

# ATLANTIC COASTAL KAYAKER

May 2020 Volume 29, Number 2



*On a multi-day "ramble" at the Arctic Sea Kayaking Race festival in northern Norway. Courtesy David Bain.*

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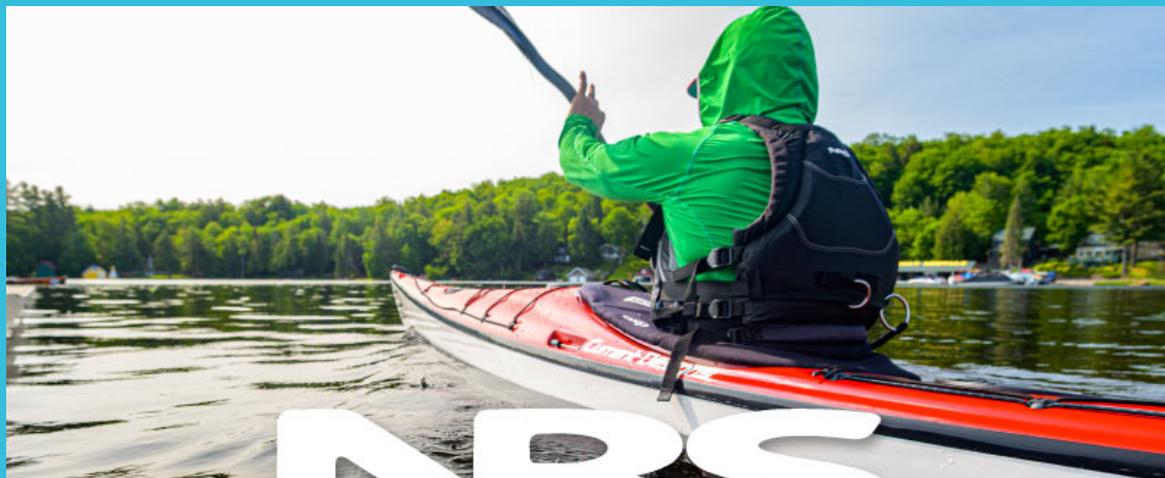
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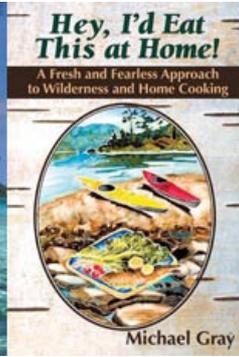
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“This trip was the most extraordinary trip of my life!”

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## News & Notes



### Kayaking During Harbor Seal Pupping Season

Every year from late April through June, New England beaches become a nursery to one of nature's most adorable animals - harbor seal pups. As a kayaker, you can help protect these cute animals by calling your local rescue agency and by acting as their eyes on the water.

And More!

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## Coast Guard News



### Coast Guard to Boating Public: It is Best to Wear Your Vest

Spring brings the beginning of the boating season and a reminder from the Coast Guard that boaters are significantly safer in and around the water while wearing lifejackets.

And More!

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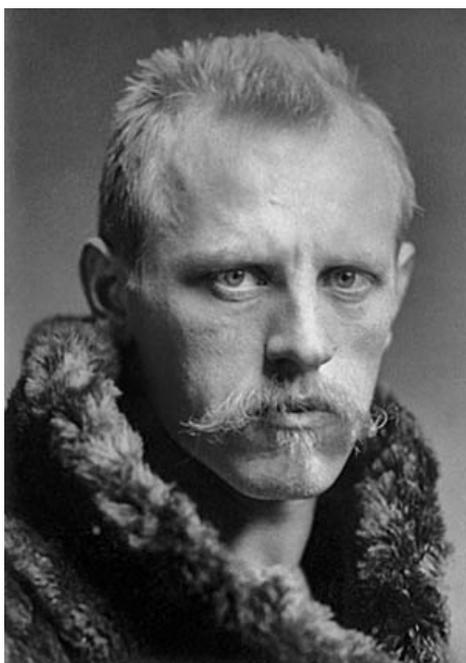
## Features

### The World's Most Beautiful Kayak Festival By David Bain

I have to admit, when I first read the self-proclaiming statement describing the Arctic Sea Kayaking Race (ASKR) as "one of the world's most beautiful and fun kayak

festivals," we started thinking of all the other kayaking festivals around the globe that we had attended over the years. The most beautiful in the world? That's a big claim.

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### **Farthest North: The Sledge and Kayak Journey South**

*By Fridtjof Nansen.*

*Introductory notes by David Eden*

One of the greatest dreams of European explorers over many centuries is to extend our knowledge of geography ever farther north. From the Greek explorer Pytheas of Massalia (modern Marseilles) through Christopher Columbus and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century C.E., intrepid sailors and adventurers have faced extreme cold, ice, and the unknown in their attempts to push the boundaries.

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### **Salt Ponds to Ocean Swells: Paddling the Sakonnet River in Rhode Island**

*By Tamsin Venn*

Rhode Island's 400 miles of coastline has a wide variety of paddling environments ranging from high sea cliffs and large swells to sheltered salt ponds, coves, and marshes to long miles of beautiful barrier beach. The state has particularly dramatic paddling at the south end of Narragansett Bay where the bay meets open ocean head on, and huge waves break against cliffs below Newport's mansions.

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## Safety



**Voices of Experience:  
Kayaker Stuck in Queens Saved by Cops**



**By David Eden**

The NYPD Special Operations division rescued a man stranded for 12 hours on remote Ruffle Bar Island in Jamaica Bay, N.Y.

36-year-old Mikhail Leybovich had paddled out to Ruffle Bar on the morning of Thursday, April 16. The island is two miles across the Bay from his launch point of Floyd Bennett Field. Leybovich had made the crossing at least four times and had paddled on the Bay more than 20 times.

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## Environment



### Maine Lobstermen Under Pressure to Protect Right Whale

*By Tamsin Venn*

The North Atlantic right whales are now swimming north on their annual migration from calving grounds off Florida and Georgia to summer waters as far north as Newfoundland. The mothers and calves at times may stay in an area for seven hours or more to rest, nurse, and play. But otherwise, it's 1.3 km an hour average steady progress.

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## KAYAK KOOKERY



### Kayak Kookery: A New Department

You've been paddling all day into a headwind with spitting rain. You pull into your destination, set up camp. and start the stove roaring. Soon the water boils, the cooking is done and you gratefully dip your spoon into a steaming hot mess of... over-salted, over-processed, freeze-dried glop.

Even though the quality of the available meals has improved greatly since I first wrote those words nine years ago, the results still rather disappoint. The freeze-drying of food certainly made a lot of options available to the camper. Packages of Sweet and Sour Pork, Beef Bourginon, and Chicken Marsala certainly sound tempting. But they just don't match fresh foods.

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## Creatures of the Ocean



*Dusky dolphins (Lagenorhynchus obscurus) at play. Photo attributions, clockwise from top left: Kaikoura Kayaks, N.Z.*

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*AllenMcC. - Own work, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3952055>*

The **dusky dolphin** (*Lagenorhynchus obscurus*) is a dolphin found in coastal waters in the Southern Hemisphere. Its specific epithet is Latin for "dark" or "dim". It is very closely genetically related to the Pacific white-sided dolphin, but current scientific consensus holds they are distinct species. The dolphin's range is patchy, with major populations around South America, southwestern Africa, New Zealand, and various oceanic islands, with some sightings around southern Australia and Tasmania. The dusky dolphin prefers cool currents and inshore waters, but can also be found offshore. It feeds on a variety of fish and squid species and has flexible hunting tactics. The dusky dolphin is known for its remarkable acrobatics, having a number of aerial behaviours.

The dolphins normally live in large groups that split into smaller subgroups. These subgroups are composed of mating adults (mating groups), mothers with calves (nursery groups) and nonbreeding adults. Dusky dolphins have a promiscuous mating system in which both males and females mate with multiple partners. Mating groups are generally made of around ten males and a single female.

In the mating groups, the males pursue a female in high-speed chases. Females seem to prefer males with great speed and agility rather than size, strength, or aggression. Females may extend the chase as long as possible so only the best male remains.

During copulation, females tend to be on the top. Dusky dolphins sometimes engage in sexual behaviour for reasons other than reproduction, perhaps for greeting, communication, or strengthening social bonds. Homosexual behaviour between males has been observed. Dolphins having sex for social reasons tend to be more relaxed.

Dusky dolphins perform a number of aerial displays, including leaps, backslaps, headslaps, tailslaps, spins, and noseouts. They also perform head-over-tail leaps which have been called the most "acrobatic" of the displays. A headfirst re-entry is performed when a dolphin leaps entirely out of the water and positions its back in a curve while it flips the tail to land back in the water head-first. "Humping" is similar, except the snout and tail remain in the water when the dolphin is the arch. Leaps, head-over-tail leaps, backslaps, headslaps, tailslaps, and spins are often done over and over again. Young dusky dolphins apparently are not born with the ability to perform the leaps and must learn to master each one. Calves appear to learn the leaps in this order: noisy leaps, head first re-entries, coordinated leaps, and acrobatic leaps. Adults may perform different leaps in different contexts, and calves may independently learn how to perform leaps, as well as learn when to perform these when interacting others.



*Dusky dolphins (Lagenorhynchus obscurus) at play. Photo attributions, top to bottom:  
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## News & Notes



*Harbor seal pup on shore. This is a premature pup, evident by the white lanugo fur, generally mostly shed in utero.*

*Credit Marine Mammal Rescue, Seacoast Science Center, Rye, N.H.*

### **Kayaking During Harbor Seal Pupping Season**

**By Brian Yurasits**

**Marine Mammal Rescue | Community Outreach Manager**

Every year from late April through June, New England beaches become a nursery to one of nature's most adorable animals - harbor seal pups. As a kayaker, you can help protect these cute animals by calling your local rescue agency and by acting as their eyes on the water. If you see a seal (or any other marine mammal) on the beach, live or dead, it's a federal regulation to keep 150 feet back and call your center's hotline. The [Seacoast Science Center's Marine Mammal Rescue's](#) area of coverage is Cape Ann, Massachusetts north to the Maine border. Its hotline number is 603-997-9448. "It is vital that we do not interrupt the important bond being formed between a mother seal and her pup during this time," says MMR Manager Ashley Stokes. "The mother seal may leave her pup on the beach while she is off feeding and it is critical that we give the pup space so the mother will return to it." Pups are completely dependent on their mothers for three to four weeks, making them especially vulnerable to human disturbance during these spring and summer months.

Wildlife encounters are part of what makes kayaking such a special experience, but it's crucial to respect the space of all wild animals. According to the Marine Mammal Protection Act, it's illegal to harass or feed any marine mammal in U.S. waters. So the next time you come across a seal on a kayaking expedition, please refrain from moving closer for a photo, and instead aid the experts in studying these animals. You can help

report the exact location of the animal, whether it's alive or dead, and details about its size, coloring, and behavior, so that the Center can dispatch a trained team member. All of this information contributes to the conservation of this iconic New England species

Important note: Only animals on the beach should be reported. Animals that are free swimming do not need to be reported.

For more information on Seacoast Science Center's Marine Mammal Rescue program and to donate, [click here](#).

Keep up to date with the Team's work on [MMR's Facebook page](#).



### A Win for Right Whales

North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*) — so called because they were once thought the "right whales" to hunt (they floated when they were killed) — are the rarest whales in the world. Only about 400 North Atlantic right whales remain.

The Center for Biological Diversity and allies just won an important victory for this rapidly declining population. A court said the National Marine Fisheries Service acted illegally by not taking steps to protect the whales from entanglement in commercial lobster lines, which cause injuries and death.

"Right whales have been getting tangled up and killed in lobster gear for far too long," said Kristen Monsell, the Center's oceans legal director. "This decision sends a clear signal that federal officials must protect these desperately endangered animals."



### Find Out What's Going on During the COVID-19 Outbreak

[USHarbors.com](#), a popular online tool for tides, weather, and local knowledge, is now posting a weekly news summary of announcements and stories received from its coastal community. It includes timely information on what people who boat and fish should/should not do during the COVID-19 outbreak as well as status and project updates from its coastal communities and businesses.

As part of this service, it has posted the [CDC's household safety checklist](#) for the outbreak.

US Harbors is a website created and run by Maine Boats, Homes & Harbors and provides accurate, highly-usable tide charts covering 1,200 US harbors. The site also supports local businesses and organizations by providing an affordable hyper-local marketing channel, to promote products and services to people interested in marine-related activities. US Harbors has been in operation since 2009, providing tides, weather and local information. The custom-made tide charts are particularly popular.



## Chesapeake Bay Access

Looking for a place to get out of the house and paddle in the Chesapeake Bay area? The Chesapeake Paddlers Assn. has posted a great resource which puts you in touch with ramp locations and water access throughout Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware. Don't forget to practice six-foot social distancing, and now more than ever it is important to stay safe (Listen to your weather radio!) and not to have to tap into emergency rescue resources that are deployed elsewhere. For information, [Click Here](#).



*Clockwise from top left: Jug Rock House. Floating Kayak Club. Kayak House. Kayak cabin on Sutton Island.*

## The Kayak House

While sheltering at home, this might be a good time to dream up your perfect kayak house. Here are a few sources of inspiration.

The Jug Rock Kayak House in Westport, Mass., was once a boat house before it was destroyed by a hurricane of 1932. The small building is lifted off the rock on a board foundation and stilts and strategically cantilevered out over the water, with a large glass window. The one room includes a wall of book shelves, storage, and bed elevated above the entry level. A board walk leads into the building. Hop in your kayak and go. You'll always know what the wind and tide is doing with the large picture window looking out over the harbor.

The Floating Kayak Club is not exactly a house, but if I were designing a kayak house, I would use some of these elements. It is located in Vejle, a town in Demark in the southeast of the Jutland Peninsula at the head of the of Vejle Fjord, where the Vejle River and Grejs River and their valleys converge. It is about 237 km from Copenhagen, a three-hour drive.

A graduate of MIT in architecture, Maria Ogrydziak, designed Kayak House for a doctor and his family who love kayaking on the American River in California. The house overlooks one of the best kayak runs in Northern California. It is practically possible to kayak out the front door with enormous picture windows looking out on the water and kayaks hanging in the entry hall.

For those who prefer the traditional and funky, we discovered this perfect kayak house on Sutton Island when

paddling out of Seal Harbor in Maine. It's easy to maintain and just a short walk to the water. Though it seems Spartan, the chimney indicates the presence of a wood stove and promises a cozy shelter from chilly Maine nights.

Have you seen or designed the perfect kayak house? Or are you lucky enough to live in one? Send us your plans or a photo.

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## New Zealand Kayaking

We won't be getting there any time soon, but off the coast of New Zealand's South Island, paddlers can enjoy face time with fur seals, blue penguins, dusky dolphins, and possibly whales. Kaikoura Kayaks ([kaikourakayaks.nz](http://kaikourakayaks.nz)) offers a three hour tour several times daily throughout the year, in single and double kayaks. Kaikoura Kayaks is the world's only kayak-touring company certified as sustainable by the conservation group Friend of the Sea. The outfitter is currently closed due to the pandemic but we can dream on.



*Dusky dolphins cavorting on a Kaikoura trip.*



*This is what it will be like from now on.*

## BOC Sets Summer Paddling Schedule and Guidelines for Healthy and Safe Pandemic Paddling.

*By Larry McIntosh*

The [Brattleboro Outing Club](#) had planned to host 13 paddle trips, from April to October. Since the pandemic interfered with the first two trips, the remaining 11 are included here, and posted under the Summer Paddling menu header.

Paddling is good for both body and soul. It allows us to exercise, as well as getting into nature, away from the four walls, into a clean, safe and open environment.

During this time of COVID-19, it is especially important to protect ourselves, as well as those around us. Pandemic Paddling requires us to be more conscious of our surroundings and actions. The following guidelines are offered to help make us all more responsible paddlers:

- Follow all CDC guidelines, as well as state and local requirements regarding masks, physical distancing and group sizes.
- No car-pooling, unless it's with someone you live with.
- Avoid congested parking areas.
- Do not congregate around launch and landing sites, or rest stops. Spread out.
- Be totally self-sufficient, able to load, unload, and move your own vessel. In the event you have to ask for help, or offer help, be conscious of distancing. If you help carry a long or heavy boat, remember to use the same handle, or carry strap, each time you move that boat. Use hand sanitizer often, or gloves, if you have them.
- Always wear your life jacket (PFD).
- When paddling, remember to keep apart, and no rafting. A good rule on the water is to stay at least two boat lengths from each other. Since most kayaks, canoes, and paddle boards are more than six feet long, it shouldn't be difficult to determine distance. Also try not to follow closely behind another boat, since the virus may be shedding, or particles from the boater ahead may drift back on you. If you have to follow, try to keep at least boat lengths apart. It's best to paddle in a line abreast, rather in a file, one behind the other. Be conscious of the wind direction, and use it to stay healthy.
- If you are not able (or don't know how) to rescue yourself, in the event of a tip-over, and the water is deeper than your waist, paddle to the near shore, where you can swim or walk your boat to safety. Requiring rescue endangers both you, and the person coming to your aid, since physical distancing parameters will be compromised.
- No sharing of gear, food, water bottles, sun screen, bug repellent, cameras, cell phones, binoculars, etc. Be self-sufficient and responsible. Keep track of your own trash and recycle.

BOC hosted paddle trips are free, and open to the public. Just show up with your own boat/board, and required safety gear. No reservations are required, except for the overnight camping in September. Trips are as follows:

- Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>: Spoonwood Pond, Hancock and Nelson, N.H.
- Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup>: Somerset Reservoir, Somerset, Vt.
- Wednesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>: Hubbard Pond, Rindge, N.H.
- Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup>: Grafton Pond, Grafton, N.H.
- Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>: Harriman Reservoir, Wilmington, Vt. (sunrise paddle & potluck island breakfast) — FIRST DAY OF SUMMER.
- Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>: Ct. River, Sumner Falls to Wilgus State Park, Ascutney, Vt. This is an overnight camping trip, if desired.
- Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>: North Hartland Lake, Hartland & Hartford, Vt. Second day of the two-day camping trip, if desired.
- Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup>: Conn. River, Brattleboro to Vernon, Vt. Part of the Conn. River Conservancy's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Source to Sea Clean-up.
- Wednesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>: Leader's Choice; wherever the colors are peak.
- Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>: Somerset Reservoir, Somerset, Vt.
- Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>: Leader's Choice; wherever the colors are peak.

Details about where and when to meet for each trip are posted on the BOC website. There's also a list of recommended items to bring along on every paddle trip. Everyone is welcome to join BOC Masked Paddlers or just go out on your own.

The Annual BOC Consignment Sale & Swap of people & wind powered watercraft has been moved to Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>; location TBA. More info on BOC website.

For more information, contact Larry at (802) 254-3666, or [Lmacyak@gmail.com](mailto:Lmacyak@gmail.com)



## California Beaches Experience Amazing Bioluminescence Display

According to an article by [Katherine J. Wu](#) in [Smithsonian Magazine](#) online, the southern California coast has been experiencing a spectacular display of bioluminescence this past month. The display is due to a bloom of light-producing dinoflagellates in the water. These displays, while unpredictable, can sometimes accompany red tides. The dinoflagellate *Lingulodinium polyedra* is responsible for both the red tide and the sparkling seas. The glow is thought to be a startle defense mechanism against predators, as it is occasioned when the organisms are disturbed, even by a crashing wave.

The recent period of heavy rains in the area were the cause of the red tide bloom and local photographers, aware of a series of red tides off Newport Beach, came out at night to record some of the beautiful phenomenon.



## Coast Guard News



### Coast Guard to Boating Public: It is Best to Wear Your Vest

Spring brings the beginning of the boating season and a reminder from the Coast Guard that boaters are significantly safer in and around the water while wearing lifejackets.

Federal Law dictates that all recreational vessels must carry one wearable lifejacket for each person aboard, and any boat 16 feet and longer, with the exception of canoes and kayaks, must also carry one throwable Type IV device.

The Coast Guard encourages boaters to go a step further and wear lifejackets at all times when a vessel is underway. Many boating accidents occur on relatively nice days with calm weather and often without enough time to don a lifejacket before entering the water. Imagine trying to put a seatbelt on when you realize you are going to be involved in a car accident. A lifejacket should be treated the same way; it can save your life, but only if you wear it.

Lifejackets are available in a wide variety of shapes, colors, sizes and comfort levels. Many are thin and flexible, while others are built into fishing and hunting vests. Some are inflatable and are as compact as scarfs or fanny packs. Once they hit water, they automatically fill with air. If boaters enter the water unexpectedly, they are much more likely to survive if they are wearing their life vests.

**Things to Know:**

- The best lifejacket is the one you will wear.
- Certain lifejackets are designed to keep your head above water and help you remain in a position that permits proper breathing.
- Some styles of lifejackets are not intended for weak or non-swimmers (read the label and be honest).
- To meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements, a recreational vessel must have a U.S. Coast Guard approved lifejacket for each person aboard.
- When worn correctly, a lifejacket will fit snugly and will not rise above the wearer's chin or ears while in the water.
- Most adults only need 7 to 12 pounds of buoyancy (31 to 53 Newton) to keep their heads above water.

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## Coast Guard Reminds Boaters of Cold Water Drowning Dangers

The Coast Guard reminds recreational boaters and paddlers to be aware of the risks involving cold water drownings.

Even as the U.S. heads into warmer weather, it can still take many months for the rivers, lakes, and waterways to catch up. The water may be significantly colder than the outside ambient temperature.

Always wear a life jacket while out on the water. There is no time to don a life jacket when an accident or emergency occurs. The best vest is the one you wear.

"While hypothermia is a real concern, the true cause of most drownings this time of year is the rapid loss of one's ability to swim or tread water due to cold water immersion," said Capt. Nathan Coulter, chief of incident management for the 13th Coast Guard District. "Water temperatures in lakes and rivers are still near 50 degrees. If you enter water at those temperatures without a wet-suit or personal flotation device you may have less than 10 minutes to survive. Stay safe by dressing for the water temperature, not the air temperature."

According to Frank Golden and Michael Tipton, internationally recognized experts in cold-water survival, water below 60-degrees Fahrenheit is immediately life-threatening, and many northeastern waterways stay below 60 degrees Fahrenheit year round.

Sudden cold-water immersion makes it difficult, if not impossible, for boaters to keep their heads above water and stay afloat. Boating fatality statistics have shown that wearing a life jacket gives boaters the best chance of survival in the event of an accident, especially in cold water.

Small vessels such as kayaks, canoes, rafts, row boats, paddle boards, sailing vessels, and open motorboats less than 21-feet long are the most vulnerable to capsizing.

Wear personal protective clothing, including dry or wet suits, clothing appropriate for a swim in the water temperature where you are venturing.

Boaters don't just need to wear the proper gear but also need to equip their boats with required and recommended safety gear, such as a hand-held VHF-FM marine-band radio, a personal locator beacon, and flares.

File a float plan. Take the time to write your contact information, with a waterproof permanent marker, on your kayak, paddle board or other personal water craft. A name, address, and phone number can assist first responders in locating you, should your vessel be found.

New and inexperienced boaters should seek education before heading out on the water. Safety courses are offered through the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and other state and local agencies, which are often offered at little or no cost.

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### Coast Guard Rescues Kayaker off the Coast of San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO — The Coast Guard rescued an overturned kayaker off the coast of Pacifica, Friday, April 17.

San Mateo County personnel contacted Coast Guard Sector San Francisco watchstanders at 3:50 p.m. reporting a person in the water in distress approximately 100 yards offshore.

Sector San Francisco watchstanders dispatched a Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew.

The helicopter crew arrived on scene at 4:25 p.m., lowered the rescue swimmer to the kayaker and hoisted him into the helicopter.

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### Coast Guard Searching for Person in the Water in Dickinson Bay, Texas

HOUSTON — The Coast Guard is searching for a person in the water after a kayak overturned in Dickinson Bay, Texas, early Wednesday morning, April 15.

At approximately 4:30 a.m., Sector Houston-Galveston watchstanders received a report of an overturned kayak resulting in two people in the water. One of the individuals was able to swim to an uninhabited land mass located in the marsh in the western corner of the bay and used his cellphone to contact 911.

Watchstanders launched an Air Station Houston MH-65 Dolphin helicopter air crew and a Station Galveston 29-foot Response Boat—Small boat crew.

The MH-65 aircrew located the individual who was able to swim to shore and transferred him to the University of Texas Medical Branch Galveston.

The individual who is still missing is reported to be a 30-year-old male wearing blue jeans and a brown-hooded sweatshirt.

Involved in the search are:

- An Air Station Houston MH-65 Dolphin helicopter.
- A Station Galveston 29-foot Response Boat—Small.
- Texas City Fire Department

### Coast Guard Ends Search for Person in the Water in Dickinson Bay, Texas

HOUSTON — The Coast Guard has ended the search for a 30-year-old man missing in Dickinson Bay, Texas, after he was located at home Wednesday evening.

At approximately 8:00 p.m., Vessel Traffic Service Houston-Galveston watchstanders received notification from a family friend that the missing individual had been located at home and was unaware of the ongoing search

efforts.

"We are incredibly grateful this young man was located safe, and I want to thank each and every crew that assisted in our search efforts," said Cmdr. Jarod Toczko, search and rescue mission coordinator at Sector Houston-Galveston. "I also want to stress the importance of ensuring that you are prepared before entering the water. Wearing a life-jacket, filing a float plan and checking the weather before departure are just a few simple steps that can truly make all the difference."

Coast Guard crews searched over 57 square miles for more than 12 hours.

The search began early Wednesday morning when Sector Houston-Galveston watchstanders received a report of an overturned kayak resulting in two people in the water. One of the individuals was able to swim to an uninhabited land mass located in the marsh of the western corner of the bay.

An Air Station Houston MH-65 Dolphin helicopter air crew located the individual who was able to swim to shore and transferred him to the University of Texas Medical Branch Galveston.

Involved in the search were:

- An Air Station Houston MH-65 Dolphin helicopter.
- A Station Galveston 29-foot Response Boat—Small.
- Sector Houston-Galveston Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) team.
- Texas City Fire Department.
- Texas City Police Department.
- Houston Police Department.
- Galveston Police Department.
- League City Police Department Dive Team.
- Webster Police Department Marine Unit.
- Texas EquuSearch.
- Good Samaritan vessels.

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## EVENTS



### The World's Most Beautiful Kayak Festival

By David Bain, [NRS](#) staff. Photos courtesy NRS.

I have to admit, when I first read the self-proclaiming statement describing the Arctic Sea Kayaking Race (ASKR) as "one of the world's most beautiful and fun kayak festivals," we started thinking of all the other kayaking festivals around the globe that we had attended over the years. The most beautiful in the world? That's a big claim.

After spending a significant amount of time paddling rivers in the Arctic, a sea kayaking festival seemed like the obvious progression in our quest to explore amazing places (and sea kayak more). Situated in Vesterålen, a region north of Lofoten in Northern Norway, the backdrop for the Arctic Sea Kayaking Race is pretty spectacular.



A tight-knit community of friends first started the festival in 1991 and for the last 29 years have gotten together during the summer to run a festival that welcomes ocean paddlers from all over Europe, and indeed the world, regardless of skill level. For one week, beginners who may be taking their first strokes can mingle with and learn from the top marathon racers and sea kayakers in Norway.

Based in Skipnes, a remote fishing village only accessible by boat, the festival week is split into three distinct parts: **The Rambles**, which are a series of longer paddles teaching multi-day and open-water skills; **Skills Day**, which offers technical development from experienced paddlers; and the **Half-Marathon-Race Day**, a social competition for everyone to get involved, at every level. In addition, kayak shops pop up tents on the pier giving participants a sneak peek into the latest kayak equipment, as well as an opportunity to ask questions and buy gear.



### **The Rambles**

One of the amazing things about this festival is that if you have not done much multi-day paddling before, you have a team of people eager to help you pack your boat and share their tips for prepping for overnight adventures. And the Rambles let you put those new skills to the test.

The Rambles are divided into two groups depending on skill level and each group sets off on their own overnight or multi-day paddles. The short ramble is suitable for anyone with some paddling experience and enjoys a slower pace. The long ramble is suitable for those with more paddling experience and are able to keep a faster pace over a longer distance.

We set off on the long ramble. Coaches and rescue professionals made up our crew. Each day, our team was briefed on the paddling plan. On our first night, we landed on a beach with a grassy plateau for camping. It would be safe to say that as campsites go, this one was perfect. Our guides, Lars Oven, Eirik Bentzen, and Marian Leonhardsen all grew up paddling these waters—they know them like the backs of their hands.



The Ramble continued past mountains towering out of the ocean and beaches stretching their white sands into its depths. At one point, we busted out the fishing equipment, securing it behind our kayaks in case the opportunity arose to throw a line. To my surprise, we managed to catch enough fish for all to have a little portion with dinner.

The most challenging trip of the festival involved a day of headwinds and swell on the outside of the islands of Vesterålen. Paddling south, the world-famous Lofoten Islands stayed in our horizon line, and despite the conditions, we would remember the picturesque white sandy beaches over the swell.



Meanwhile, the kayakers on the Short Ramble mirrored our route with the exception that they stuck to the sheltered side of the islands. Whilst the long ramble team worked on their technique in small swell and winds, the short ramble team developed their forward paddling and got used to the feel of loaded sea kayaks.

Waking up on the final morning of the ramble was not the morning we had planned. Strong onshore winds and sharp rain pierced through my base layers. I quickly donned some thicker outer layers to prepare for a splashier return trip to Skipnes.

Back at basecamp, we met with the short ramble team as well as the new paddler group being taught by Roger Tronstad. An evening of celebration ensued with paddlers from all over Europe enjoying time away from the hustle of daily life and sharing tales of paddling adventures.



### Skills Day

The ASKR has some of the most experienced paddlers and rescue personnel that Norway has to offer, so for me, the skills day was one of the highlights of the whole festival.

Eirik Bentzen, owner of Milslukern and a Norwegian Marathon Paddler, helped paddlers to perfect their forward stroke technique. Local coaches taught rolling and rescue clinics. One group paddled out to improve their rough water techniques in the small swells and test rock-hopping skills. But it was the off-water presentation that stuck with me most.

Lars, a rescue helicopter winchman, gave an in-depth talk about ocean safety and protecting yourself in case of cold-water immersion. He also discussed how to recover and increase your chances of rescue during an emergency. Paddlers packed in to hear Lars's insight. He answered questions and explained equipment. I'm confident this single lecture could make the difference in life or death to at least one paddler in that room. I exited the talk with a giddy feeling having been a part of an event that better the paddlesports community.



### Race Day

Like all good festivals, they save the best for the last. Race Day is dedicated to a long race around the islands. Traditionally, it's a marathon however; the 2019 route was only a half marathon. (Rumor has it, in celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, next year will be a full marathon.) The race was again split into several groups, from the ultra-competitive paddlers to those who just wanted to go for another incredible paddle in Northern Norway.

The festival wrapped up with a huge feast of fresh fish and an after-party on the deck of the Skipnes village. We drank beers late into the night and toasted to the most beautiful kayaking festival in the world.



Note: This event, like so many others, happens so seamlessly because of the dedicated local paddlers who tirelessly prepare a full schedule that inspires, educates and celebrates sea kayaking. Huge thanks need to go to Karl-Einar, Astrid Berthinussen and the rest of the ASKR crew who make this grassroots event happen. Learn more about [The Arctic Sea Kayak Race](#) and get involved.

*This story first appeared on NRS' blog, [Duct Tape Diaries](#). NRS (Northwest River Supply) is an employee-owned paddlesports supply company based in Moscow, Idaho.*

# ATLANTIC COASTAL KAYAKER

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## KAYAKING PEOPLE



### Farthest North — The Sledge and Kayak Journey South

*By Fridtjof Nansen. Illustrations from the books.*

*Introductory notes by David Eden*

One of the greatest dreams of European explorers over many centuries is to extend our knowledge of geography ever farther north. From the Greek explorer Pytheas of Massalia (modern Marseilles) through Christopher Columbus and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century C.E., intrepid sailors and adventurers have faced extreme cold, ice, and the unknown in their attempts to push the boundaries. Often these explorers were not inspired by the pursuit of scientific knowledge alone, but by commercial or nationalistic motives. The experiences of the former, the fishers after whales, walrus, and seals, formed the basis of the practical knowledge necessary to face the rigors of the arctic in wooden sailing ships.

Wooden sailing ships had two ways of dealing with the sea and pack ice that challenged them. They could either hope to avoid it completely or, accepting the inevitability of becoming frozen in, as with a whaler that had stayed too long on the fishing grounds, try to develop ways to survive the experience. That this was often a failure was shown by the fates of the Franklin expedition in 1847 in Victoria Strait, northern Canada; the U.S. western whale fleet off northern Alaska in late 1871; and the loss of the USS *Jeanette* off the northern coast of Siberia in 1881.

It was that last loss that is of significance to this tale. Wreckage from the *Jeanette* was discovered three years after the tragedy near the eastern coast of Greenland, hundreds of miles from where the ship was crushed in the ice. That discovery indicated an east to west current of the pack ice. And this is where Fridtjof Nansen comes in.

Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen was a scientist and explorer who was already lionized for his feat of accomplishing the first crossing of Greenland, an endeavor which had been scorned by many as sure suicide, especially since he had planned to do it on skis with a minimal crew, only six men. He came to believe that by taking advantage of the arctic drift, a properly-designed ship could cause itself to be frozen in the ice and possibly be carried across the Arctic Basin over the North Pole itself. While the desire to gain the farthest north record was part of the nationalistic "Race to the Pole" of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Nansen also planned a years-long program of oceanographic and meteorological studies as part of the expedition. Nansen's idea was met with derision and he had some trouble raising funds.



*The Fram departs, July, 1893.*

Nonetheless, Nansen had a vessel, the *Fram*, specially designed and built to withstand the pressures of the pack ice. The *Fram* left Christiania, Norway, on June 24, 1893, turning north and east to sail along the northern coast of Europe and Siberia. Just west of the New Siberian Islands archipelago, the *Fram* turned north again and wedged itself in to the drift pack in September, 1893.

For the next 18 months, the *Fram* drifted slowly and erratically westward. It became clear that she was not fated to drift over the Pole, so in March, 1895, Nansen put into practice a new plan: When the ship reached 83° N, Nansen and crewman Hjalmar Johansen would make a dash for the Pole using dog sledges and skis (or "snowshoes," as the crew referred to them), while the *Fram*, under the command of Otto Sverdrup, would continue its drift westward. (The ship finished the experimental drift and returned to Norway in August, 1896, just a few days after Nansen and Johansen made it back.)



*The Fram frozen in, summer, 1894. Note the "snowshoes" and the windmill for auxiliary power.*

Nansen was 410 miles from the Pole when he started out. Among the equipment he brought on the journey were two kayaks that he had made from bamboo and canvas that would be needed to ferry them across open leads in the pack ice as well as entirely open water on their return trip

While the pair made better time than they had calculated, they were moving against a southwards movement of the pack ice, so that it soon became clear that they would have to turn back before reaching the Pole or not have sufficient supplies to reach safety. Finally, they encountered a seemingly endless field of impassible, broken ice and were forced to turn south. They had set a new northerly record of 86° 13.6' N before they began their retreat.

I was lucky to find the original two-volume record of Nansen's popular telling of his adventures in our local library. (Unfortunately, the library shortly afterwards disposed of all its 19<sup>th</sup> volumes.) Still, I was able to find facsimiles of the books online. Over the next several issues, I will be presenting Nansen's incredible tale of his retreat southwards on skis and in kayaks, using the facsimile pages,

These are not the chronicles of an egotistical macho man bragging about his accomplishments. Nansen a strong streak of romanticism and uncertainty in his writing. Anyone who has read Thor Heyerdahl's popularizations of his adventures will recognize this tendency. Such delicacy of temperment may be unexpected in two such intrepid scientist/adventurers, but perhaps it is a prerequisite for the motivations of these two Norwegian adventurers, separated by 60 years.

*Nansen chooses his companion for the sledge and kayak trip and does some fretting.*

## FARTHEST NORTH

*Being the Record of a Voyage of Exploration  
of the Ship "Fram" 1893-96 and of a  
Fifteen Months' Sleigh Journey by  
Dr. Nansen and Lieut. Johansen*

BY  
DR. FRIDTJOF NANSEN

WITH AN APPENDIX  
BY OTTO SVERDRUP  
CAPTAIN OF THE FRAM

*About 120 Full-page and Numerous Text Illustrations  
16 Colored Plates in Facsimile from Dr. Nansen's Own  
Sketches, Etched Portrait, Photographs, and 4 Maps*

IN TWO VOLUMES  
VOL. II.



NEW YORK  
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS  
1897

## FARTHEST NORTH

### CHAPTER I

#### WE PREPARE FOR THE SLEDGE EXPEDITION

Who are to be the two members of the expedition? Sverdrup and I have tested each other before at this sort of work, and we could manage very well; but we cannot both leave the *Fram*: that is perfectly clear without further argument. One of us must remain behind to take on himself the responsibility of bringing the others home in safety; but it is equally clear that one of us two must conduct the sledge expedition, as it is we who have the necessary experience. Sverdrup has a great desire to go; but I cannot think otherwise than that there is more risk in leaving the *Fram* than in remaining on board her. Consequently if I were to let him go, I should be transferring to him the more dangerous task, while keeping the easier one to myself. If he perished, should I ever be able to forgive myself for letting him go, even if it was at his own desire? He is nine years older than I am; I should certainly feel it

II.—1

Digitized by

"Sunday, November 18th. It seems as if I could not properly realize the idea that I am really to set out, and that in three months' time. Sometimes I delude myself with charming dreams of my return home after toil and victory, and then all is clear and bright. Then these are succeeded by thoughts of the uncertainty and deceptiveness of the future and what may be lurking in it, and my dreams fade away like the northern lights, pale and colorless.

"Ihr naht euch wieder, schwankende Gestalten."

"Ugh! These everlasting cold fits of doubt! Before every decisive resolution the dice of death must be thrown. Is there too much to venture, and too little to gain? There is more to be gained, at all events, than there is here. Then is it not my duty? Besides, there is only one to whom I am responsible, and she . . . ? I shall come back, I know it. I have strength enough for the task. 'Be thou true unto death, and thou shalt inherit the crown of life.'

"We are oddly constructed machines. At one moment all resolution, at the next all doubt. . . . To-day our intellect, our science, all our 'Leben und Treiben,' seem but a pitiful Philistinism, not worth a pipe of tobacco; to-morrow we throw ourselves heart and soul into these very researches, consumed with a burning thirst, to absorb everything into ourselves, longing to spy out fresh paths, and fretting impatiently at our inability to solve

the problem fully and completely. Then down we sink again in disgust at the worthlessness of it all.

"As a grain of dust on the balance is the whole world; as a drop of morning dew that falls on the ground.' If man has two souls, which then is the right one?

"It is nothing new to suffer from the fact that our knowledge can be but fragmentary, that we can never fathom what lies behind. But suppose, now, that we could reckon it out, that the inmost secret of it all lay as clear and plain to us as a rule-of-three sum, should we be any the happier? Possibly just the reverse. Is it not in the struggle to attain knowledge that happiness consists? I am very ignorant, consequently the conditions of happiness are mine.

"Let me fill a soothing pipe and be happy.

"No, the pipe is not a success. Twist tobacco is not delicate enough for airy dreams. Let me get a cigar. Oh, if one had a real Havana!

"H'm! as if dissatisfaction, longing, suffering, were not the very basis of life. Without privation there would be no struggle, and without struggle no life, that is as certain as that two and two make four. And now the struggle is to begin; it is looming yonder in the north. Oh, to drink delight of battle in long, deep draughts! Battle means life, and behind it victory beckons us on.

### Nansen describes the kayaks and other aspects of the preparations.

too hard and brittle, and apt to have holes knocked in it during transport over the ice. Therefore I preferred to steep it in a mixture of paraffin and tallow, which added somewhat to the weight of the kayaks, so that altogether they came to weigh about 36 pounds apiece.

I had, moreover, some hand-sledges made especially for this expedition; they were supple and strong, designed to withstand the severe tests to which an expedition with dogs and heavy freights over the uneven drift-ice would necessarily expose them. Two of these sledges were about the same length as the kayaks—that is, 12 feet. I also made several experiments with respect to the clothes we should wear, and was especially anxious to ascertain whether it would do to go in our thick wolfskin garments, but always came to the conclusion that they were too warm. Thus, on November 29th I write: "Took another walk northward in my wolfskin dress; but it is still too mild (−37.6° C.). I sweated like a horse, though I went fasting and quite gently. It is rather heavy going now in the dark when one cannot use snowshoes. I wonder when it will be cold enough to use this dress."

On December 9th again we went out on snowshoes. "It was −41° C. (−41.8° Fahr.). Went in wolfskin dress, but the perspiration poured down our backs enough to turn a mill. Too warm yet; goodness knows if it ever will be cold enough."

Of course, we made some experiments with the tent

and with the cooking apparatus. On December 7th I write: "I pitched the silk tent we are going to take, and used our cooking apparatus in it. From repeated trials it appeared that from ice of −35° C. (−31° Fahr.), we boiled 3 litres of water (5½ pints), and at the same time melted 5 litres (8½ pints) in an hour and a half, with a consumption of about 120 grammes of snowflake petroleum. Next day we boiled 2½ litres of water (over 4 pints), and melted 2½ litres in one hour with 100 grammes of snowflake petroleum. Yesterday we made about two litres of excellent oatmeal porridge, and at the same time got some half-melted ice and a little water in little over half an hour, with 50 grammes of snowflake petroleum. Thus there will be no very great consumption of fuel in the day."

Then I made all kinds of calculations and computations in order to find out what would be the most advantageous kind of provisions for our expedition, where it was of the greatest moment that the food both for dogs and men should be nutritious, and yet should not weigh more than was absolutely necessary. Later on, in the list of our equipments, I shall give the final result of my deliberations on this matter. Besides all this, we had, of course, to consider and test the instruments to be taken with us, and to go into many other matters, which, though perhaps trifles in themselves, were yet absolutely necessary. It is on the felicitous combination of all these trifles that ultimate success depends.

Everybody is hard at work. Sverdrup is sewing bags or bolsters to put on the sledges as beds for the kayaks to rest on. To this end the bags are to be made up to fit the bottoms of the boats. Johansen with one or two other men are stuffing the bags with pemmican, which has to be warmed, beaten, and kneaded in order to give it the right form for making a good bed for our precious boats. When these square, flat bags are carried out into the cold they freeze as hard as stone, and keep their form well. Blessing is sitting up in the work-room, copying the photographs of which I have no prints. Hansen is working out a map of our route so far, and copying out his observations for us, etc., etc. In short, there is hardly a man on board who does not feel that the moment for departure approaches; perhaps the galley is the only place where everything goes on in the usual way under the management of Lars. Our position yesterday was  $83^{\circ} 32.1'$  north latitude and  $102^{\circ} 28'$  east longitude, so we are southward again; but never mind, what do a couple of miles more or less matter to us?

"Sunday, February 10th. To-day there was so much daylight that at 1 o'clock I could fairly well read the *Verdens Gang*, when I held the paper up towards the light; but when I held it towards the moon, which was low in the north, it was no go. Before dinner I went for a short drive with 'Gulen' and 'Susine' (two of the young dogs) and 'Kaifas.' 'Gulen' had never been in harness before, but yet she went quite well; she was

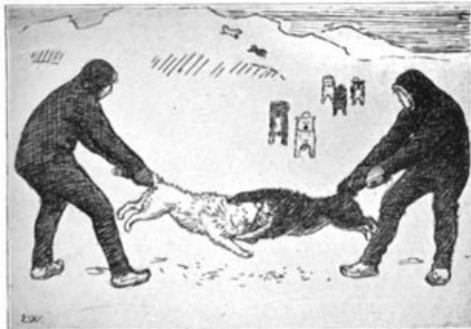


THE UPPER END OF THE SUPPER-TABLE. FEBRUARY 15, 1895. (See *Arctic Expeditions*, page 248.)



LOWER END OF SUPPER-TABLE

certainly a little awkward at first, but that soon disappeared, and I think she will make a good dog when she is well trained. 'Susine,' who was driven a little last autumn, conducted herself quite like an old sledge-



STOPPING A DOG-FIGHT

dog. The surface is hard, and easy for the dogs to haul on. They get a good foothold, and the snow is not particularly sharp for their feet; however, it is not over-smooth; this drift-snow makes heavy going. The ice is smooth, and easy to run on, and I trust we shall be able to make good day-journeys; after all, we shall reach our destination sooner than we had expected. I cannot deny that it is a long journey, and scarcely any one has ever more effectually burned his boats behind him. If we

wished to turn back we have absolutely nothing to return to, not even a bare coast. It will be impossible to find the ship, and before us lies the great unknown. But there is only one road, and that lies straight ahead, right through, be it land or sea, be it smooth or rough, be it mere ice or ice and water. And I cannot but believe that we *must* get through, even if we should meet with the worst—viz., land and pack-ice.

"Wednesday, February 13th. The pemmican bolsters and dried-liver pie are now ready; the kayaks will get an excellent bedding, and I venture to say that such meat-bolsters are an absolute novelty. Under each kayak there are three of them, they are made to fit the sledge, and, as already stated, are moulded to the shape of the kayak. They weigh 100 to 120 pounds each. The empty sacks weigh 2 or 3 pounds each, so that altogether the meat (pemmican and liver pie) in these three bags will weigh about 320 pounds. We each had our light sleeping-bags of reindeer-skin, and we tried to sleep out in them last night, but both Johansen and I found it rather cold, although it was only  $37^{\circ}$  Fahr. of frost. We were, perhaps, too lightly clad under the wolfskin clothing; we are making another experiment with a little more on to-night.

"Saturday, February 16th. The outfitting is still progressing; but there are various small things yet to do which take time, and I do not know whether we shall be ready to start on Wednesday, February 20th.

TO BE CONTINUED...



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## Places





## Salt Ponds to Ocean Swells: Paddling the Sakonnet River in Rhode Island

By Tamsin Venn.

Rhode Island's 400 miles of coastline has a wide variety of paddling environments ranging from high sea cliffs and large swells to sheltered salt ponds, coves, and marshes to long miles of beautiful barrier beach. The state has particularly dramatic paddling at the south end of Narragansett Bay where the bay meets open ocean head on, and huge waves break against cliffs below Newport's mansions.

Newport reigns as the sailing capital of the East and is the start or finish of the world's great sailing races, including the Newport-to-Bermuda Race every other year, the OSTAR singlehanded Round-the-World Race,

the TransAtlantic Race, and in the past the America's Cup trials. Between Newport and Mystic, Connecticut, you can probably see the best collection of handsome and historic boats anywhere.

While sea kayaking in Rhode Island can be dramatic, scenic, or feisty, the experience is influenced by several factors, a major one being the U.S. Navy, which has several installations in Newport. The Navy prohibits landing or launching on most of Newport-area shoreline and has ships that throw off huge, tricky wakes. In addition, Newport is a major shipping port, and barges and freighters the size of apartment buildings go in and out of the bay pulled by tugboats, in addition to ferries, large ocean crossing sailing craft, fishing trawlers, historic tall ships, lobster and quahog boats, ocean going fishing pleasure boats, and jet skis. The bay is a very busy place, and it is usually best to paddle in the off season or avoid major crossings in summer. All of Rhode Island's bridges are vertigo-inducing high to accommodate large ships.

Three passageways extend from Rhode Island Sound inland as far as Providence and Fall River. The far-east side is the wide and straight Sakonnet River from Sakonnet Point on the Atlantic to Mount Hope Bay. The west side's large islands of Prudence and Conanicut plus several smaller islands divide Narragansett Bay into a West and East Passage. The East Passage that goes by Newport is the busiest. The island of Aquidneck, with Newport at its tip, divides the East Passage and Sakonnet River.

It should be noted that waters around Newport and the Providence River can be polluted with sewage overflows, toxic wastes from industry, and toxic run-off from roads, a situation that an environmental organization called Save the Bay is doing much to correct. Shellfishing in the northern bay is often closed after rainstorms. In contrast, the mouth of Narragansett Bay is pristine because of lack of industry and daily flushing by the Atlantic.

To the southwest of Narragansett Bay lies the south shore, 20 miles of superb beaches protecting large saltwater ponds from Narragansett to Watch Hill. The Pawcatuck River, along the Connecticut border, empties into Little Narragansett Bay at Watch Hill.

A good source of public access points is Rhode Island Sea Grant's [Explore Rhode Island Shore](#). The site provides information on more than 340 public access points along the state's coast. The guide describes selected parks, wildlife refuges, beaches, fishing sites, boat ramps, pathways and views along the state's coast. Another useful book is *A Guide to Rhode Island's Natural Places*, also available from the [Sea Grant](#).

Still another source is the [ExploreRI mapper](#) posted by Rhode Island Blueways, with interactive water trail maps and a boat ramp list, both trailer and hand carried.

Great resources all in this Ocean State.



*The Sakonnet River offers some relatively rural coastal paddling. Fogland Preserve. Credit The Nature Conservancy.*

### **Sakonnet River: Sakonnet Point to Tiverton**

Charts and Maps: NOAA # 13221 at 1:47,000 and #13223 at 1:46,500 (if you want to paddle to Newport)

**Trip Mileage:** 15 miles (one way)

**Access and Directions:** Sakonnet Harbor: From I-195, take RI 24 south. At Tiverton before crossing the bridge, bear left on RI 77. Follow RI 77 through Four Corners all the way to the end at Little Compton. Bear right on Sakonnet Point Road to harbor. Parking is on the left. Launch is across the street. Directions to the take out at The Cove, north part of Portsmouth. From Bristol, take the Mt. Hope Bridge to RI 24 north to the unmarked dirt road on the right before reaching Hummock Ave. The road leads to a former concrete ramp and plenty of parking.

**Tidal Range:** 3.1 feet at Sakonnet

**Caution Areas:** At Almy Point, the channel narrows radically, with strong currents of 4—5 knots. A quiet eddy line on the east shore is complicated by the risk of entanglement in lines from those fishing from what remains of the Old Stone Bridge.

While much of Rhode Island's coastal zone is densely populated, the eastern shore by contrast has been left to the farmers, dairy cows, and vintners. The Sakonnet River is the most easterly of three passages leading through Narragansett Bay, so it is actually an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean. Many paddlers find it the most inviting because of the rural shoreline and quiet waters removed from the bay's prolific boat traffic of commerce, government, and pleasure.

A good way to enjoy the Sakonnet River's length without doubling back is to start at Sakonnet Point in Little Compton but spot a car in Tiverton. The view from the river is one of long fields with cows and silos, stone walls and shingled houses, rose bushes and windmills, looking probably much as it did several hundred years ago. The original settlers were a band of explorers from Plymouth Colony seeking to expand; they bought 20 square miles on the peninsula from the Sogkonnite tribe of Indians. Later settlers are famous for having developed the famous Rhode Island Red chicken breed (you can see a monument to the breed in nearby Adamsville). The coastline is broken by beaches and marshy inlets.



**The Sakonnet Point Light on Little Cormorant Rock. Credit Friends of Sakonnet Lighthouse.**

Sakonnet Harbor is small and snug, protected from northwest winds by a breakwater. Park in the lot next to the Haffenreffer Wildlife Preserve and carry your boat across the street to the paved launch ramp. The view to the west is to the Sakonnet Point Light on Little Cormorant Rock. Built in 1884, officials discontinued the light in 1955, then relit it in 1997 — it flashes white every six seconds with a red sector.

Carl Haffenreffer, president of Narragansett Brewing, bought the lighthouse for a little more than \$1,000 at auction in 1961, but donated it to the Friends of Sakonnet Point Lighthouse in 1985 so they could maintain it.

Beyond you can see the cliffs dropping into the sea at Newport. It is a tempting thought to paddle over to Newport (a round trip from Sakonnet Harbor of at least 20 n.m.), but conditions need to be fairly calm because of the long, exposed crossing.

Sakonnet Point is a dramatic spot but also very exposed when the wind is blowing 15 mph or more from the southwest. From Sakonnet Harbor, hug the shore past Church Cove, Church Point, around Fogland Point to Sapowet Point to Nannaquatek Neck. The shore has several beaches, a few interesting sailboats, and pretty tidal marsh estuaries to poke around in at high tide such as Nonquit Pond or Sapowet Creek. For a shorter trip, consider paddling as far as Fogland Point beach, about half way between Sakonnet and Tiverton.

At the south end of Nannaquatek Neck, turn right (east) into the gut to the quiet and rural Nannaquatek Pond, surrounded by private homes and carefully spotted picnic tables, with osprey diving overhead.

Back on the Sakonnet River, the view from Nannaquatek Neck is dominated by the large Mt. Hope Bridge, a 135-foot-high fixed bridge that spans Mt. Hope Bay from Bristol Neck to Aquidneck Island. Beyond is sprawling Fall River. At Almy Point, pass through the narrow passage, which connects the Sakonnet River to Mt. Hope Bay. The current rushes through at upwards of 5 knots and is one of the strongest in Narragansett Bay. Please check your tides. The jetty on the east side is the former Old Stone Bridge, which used to connect Almy Point to Rhode Island, and from which many fishermen cast their lines. Just to the north is the Tiverton Yacht Club.

Cross the river. Paddle under the bridge at Hummock Point into The Cove, then straight across (west) to the takeout.

On your drive back down Route 77 to Sakonnet Point to pick up your car, stop at one of the many farmstands, or famous Gray's homemade ice cream in Tiverton Four Corners (crossroads of Main road/RI 77 and East Road/RI 179). It is currently open for call-ahead orders including pints and quarts, which can be picked up from the general store entrance. You can also visit the renowned Carolyn's Sakonnet Vineyards in Little Compton. The tasting room is closed, but online orders are available for curbside pick-up. Salty sea breezes, occasional rains, and rolling fog all add striking flavors to the grapes at New England's oldest vineyard, the winery proclaims.



**Greg Lesher pushing hard during the Sakonnet River Race. Photo by Greg Lesher.**

**Other Options:** Should the water be too choppy at Sakonnet Point, head farther down the peninsula and put in at the Sapowet Point Ramp, which can be reached by turning west onto Neck Road in Tiverton Four Corners at the Provender food market, then north onto Sapowet Ave. From here you can explore the Sapowet (also spelled Seapowet) Marshes. You can also launch from Fogland Beach, which juts out into the river. From Main Rd./RI 77 turn west on Fogland Rd., and follow to end to launch ramp. Limited parking at the ramp, but ample parking (fee in season) is available at the town beach to the northwest (right). Fogland Marsh Preserve, drained by Almy Brook from Nonquit Pond, is managed by The Nature Conservancy and is one of the few unditched marshes in Rhode Island. Most are drained by ditches for mosquito control. The Preserve itself is currently closed due to Covid-19.

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## Safety



— NYPD Special Ops (@NYPDSpecialops) [April 17, 2020](#)

### Voices of Experience: Kayaker Stranded in Queens Rescued by Cops

*By David Eden.*

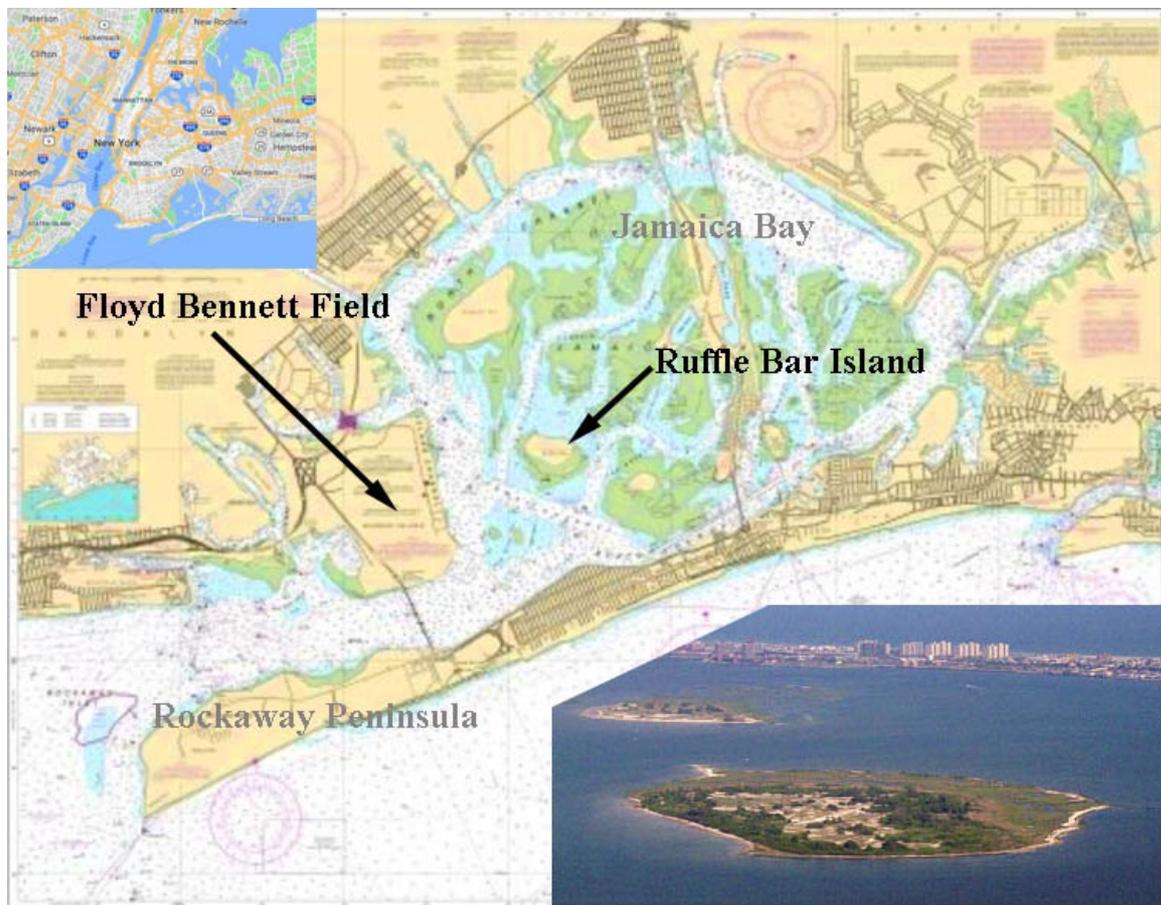
The NYPD Special Operations division rescued a man stranded for 12 hours on remote Ruffle Bar Island in Jamaica Bay, N.Y.

36-year-old Mikhail Leybovich had paddled out to Ruffle Bar on the morning of Thursday, April 16. The island is two miles across the Bay from his launch point of Floyd Bennett Field. Leybovich had made the crossing at least four times and had paddled on the Bay more than 20 times.

Although the weather had been calm when he set out, the wind picked up and the waves got rough as he was making the return crossing. His kayak began to take on water and sink, so he abandoned his boat and swam back to the island. He was in the water for at least 15 minutes.

Leybovich found a tarp on the beach to wrap around himself. He also ran across two coconuts, cracked them open, and drank the milk inside. The tarp and the fire may have saved him from hypothermia, as the wind continued to howl.

No help arrived for several hours. Finally, Leybovich's parents reported him missing after dark to the 112<sup>th</sup> precinct of the NYPD, the call coming in around 2315 hours. The police helicopter made it to the island shortly after midnight, ending his adventure.



There have been many instances of kayakers running into trouble and needing rescue in Jamaica Bay. Although mostly land-bound, separated from the open Atlantic Ocean by the Rockaway Peninsula and so "protected," the surrounding land is very low, and the islands in the Bay are largely marsh or low glacial till, so winds can really roar across. Also, the fetch of several miles can raise quite a chop

The police personnel who rescued Leybovich had come from the Midwest to help with rescue work during New York City's Corvid-19 pandemic. Leybovich expressed his deep apologies for calling them away from what he felt were far more important duties.

The area is surprisingly remote for those who imagine an urban paddle. According to the [National Park Service's website](#), "The Jamaica Bay Unit (of the Gateway National Recreation Area) is one of the largest expanses of open space in the region, consisting of over 19,000 acres of land, bay, and ocean waters in Brooklyn and Queens. Comprising an area almost equal to the size of Manhattan, Jamaica Bay consists of numerous islands, [and] a labyrinth of waterways."

Leybovich's kayak was described as "sinking" in several of the sources I was able to find. This either indicates a SOT with a leaky drain plug or an actual breach; or a sit-inside with no flotation and presumably no spray skirt. Although the conventional wisdom is to never abandon your boat, he either made the right decision in this instance, or was very, very lucky. Leybovich was also very lucky once he reached shore to find the tarp, the coconuts, and especially the lighter. Some sort of easily accessible emergency bag, such as described in my article "The Kayaker's Bug-out Bag" ([ACK May, 2015 Vol. 24, No. 3](#)) could have made his stay far more comfortable. As simple a thing as protecting his cell phone from water would also not have been a bad idea.

# ATLANTIC COASTAL KAYAKER

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## Environment



*A female right whale, known as "Dragon," was spotted with a buoy and rope in her mouth about 45 miles off Nantucket on February 24, 2020. Photo of Dragon and her calf, taken off Georgia in 2008. NOAA.*

### **Maine Lobstermen Under Pressure to Protect Right Whale**

**By Tamsin Venn.**

The North Atlantic right whales are now swimming north on their annual migration from calving grounds off Florida and Georgia to summer waters as far north as Newfoundland. The mothers and calves at times may stay in an area for seven hours or more to rest, nurse, and play. But otherwise, it's 1.3 km an hour average steady progress.

Unbeknownst to them, on April 7 a federal judge gave them a fighting chance. Judge James Boasberg, a well-known right whale defender, ruled that federal fishery managers (National Marine Fishery Service - NMFS) had not protected the whales under the Endangered Species Act when it authorized the lobster fishery to follow certain rules without appropriately analyzing its impact on right whales.

About 400 North Atlantic right whales (there are two other species) exist and are protected under the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

In the best scenario, the upshot is not so much an indictment as an incentive for scientists and lobstermen to work together to protect the right whales and to sustain the business.

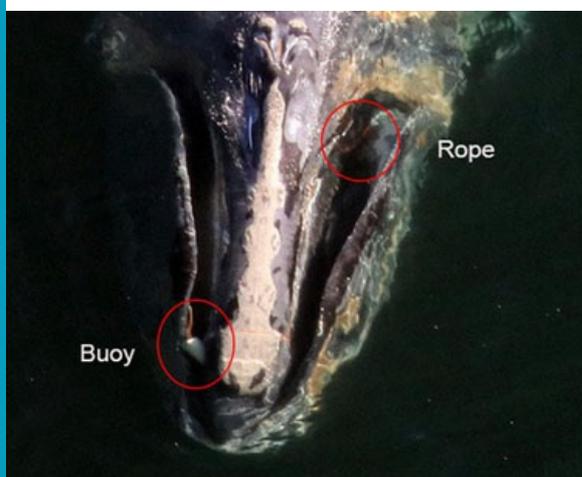
Maine lobster fishermen will not welcome the decision. They say they are already "regulated to death" and that the burden is not being equally shared by other fisheries.

On top of that, Maine lobstermen are now experiencing job loss due to Covid -19 with shrinking markets due to travel restrictions and restaurant closures.

The two leading causes of death of right whales are ship collisions and entanglement in fishing gear. Since 2017 they have shifted their habitat in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Canadian waters right into the path of busy shipping lanes.

Right whales ingest plankton with wide open mouths thus risking entanglement in any rope or net fixed in the water columns. Rope wraps around their upper jaws, flippers, and tails.

As a result, the federal government issued strict instructions last year to reduce fishing line by half to avoid entanglement, creating a hardship on Maine lobstermen who argue that most of Maine's lobster fishing takes place in a near-shore exemption area. They also note that most right whale deaths have occurred in Canada from ship strikes and not from entanglements in Maine's lobster fishing gear.



*NOAA drone photo closeup of Dragon's head and injuries. NOAA and partners are reviewing limited options for intervention. "She is extremely emaciated and gray, suggesting she may have been entangled and unable to close her mouth for months," said New England Aquarium senior scientist Amy Knowlton in a press release from the aquarium. It is believed that right whales open and close their mouths to help with body heat regulation and that Dragon may be using up her stored body fat in an effort to stay warm. Knowlton said the orange patches around Dragon's head, seen in aerial photos, indicate the whale's skin is infested with orange cyamids, a kind of lice that focuses on areas where there is an injury. According to the release, Dragon is in her prime breeding age range. Picture from NOAA website.*

The tensions have a long history. In 1997, NOAA, which directs NMFS, created the first Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan. That immediately helped increase the whales' population. That good news stopped in 2010 when the birth rate began to drop and the whales began to move north to the Gulf of St. Lawrence for food. Entanglements and boat collisions increased in Canadian waters in 2017 leading to 12 right whale deaths that year and led to several environmental organizations filing suit against the NMFS under the Endangered Species Act.

Canada put new restrictions in place, and officials reported no mortalities in 2018, so relaxed the rules. Disastrously, in June 2019 officials found six dead whales in Canadian waters.

Looming rules are making the lobstermen nervous. They argue it is unfair to ask Maine fishermen to do anything more without proof they are killing right whales.

Since 2017, at least 30 right whales have been seriously injured or killed, mostly in Canada. Eight incidents were attributed to ship strikes, including one in U.S. waters. None of the 30 can be attributed to the Maine lobster industry. The most recent Maine entanglement occurred in 2004.

The lobstermen accuse NMFS of caving into environmental organizations' demands and not recognizing how much Maine lobstermen have done to protect the whale by getting rid of floating rope that could entangle whales and using sinking rope between traps.

NMFS claims it is trying to keep the robust fishery alive in the face of many whale protection lawsuits.

According to data published by NOAA, American lobster was the most valuable single species harvested in the U.S. in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018, with Maine landings accounting for approximately 80 percent of that value each year.

Meanwhile Canada has promised to do more to protect the whales, and will temporarily close waters to fishing and shipping when a whale is sighted.

It may all come down to the science. Maine lobstermen, with feedback from the Maine Lobstermen's Assn. (MLA) and the Maine Lobstering Union, are set to use gear marking and harvesting numbers to help support their case that right whales aren't swimming inshore into their traps.

Meanwhile, oblivious to humans' concerns, the right whales swim north with new calves to spend the summer feeding in plankton rich waters.

**What Kayakers Can Do:**

Please report all right whale sightings from Virginia to Maine at (866) 755-6622, and from Florida to North Carolina at 877-WHALE-HELP (877) 942-5343. Right whale sightings in any location may also be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard via channel 16 or through the free [WhaleAlert app](#).

# ATLANTIC COASTAL KAYAKER

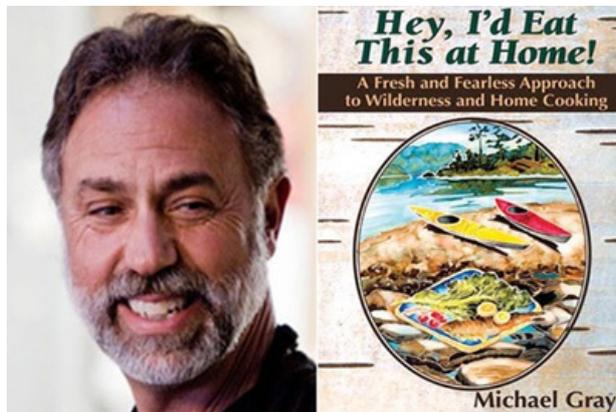
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## KAYAK KOOKERY



### Kayak Kookery: A New Department for ACK

*By David Eden*

You've been paddling all day into a headwind with spitting rain. You pull into your destination, set up camp. and start the stove roaring. Soon the water boils, the cooking is done and you gratefully dip your spoon into a steaming hot mess of... over-salted, over-processed, freeze-dried glop.

Even though the quality of the available meals has improved greatly since I first wrote those words nine years ago, the results still rather disappoint. The freeze-drying of food certainly made a lot of options available to the camper. Packages of Sweet and Sour Pork, Beef Bourginon, and Chicken Marsala certainly sound tempting. But they just don't match fresh foods.

We try to incorporate fresh food in our camping menus. This has been the most successful on canoe or car trips, where space concerns are not quite as pressing as in a kayak or when backpacking. Most of us just don't have the experience to develop methods to bring fresh food cookery into the wild.

This is where Michael Gray comes to the rescue with his fabulous cook book *Hey, I'd Eat This at Home!* ACK originally reviewed this book in 2011 (July/August, 2011 Vol. 20, No. 4). Gray has had the time to work on both technique and recipes: he has been guiding trips to Alaska, New Zealand, Central America, and the Great Lakes as the founder of Uncommon Adventures since 1984. He has also taken his culinary expertise to such venues as the East Coast Canoe & Kayak Festival in Charleston, SC.

*"Our lives are full of things beyond our control, and these factors have an even greater impact when we are in the backcountry. We can't control the weather, critters, or personalities - but over the years I have learned that the aroma of Georgia Peach Cake baking in the wilderness can make people forget about challenging weather and bugs.*

*"Many of the foods we enjoy on outdoor adventures require fairly basic ingredients commonly found in supermarkets. That makes them particularly useful during this pandemic when we are all figuring out what to*

*make out of the odds and sods in the back of the cupboards or the mystery packages in the freezer. Here are a couple easy recipes that can be made with canned goods and seemingly odd combinations of ingredients that end up being quite tasty. You may just want to include them in your next socially distanced outdoor adventure."*  
- Michael Gray.

### **Mandarin Orange Chicken with Rosemary over Rice**



*This one is pretty quick and easy and a pleasant change from the norm. It works with fresh, leftover, frozen, canned, or pouched chicken — ah — you might think you could substitute salmon or tuna. Don't do it. I tried it and it's a spectacular fail.*

*Takes about 40 minutes total, serves 4. Good with Pino Grigio or any light white wine.*

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

- One lb of boneless chicken, cooked or canned.
- Veggies: any or all — small onion, small bell pepper (any color), carrot, pea pods, broccoli, etc.
- 1.5 cups of uncooked rice. Any will work, but Basmati will be most tasty.
- Can of Mandarin Orange segments, drained.
- Orange Marmalade for glaze.
- 1/2 tsp Dried Rosemary
- 1/4 cup of nuts (slivered almonds work great).

#### **PROCEDURE**

- Sauté dry rice in the bottom of a pot in a bit of olive oil until uniformly hot and slightly golden.
- Add two cups of water or chicken broth and bring back to a boil.
- Reduce heat and simmer covered for 25 min.
- While the rice is simmering, toast the nuts in a dry pan on medium high heat for a few minutes until they start to brown. Set aside.
- While your sauté pan is still hot, toss in your chopped veggies with a bit of olive oil and cook until slightly tender but still crisp.
- Add diced chicken, rosemary, a splash of water or white wine, and orange marmalade until the sauce is reduced and the ingredients are glazed.
- Take off the heat and stir in orange segments.
- Serve on top of rice garnished with toasted nuts.

### **Pasta in Cajun Cream Sauce**



*Stupid easy and fast.*

*Serves four. Takes 20 minutes. Good with Old Vine Zin or an crisp IPA.*



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## Flip That Kayak!



**STELLAR SES SURFSKI:** In very good condition. Advantage layup. [See it here](#). Length: 20'4", Beam: 16.4". Designed for paddler 5' to 6'3" with 200 lbs capacity. \$1,450. Email to [nelowk2@gmail.com](mailto:nelowk2@gmail.com) (please put "Stellar" in the subject line) (7)

**BETSIE BAY VALKERIE:** Boat is Inuit style, 17 feet long and 20 1/2 inches beam. It is fast with a medium weight paddler, and very controllable in challenging conditions. Comes with cockpit cover, spray skirt and Betsie Bay very light weight Greenland-style carbon fiber reinforced paddle and other accessories. Always stored indoors. Boat and paddle are in excellent condition. Boat is currently in eastern Florida, but could be brought to Ohio or eastern Penn. in mid-April for a sure sale. \$1000. Contact Jim at [jbedford46@gmail.com](mailto:jbedford46@gmail.com). (6)

**WANTED TO BUY:** One used L.L. Bean Calypso kayak, Eddyline Skylark kayak, or similar used recreational kayak in the 12-foot range. Must be near Rhode Island for my pick-up. Mike Rubin, Pawtucket, R.I. [mike.rubin54@gmail.com](mailto:mike.rubin54@gmail.com) (6)

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 12 oz. any sort of Pasta.
- Veggies: chopped onion and bell pepper at the minimum, but diced squash, eggplant, or roasted red peppers and some minced garlic, if you have any of them. Any or all work.
- 12-15 oz canned diced tomatoes or tomato sauce.
- Small can of condensed milk (NOT sweetened). Mom called it Pet milk.
- Cajun spice — 1 tsp to 1 tbs depending on taste.

**PROCEDURE**

- Boil the pasta in a pot of salted water for the recommended time.
- Meanwhile, sauté veggies in a frying pan with olive oil until a bit tender.
- Add tomatoes and cajun spice.
- Simmer until pasta is about done, add canned milk (or cream) and bring back up to heat. Should be thick enough to coat noodles in a rich spicy sauce.
- Drain noodles and mix into sauce.
- This is also great with shrimp, which can be added with tomatoes if you like.

*Do you have a favorite recipe that you use on camping or kayaking trips? Send it to us and we will share it with our other readers. Try to take a picture of the finished dish.*

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Submit an Ad



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**EPIC V10 SPORT SURFSKI:** Excellent condition - Performance layup. <https://www.epickayaks.com/v10-sport> \$1,950 Custom padded insulated cover cover available - \$200 (cost new \$350). Pictures available. Email to [nelowk2@gmail.com](mailto:nelowk2@gmail.com) (please put "Epic" in the subject line). (6)

**PRIJON SEAYAK:** with rudder; 16 ft, very good condition; best offer. Paul Foster-Moore, Florence, Mass. [pfostermo@gmail.com](mailto:pfostermo@gmail.com). (6)

**QCC 600X:** 16'8"x 21", 43 lbs. in kevlar, rope skeg, narrow but not twitchy and fast, good for a woman or slender man to 6'3". Foot pegs adjust while sitting. Second hatch cover with compass. Light blue and maroon over white. Bought new in 2008, used about 30 weeks over nine years. Stored inside. Plus professionally-made Greenland paddles, helmet, NRS titanium wet-suit, NRS eVent dry top (gaskets replaced last year), Immersion Research spray skirt, Aleutian deck bag, Kokatat Poseidon PFD with customizable pockets, custom canvas cover, and more. \$2,000 OBO. [vhme.137@gmail.com](mailto:vhme.137@gmail.com). (6)

**2015 NDK ROMANY CLASSIC:** Wire skeg, underdeck pump holder, Valley day hatch cover. Blue over white. \$2,915. Contact Jesse 864-884-4957 or [jhtjr51@gmail.com](mailto:jhtjr51@gmail.com). (6)

**BETSIE BAY RECLUSE:** Greenland-Style. 2007-original owner; 19' long and 20 1/2" wide; weight 32 lbs. For paddler 175 lbs. & greater; spray skirt, cockpit cover, Tuktu Greenland Paddle, and other accessories; Excellent Condition (stored indoors/only fresh water use); \$2175 (\$4300 value); Photos available on request; Contact Charlie [ccummins55@gmail.com](mailto:ccummins55@gmail.com) or 518-234-9235 in Albany, NY area; Meet half way possible. (6)

**NDK EXPLORER:** Navy over White 2002. 17' 6" Overall Length. 21" Beam. 10" cargo hatches and 8" day hatch. Fiberglass, drop down skeg, deck lines, deck compass. Custom foam seat, or original seat can be reattached. Cockpit cover and spray skirt. Stored in garage, usual scratches from use, two small punctures fixed with fiberglass patches. Still very seaworthy craft. Located in Sloatsburg, NY. Asking \$1000. More pictures available. Contact Greg Sullivan at [gregsullivan1@mac.com](mailto:gregsullivan1@mac.com) (6)

**KOKATAT DRY SUIT:** Men's XL Front Entry Gore-Tex with relief zipper and integrated socks. Cobalt/mango. Excellent condition, used 4x's. \$500. Located in Springfield NH. Contact Linda 603-763-4824 or [4LindaHowes@gmail.com](mailto:4LindaHowes@gmail.com) (6)

**CONN KAYAK INSTRUCTION 20-YR BUSINESS** for sale. Principals only to [michele@kayak-Adventure.net](mailto:michele@kayak-Adventure.net)