is a Fool's Game to try and outsmart it.

Bark Lake fog is a tricky customer. It will look like it has started to leave and then it comes right back, sometimes even thicker. You might see a clearing and think it is safe to travel and you turn, say into the Narrows and there it is again. The many bays give the fog lots of places to hide and then it sneaks out and surrounds you.

So what should you do if the Bark Lake fog traps you in mid-trip? Slow your motor down and creep towards the nearest shore. Drop your anchor or get to the closest wharf and tie up and wait until the fog is well lifted before continuing.

When thinking about writing this article I remember speaking to a couple of cottagers who had fog experiences to tell. One life-long cottager left a party near the end of the lake and was sure he knew how to get back through the Narrows. When he ended up in the inlet, he realized he was completely turned around. Another boater, trying to get to the Landing for a meeting, crept along the shore of the Big Bay. He told me he ended up in a shallow, weedy spot that he didn't even know existed on Bark Lake. One fall when I was closing up for the season I was impatient to get on my way for my 8 hour drive. I packed my belongings and 4 cats in the boat and headed out when the fog had lifted from Patrie's Bay. By the time I got to Priest Point all I could see was the wharf. I tied up for a good half hour and watched the fog play games, totally blocking out sight of the safety lights and obliterating any view of the island. The route I had just taken was no longer visible and I was trapped. Luckily I was safely trapped.

Trying to travel in Bark Lake fog is dangerous. The best way to deal with it is to leave it alone until it has finished its games. Have another coffee or go back for a wee snooze. If out in the evening to friends', pack a toothbrush and sleeping bag, just in case. Give Bark Lake fog the respect it deserves.

Here's wishing all my fellow boating cottagers safe travels on our beloved Bark Lake.

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