

California Kayaker



#8

Always Free

Spring 2012



INSIDE:

Getting Butt Time
American White Pelicans
Big Sur Learnings
Rachael Krugman
Petaluma to Napa
Build Your Own Kayak



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California Kayaker Magazine is an independent magazine available for free at paddling shops, sports retailers, outdoor stores, fitness clubs, marinas, and events, available free on the web, or individual copies can be mailed for a nominal charge to cover postage and handling.

Kayaking can be a dangerous sport. Dress appropriately, always wear your PFD, and paddle within your skill level.

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Cover Photo - boats laid out on the beach at the 2011 Bay Area Paddlefest. See the Calendar on page 4 for information about upcoming demo days.

Photo by California Kayaker

Camera: Nikon D5000



Editor's Note

I am sure many readers noticed that December came and went without a Winter issue showing up at your local kayak shop. Sorry about that. This definitely was not what I wanted. Last Summer, the magazine finally got to the point where it was more than covering its variable costs (printing, distribution, and paying for stories/photos). But the Fall issue slipped back into being a loss. And the Winter issue would have been also. Unfortunately, I am unable to continue covering these losses.

So a last minute change to drop the Winter issue and only have 2 issues (Spring and Summer) in 2012 was made. The magazine is supported by advertisers, and there are some who only want to advertise in the "kayak season". I paddle year round, so don't fully agree that there is a kayak season, but am not about to argue this point with advertisers. So a tactical retreat was in order.

A few minor changes came about due to this. With most races taking place after our issues are published, we felt we wouldn't be providing timely results information, so dropped the Results section. We used this freed up space to expand our Calendar listings by adding single-shop events, such as the larger demo days.

California Kayaker Magazine continues to be a work in progress. Hopefully these changes allow us to continue to be "California's source for kayak information."

Happy Paddling!

Peter Donohue

Editor

editor@calkayakermag.com



An advertisement for Valley Gemini kayaks. The background is a scenic view of a beach with waves crashing against rocks. The text is overlaid on the image. On the left, there is a large red Roman numeral 'II' followed by the word 'GEMINI' in a bold, red, serif font. To the right of this, there is a paragraph of text: 'The Gemini Project: Valley accepts the challenge for the emerging 14-foot category, not with a compromised all-rounder, but with two discrete kayaks... similar but not quite the same, and equally different!'. Below this, there are two descriptions of the kayaks: 'GEMINI ST 14'10" x 21.75" 35 lbs Optimized for light touring and fitness paddling with good stability, reduced weight, fine lines and increased speed.' and 'GEMINI SP 14'10" x 22" 40 lbs With increased rocker and bow volume for improved surf-zone, tiderace, rockhopping and all-around dynamic water performance.' At the bottom, there is a red line of text: 'So just like real twins, we have two kayaks created at the same time but with different personalities... Which twin are you?'. In the bottom right corner, there is the 'VALLEY' logo in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by the website 'www.valleyseakayaks.com' and a Facebook icon.

▷EVENTS

Santa Cruz Surf Kayak Paddlefest

Santa Cruz, CA
March 16-18, 2012
www.asudoit.com/paddle_fest

South West Kayak Symposium

San Diego, CA
March 23-25, 2012
www.aqua-adventures.com

Bay Area Paddlefest

Fremont, CA
April 21-22, 2012
www.thebayareapaddlefest.org
See ad on page 7

Kern River Festival

Kernville, CA
April 21-22, 2012
www.kvrc.org/festival.htm

Explore North Coast Kayak Social

Trinidad, CA
May 3-6, 2012
www.explorenorthcoast.net

Great Russian River Race

Healdsburg, CA
May 12, 2012
www.greatrussianriverrace.com

Sunrise Mountain Sports Kayak Festival

Livermore, CA
May 19-20, 2012
www.sunrisemountainsports.com

29th Upper Clackamas Whitewater Festival

Estacada, OR
May 19-20, 2012
www.upperclackamasfestival.org

Reno River Festival

Reno, CA
June 15-17, 2012
www.renoriverfestival.com

California Canoe & Kayak Paddlefest

Rancho Cordova, CA
June 16-17, 2012
www.calkayak.com

South Sound Traditional Inuit Kayak Symposium

Union, WA
June 15-17, 2012
www.qajaqpnw.org

AquanFest

San Mateo, CA
June 23-24, 2012
www.aquansports.com
See ad on page 31

Big Bear Paddlefest

Big Bear Lake, CA
July 7-8, 2012
www.bigbearpaddlefest.com

Scheels Paddle Sport Demo

Sparks, NV
July 14, 2012
www.scheels.com/events

Eppies Great Race 39

Sacramento, CA
July 21, 2012
www.eppiesgreatrace.org
See ad on page 32

Wavechaser Paddle Series

Various NorCal locations
Various dates
www.wavechaser.com

To submit news or an event for consideration to *California Kayaker Magazine*, please send basic information to editor@calkayakermag.com.

▷NEWS

Sea Bird Breeding Season

Spring is the time for the birds and the bees. And this is no exception for sea birds. They are flocking to our coasts, preparing to breed and raise chicks on offshore rocks, islands and coastal cliffs. Over 600,000 seabirds return to central California each year to feed in the rich waters of California's national marine sanctuaries and beyond. While these amazing birds are fascinating, keep in mind that they and other marine wildlife need space to feed, rest, and care for their young. Seabirds are especially sensitive to kayakers coming too close to their breeding colonies. You don't want to spook the birds off their nests—to avoid this, Seabird Protection Network recommends staying 1,000 feet from rocks and islands to avoid disturbing their natural behavior, or causing harm to their chicks. Multiple small disturbances or a single large one, could cause colony abandonment.

Also, California now has Special Closures, marine protected areas surrounding six sensitive breeding colonies in the San Francisco Bay Area. Find out more at www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa or request a free waterproof guide on Special Closures from Bodega Head to Año Nuevo from the Seabird Protection Network: 415-970-5244; or email: California.Seabirds@noaa.gov

And for more information on Common Murres, one of the sea birds found on our coastline, you can read the Critters from Kayaks article in the Spring 2011 issue (available online at www.calkayakermag.com, if you didn't save a printed copy).

2012 Tahoe Keeper Certification and Costs

Tahoe Keepers is the organization tasked with stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) in the Lake Tahoe watershed. This pristine

Continued on Page 15

Getting Butt Time



People trying boats at last year's AquanFest

I have heard quite often questions like “I am new to kayaking. Would such and such boat be good for me?” I cringe when I hear this, as more often than not, the person asking the question is getting way ahead of themselves.

Without a doubt, getting into kayaking is great. There are so many experiences you can only have in a kayak. And trying to figure out what boat is right for you is also good. But settling down on any one model early in the process can be a frustrating and expensive mistake.

This person often heard about a boat that was reviewed favorably in a magazine or that a friend raved about. Do you want to do the same type of kayaking as they do? Are you a similar size and shape and flexibility as them? Even if you answered yes to all of this, the sad truth is that the boat that works for them could still be a living hell for you.

Buying a new boat is like buying a car—once you take it from the dealer, the value depreciates significantly. When someone makes the wrong choice (which is unfortunately all too common), they don't enjoy paddling as much as they could. And they lose a lot of money when they resell it. You don't want to be the person taking this financial bath.

The way to figure out what boat works for you is to get butt time in various boats. I am not talking about just sit-

ting in different boats on the dealer's floor, but you should get out paddling in different boats for extended durations and in conditions matching how you plan to paddle. After all, you would not buy a car without a thorough test drive.

So how do you get butt time? Here are a few suggestions:

- Take a basic kayaking class. These classes teach a lot of the basics of kayaking which will make a good foundation for any kayaking you do—knowing how to do the strokes properly to move your boat, how to be safe in your boat, etc. Generally a day long class costs about \$100, and includes use of the gear you need.
- Rent boats. The money you would pay for rentals is much less than you risk losing if you bought the wrong boat. Many shops even have rent-to-own deals—they apply your rental fees towards the purchase of a new boat. So if you do buy a new boat from them, the rentals will be free.
- Some shops even have an “all you can paddle” deal—you pay a set amount to be able to take as many boats out as you want during a set number of weeks or months. Excellent way to try many different boats.
- Take advantage of demo days and demo events. These are free or low cost ways to get out in many different types of boats. Check the calendar listing on page 5 of this magazine for upcoming events, like Bay Area Pad-

difest in April, Sunrise Mountain Sports Kayak Festival in May, and AquanFest in June.

- Join a club/make friends with current kayakers. People often have multiple boats, and are often looking for paddling partners, so you may be able to borrow their boat to paddle with them. Or if you are on a group paddle (whether in a rental or borrowed boat), people are often willing to do short term swaps to let you try out their boat.
- Benefit from someone else's mistake. Unlike cars, boats don't depreciate quickly after the initial depreciation. If you can buy a used boat in decent shape for a decent price, you can then use it as a long-term demo. If it works for you and you keep it, great. But if it doesn't work for you, you should be able to resell it for close to what you paid for it. But it does take a little knowledge to know what a used boat is worth, and you might be better off sticking to boats no more than 5-10 years old (as some of the designs that make boats safer, like integrated bulkheads/flotation and deck lines, will be built in).

These are some of the options, but the important thing is to do whatever it takes to get time in different boats so you can make a decision based on what feels good to you.

If your path to butt time doesn't involve renting and classes, you should still get to know your local kayak shop well. The boat is just one piece of gear you would need to start paddling. Even though you may be able to find used boats to save money, it is often not worth trying to save money on paddles, PFDs, and other gear. A decent paddle makes a huge difference in your paddling experience. And a PFD that is comfortable and fits well will be worn, which may save your life. ❖

Words and photo by California Kayaker



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Expedition Learnings from a Big Sur Trip

By Peter Donohue



Bixby Bridge is not often seen from the water

Yes “Sur”, it was Big. Not my tent, mind you—that was too small. But the scenery was huge. As were the experiences (and experiences have this way of bringing about equally large learning opportunities).

The plan was for a group of 8 (Bryan, Dick, Doug, Patrick, Rick, Roger, Sandy, and I) to paddle for 7 days along Big Sur in October. Sur is Spanish for “South”, and Big Sur is a vast, unexplored, and impenetrable land south of the Spanish mission in Monterey. Big Sur became more accessible with the completion of Highway 1 in 1937, yet even now the vast majority of visitors to the area never venture far from the highway. Our plan was to see it from a much different perspective—from the water.

The group was mostly experienced coastal paddlers, but they wanted the added safety of a guide with knowledge of the area, so hired Roger Schumann of Eskape Sea Kayaking. I was a late addition to the trip, so got involved after much of the route planning and campsite selections were made.

This stretch of coast is rarely paddled, and Roger—with about a half dozen trips through the area under his belt—is probably one of the more experienced paddlers of the area. And Roger doesn’t just guide, he can’t turn off instructor mode, so we were looking forward to a week-long class to further hone our skills.

The group also had a large contingent of people who enjoyed rock gardening—the act of weaving your boat through the rocks with the swells. The skill set one gains when rock gardening is also important for surf launches/

landings, so was a good skill set to have on this trip, as we would have many surf zones to deal with during the trip.

It was an excellent trip, even though we had to shorten it. Rather than write up a normal trip report type article, I’ll instead focus on some of the learnings I gained from the trip.

Lesson 1: A Loaded Boat Doesn’t Perform the Same as an Unloaded Boat

On trips like this, I like to start slow. We’d have a week of paddling and playing, so I sure didn’t want to burn my energy up on the start. We started at Monastery Beach in Carmel and headed around Point Lobos. Patrick and Roger decided to see if they could go through a channel in the rocks, while the rest of us stayed outside. A few minutes later, I see Roger waving his paddle in the air. That wasn’t a signal we went over at the start, so I asked Bryan (who did not see the signal) what it meant. He said that is the signal for an emergency, but never in his years of paddling with Roger has he seen it used. Uh oh.

In Patrick’s report, he described the conditions as “when the swells hit Point Lobos they become huge, and although they’re broken somewhat by some outlying rocks, Pinnacle Cove can be very sloshy and bumpy.” I don’t know exactly what happened, but it was in part related to the fact that a loaded boat performs differently than an empty boat. The end result was Patrick and his boat separated in the slot. Roger was signaling he wanted some help getting the two back together. He had put Patrick on his back deck, so Bryan went in, grabbed and drained

Tail end of the rescue at Point Lobos. Roger and Bryan had pulled Patrick and his boat out and where in the process of helping him back in.



Patrick's boat, and they finished the recovery. I think we saw a little more conservative paddling out of Patrick for at least a few hours after that.

Lesson 2: Rogue Waves Happen

At lunch on the first day, we had pulled our boats up well above where the highest waves were reaching on a beach just south of Point Lobos. As usual, hatches were opened, food comes out, various gear strewn around to dry, and we relax and shoot the bull. It was a nice, sunny day and we weren't in a rush to get back going. All was well, until a very large wave came in and washed up past our boats. Thankfully, we were able to grab the boats as they were still being pushed inland before the wave tried to suck them into the ocean. Once that wave receded, we rushed around to pull boats further up, find the gear the waves grabbed, and lay out even more stuff to dry.

Assisted launch from our lunch beach. Wait for a wave to wash up, and throw the kayaker onto it so he can ride it out. Problem is that there isn't anyone to help the last person off the beach...

We thought Dick might have lost a pair of gloves and I had a scare that my un-tethered day hatch cover might have floated off. In the end all was found.

Lesson 3: Never Pass Up a Good Lunch Beach

As could be expected for an area with as many cliffs as Big Sur has, there aren't always a lot of landing options. On the second day, Roger spotted a place we could stop for a break and lunch, but it looked a little rocky and was still a little early, so we

decided to continue on. A few miles later, our desires to add or remove food from our bodies finally hit a high enough level that we wanted a break (badly, in some cases). But that decent, but rocky beach was too far back, leaving a dumpy and rocky beach as our only choice. Rick and Dick decided to stay on the water, while the rest of us landed for a quick stop (at least we thought it was quick—those waiting out in the swell probably wished we were faster). It definitely was a beach where assisted launches and landings were



That blue bag between the two boats is my bivy sack. With the rain, I was wishing I had brought a tent.

appreciated—probably would have been some serious carnage if we all tried to solo it.

Lesson 4: Bring a Larger Tent

On expeditions, there is always a lot of thought that goes into what to bring, and what to leave behind, to ensure that you can pack everything into a boat. I was paddling a Valley Aquanaut, which is relatively roomy, so space wasn't that much of a consideration. But I still chose to bring my Outdoor Research Bivy sack, which packs into a space about the size of a 1 liter water bottle, instead of a real tent. October in California is not a time we normally get rain, so I thought this would work just fine.

But the reason it packs small is that it IS small—the bivy is only slightly larger than a sleeping bag, with a single pole to give you a few inches of air space around your head. It is made of GoreTex, so quite warm and dry when I am inside, but doesn't provide any space to do anything other than lying there.

As we were finishing our 3rd day, it started to drizzle some. After landing, I set up a tarp around the opening of my bivy so I could hopefully have some space to keep my gear dry and to have room to change/cook. The drizzle became a bit harder, moving on to being real rain. I had limited amounts of dry clothes, and didn't want to get what I was wearing wet,



so I jumped into the bivy to wait out this passing shower. It was around 4 pm. It turned out my tarp didn't give me enough extra space to do much, besides crawl in and out of the bivy, but it was better than nothing. There wasn't enough space to cook, but it did allow me to grab some unheated toaster pastries (not the dinner I had planned). And about 9:30 pm, there was finally a break in the rain, so I was able to get out for a quick chat with the others who emerged, had a sip or two (or four) of port, and then headed back to bed.

A larger tent would have been nice, allowing me space to move about, cook a proper meal, or read a book (if I had brought one—guess that is another lesson).

Lesson 5: On Expeditions, Having Just a Plan B is not Enough

Overnight, the rains were off and on. During the night, we would also sometimes hear some funny clanking sound. Kind of like a metal on ceramic sound. It was loud enough to catch our attention, but not so threatening sounding to make any of us leave the warmth of our sleeping bags to investigate.

We woke in the morning to find the rains gone, but still cloudy. And a large surf. The beach that was very protected when we landed was now being battered by head high waves coming in at a rapid 4 second period. And the sound—that was bowling ball-sized rocks hitting each other as they were being washed up and back in the surf.

We had a plan B—we had placed a car at about the half-way point, with gear for a resupply and as a potential bail out point. The problem was that we weren't going to make it off the beach to paddle the 8 miles or so to the car (and we weren't sure what the conditions would be like at the landing beach). And the last swell report and marine weather report we heard said that this high surf condition might exist for a few more days, so waiting it out wasn't really an option.

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Time to start formulating back up plans to the back up plan. In the end, one of the few residents of Big Sur (there are only about a thousand of them) was nice enough to allow us to use his private road, and even drove one of us to get a car so we could start the shuttle process. This allowed us to ONLY have to carry the boats a half mile up a neighborhood trail to the private road (which I have to thank my paddling partners for, as they carried mine for me as I spent my time driving the length of Big Sur to reunite drivers with cars).

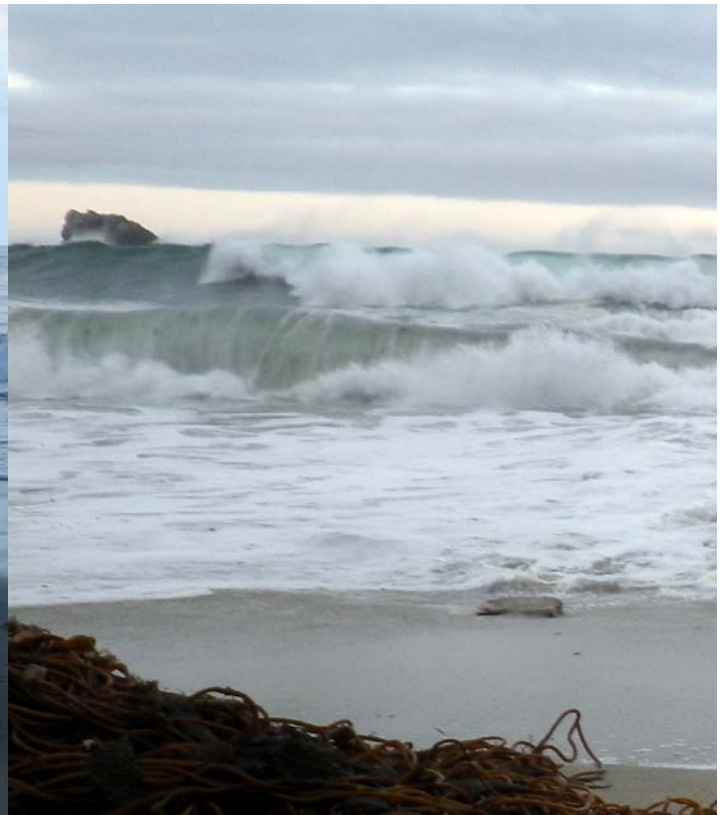
Overall, a great trip that provided a lot of lessons for all of us. Lessons I will take into consideration when I paddle the section of Big Sur I missed out on. ❖

Peter Donohue is the founder and editor of California Kayaker Magazine.

Photos by Peter Donohue.

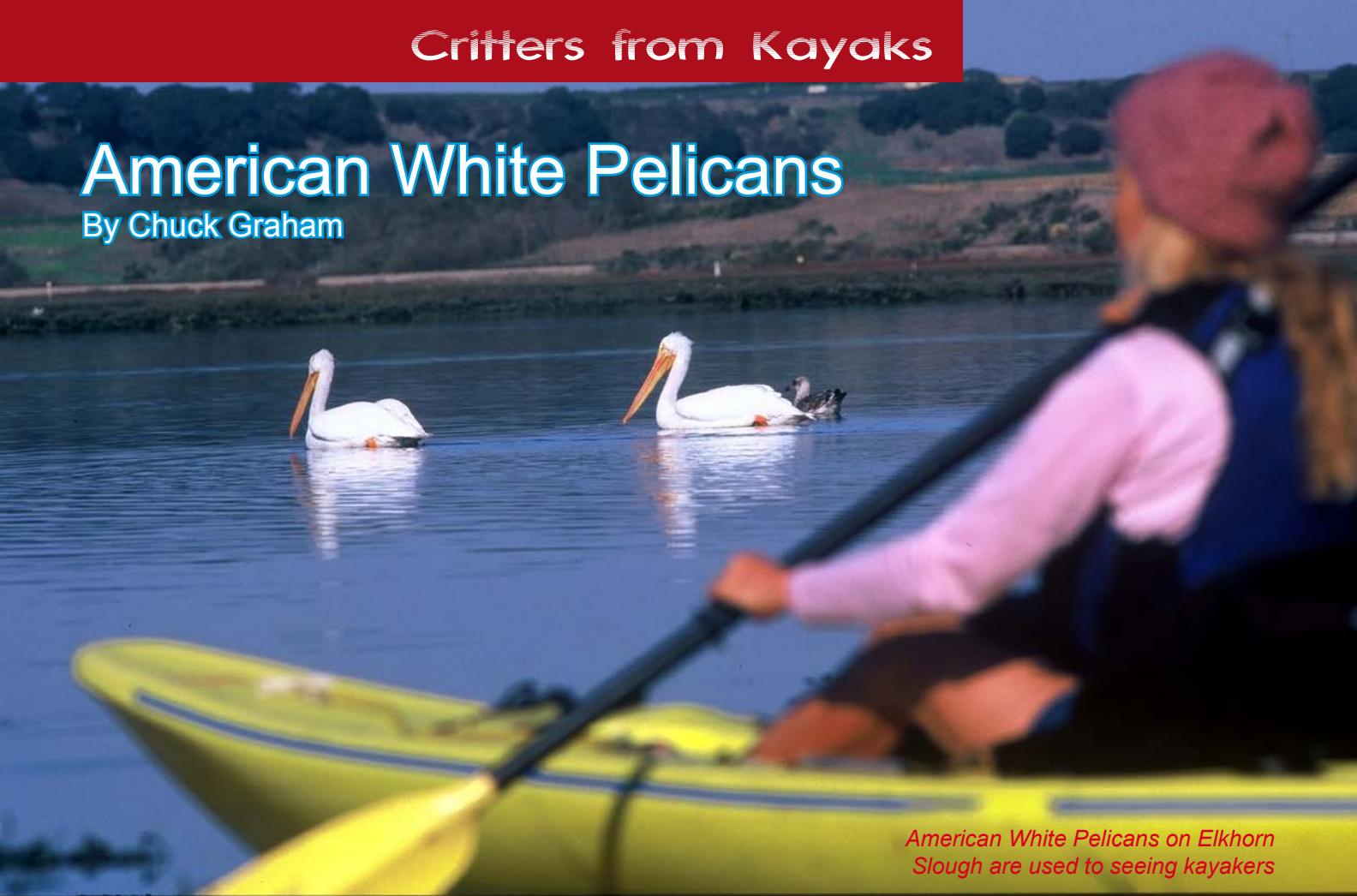
The advertisement features a blue background with a yellow kayak in the center. A person is shown paddling the kayak on a blue body of water. The text 'The EVOLUTION of INFLATABLE KAYAKS™' is at the top, with the 'ADVANCED ELEMENTS' logo to the right. Below the kayak, the text reads: '“RIVALS THE SPEED AND PERFORMANCE OF A HARDSHELL KAYAK”'. Further down, it says 'Introducing the NEW AirFusion™ KAYAK' with specifications: 'Length: 13' Beam: 25" Capacity: 235 lbs.'. A top-down view of the kayak is shown below the text. At the bottom left, there is an image of a duffel bag with the text 'Duffel Bag Included'. At the bottom right, it says 'For a dealer near you, visit our website or call Toll Free 1-866-262-9076 www.advancedelements.com'.

Example of how conditions can change. The picture on the right is the day after the picture on the left. Hard to tell the wave height in the photos, but those breaking waves on the right are head high, and coming in way too often for us.



American White Pelicans

By Chuck Graham



American White Pelicans on Elkhorn Slough are used to seeing kayakers

The small island of pickleweed inside the Morro Bay Estuary along the Central California coast was crowded. A flock of American white pelicans (scientific name: *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) roosted on every inch of the soggy islet, a full tide forcing them to gather tightly while they furiously preened their creamy white feathers in the morning chill driven by stiff offshore winds.

From my kayak I gradually stroked out of the depths of a narrow channel which serpentine out of the back bay of the estuary. I gave the island of white pelicans a wide berth, and photographed them off my bow with a 300mm lens. The ever-present Morro Rock was a daunting backdrop as the creamy colored pelicans postured with their bright orange beaks, while stretching their impressive wings marked with their distinct black trailing edge. I could hear a chorus of croaks amongst the pelicans as they preened, as light gusts of offshore winds carried their loose, free-flying feathers westward.

Then one by one the flock of American white pelicans took flight. I counted 27 of them, a squadron of pelicans, one of North America's largest birds gracefully flying in a straight line, then eventually coming together into a V formation, while displaying their magnificent 9-foot-wide wingspans.

Distribution and Feeding

Though most of their nesting colonies are found in Canada, then descending through the Great Plains and mountain west, their southernmost nesting colonies are located in the corner of northeastern California. As many as 5,000 breeding pairs occupy each site throughout North America. By December, these 30-pound boreal birds have migrated for the winter to the Pacific and Gulf of Mexico coasts, enjoying sandbars, coastal bays, estuaries and inlets, but they avoid the open ocean altogether.

This is because unlike their coastal cousin the California brown pelican, American white pelicans do not dive for their food. They require shallower waters where they can congregate in flocks and corral prey. As they swim they dip their heads underwater scooping and stabbing at their food, putting away more than four pounds of food per day. They'll even chase prey to one another and are known for stealing food from competitors like gulls.

Their bills can hold 3 gallons of water, and after the fish have been caught the bill is pointed downward allowing the water to drain, and then they raise their bills to swallow.

Favorite fish species include Common Carp, Tui Chub, Sacramento and Yellow perch, Rainbow Trout, crayfish,



*American White Pelicans congregating on the Salton Sea.
80 to 90 percent of the entire population winters there*

and amphibians. If American white pelicans are nesting on a saline lake where food is scarce, they will travel far and wide in search of food.

Conservation Status

At one time, American white pelicans were a popular sport and trophy shooting object, and were also persecuted misguidedly as a competitor for valuable fish. In the past hydro-electric projects flooded many nesting sites, and droughts made white pelicans vulnerable to predation.

Like many other birds during the 1940s through the 1970s, DDT pesticides invaded the food web and wreaked havoc on avian species and ecosystems alike. Much like the California brown pelican, bald eagles and peregrine falcons, DDTs forced the American white pelican to lay thin-shelled eggs. Since stricter environmental laws were implemented, the numbers of American white pelicans have stabilized and even increased slightly over the years throughout North America following the ban of DDTs.

By the 1980s, American white pelican populations had risen to 100,000. As a species, they are protected by the

Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as well as California Fish and Game protective status under the California Bird Species of Special Concern criteria, which is a ranked assessment of species, subspecies and distinct populations of birds of immediate conservation concern in California.

However, like many animal species, American white pelicans still suffer from loss of foraging and breeding habitat. Given the water and recreational demands in California and its ever expanding human population, it's unlikely that restoration efforts will enable white pelicans to establish many new colonies or reoccupy much of their historic breeding range.

Paddling with White Pelicans

Because California has lost 90 percent of its coastal wetlands, the remaining 10 percent is vital for species like the American white pelican

to survive. You can see American white pelicans from the seat of your kayak in sloughs, bays, and lakes. I commonly see them at Elkhorn Slough in Monterey Bay, the Morro Bay Estuary in San Luis Obispo County, and Cachuma Lake in Santa Barbara County. All three locales have easy put-ins.

However, the best place to see vast numbers of these plump pelicans is the Salton Sea, east of San Diego. It's estimated that over 80 percent of the entire American white pelican population overwinters in California's largest lake. Although white pelicans are seen soaring over the deepest portions of the Salton Sea, they mainly hug the shoreline of this man-made lake. The pelicans enjoy roosting along the briny shoreline, and feeding in vast numbers in the shallow, salty waters, making it extremely easy to spot them and observe.



American White Pelicans have the second largest wingspans of any bird in California



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A flock of American White Pelicans gather to preen on an island of pickleweed inside the Morro Bay Estuary

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Conclusion

On a gloomy day in early June, fog engulfed the winding channels inside Elkhorn Slough. I was paddling with my wife Lori six miles from the coast at the rear of the longest channel, hoping for the overcast to burn off. All the various birds were hunkered down waiting out the soggy conditions. The ones we could see had their beaks neatly tucked inside closed wings, dew drops clinging to their feathers.

However, by late morning the fog began to lift, warm rays of sun filtering through the mist. At the rear of the slough a flock of American white pelicans swam in the shallows, previously hidden by poor visibility. There were more on the slough's muddy banks, their orange webbed feet leaving detailed prints in the muddy banks. When the slough was free of overcast, the pelicans took off flying across the slough and its surrounding trails, occasionally blotting out the sun with their broad wingspans. ❖

Chuck Graham is a freelance writer and photographer living in Carpinteria, CA. He leads guided kayaking trips at the Channel Islands National Park, and has been a beach lifeguard for 18 years. His stories and photos have appeared in Backpacker, Canoe & Kayak, Paddler, Wavelength, Trail Runner, Shutterbug and The Surfer's Journal. He's also the editor of DEEP Magazine.

Photos by Chuck Graham.



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News - continued from page 5

area is currently threatened by several aquatic invaders. Spreading these invasive species violates local, state, and federal laws. So inspections and decontamination is required of all boats, including kayaks, canoes, and SUPs. There is no charge for inspections or decontamination of paddle craft in 2012.

You can also become a Tahoe Keeper—someone who has been trained to inspect and decontaminate their boat. This would save you from having to stop at the official inspection stations. The free training is online and involves watching a video and then completing a short quiz about what you learned. To become a Tahoe Keeper, go to www.tahoekeepers.org.

Note—the process you do to keep your boat from transporting AISs is the same for all water bodies, so we recommend watching the video even if you aren't going to paddle on Lake Tahoe. The information you learn about preventing AIS transport will help you throughout your paddling career and help protect any waters you paddle in.

Passing of a Wave Warrior

Sad news to share—Eric Soares, one of the founders of the Tsunami Rangers, passed away on February 1, 2012, of a sudden cardiac event at Stanford Hospital while awaiting surgery to repair an aortic aneurysm. Along with writing the skills article “swimming for kayaking” in the Summer 2011 issue of *California Kayaker Magazine*, he created many books and videos and has been seen on *National Geographic* and in other magazines. He was also an instructor at the Golden Gate Sea Kayak Symposium. Many of his thoughts on kayaking can be found at the Tsunami Rangers web site www.tsunamirangers.com.

Eric—you made a strong impact on kayaking and will be missed.

Center



Have a photo that shows the beauty of kayaking or otherwise makes people think?
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Include the background story and what camera was used.

Hatch



Paddle Faster!

“The Wedge” in Newport Beach was producing some large waves on September 1, 2011. Rich Sprout was on his surf ski playing with the rebound waves near the jetty when a BIG set came in. He had to paddle in front of the breaking wave to get around it.

Looks scary, but he made it safe and sound. Don't believe us? You can see a video of Rich padding in front of the wave at www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWwW5_3jbJ8.

Photo by Liz Reichenstein

Camera: Canon EOS 40D

Surf Kayaker

An interview with Rachael Krugman



Photo by Rob Avery

Rachael Krugman was pointed out to me at the 2011 Santa Cruz Paddlefest as someone to watch. And even with the pretty bad conditions they unfortunately had that year, she made her boat move well enough to win her category. When she also placed in the top 3 at the Surf Kayaking World Championships later that year, I knew she would be one that I wanted to interview for *California Kayaker Magazine*.

CKM: How did you first get into kayaking?

RK: During a rafting trip in high school, I had the opportunity to paddle an inflatable kayak. While this was considerably more entertaining than being a passenger on a raft, the closed-deck kayakers that passed by, freely surfing standing waves, looked like they were having an infinitely more exciting time. Shortly after, my mother and I took a kayak class from Ann Dwyer, former owner of Drag-onfly Designs, California Rivers, and Kiwi Kayak Co. As a college freshman, I learned whitewater river kayak skills from Dick Wold at Humboldt State University. Upon relocating to Colorado in 2001, I became an ACA certified kayaking instructor and taught for three years. I returned to

California and taught ocean kayaking in the Monterey Bay.

CKM: How long have you been kayaking?

RK: I have been kayaking approximately 15 years. After moving to Colorado in 2001, I paddled more consistently.

CKM: What type of kayaking do you like most?

RK: The type of kayaking I like most is a toss-up between river kayaking and surf kayaking.

CKM: What got you into surf kayaking?

RK: I enjoyed playing in the surf with my river boat and got hooked on surf kayaking while competing with the Cal State Monterey Bay Surf Kayak Team at the Santa Cruz Surf Kayak Festival in the spring of 2009. After the contest, I was asked to join the US West Surf Kayak Team. In four months, with the coaching of World Champion surf kayaker Buck Johnson, and the support of Valley Surf Kayaks, I competed in Portugal for my first World Championship event.

CKM: Most memorable moment kayaking?

RK: That is a difficult question, because there have been many memorable moments. One of my first

memorable moments was, of course, my first combat roll. This was especially momentous since I had been safety kayaking for inflatable kayakers on a rafting trip. I remember being upside-down wondering how it would look if the safety kayaker had to swim. Luckily, I succeeded on my roll.

CKM: Favorite place to kayak?

RK: My favorite local surf kayaking spots are Moss Landing and Davenport. My favorite local rivers are the Feather, Merced, and American. The White Salmon in Washington, the Rogue in Oregon, the Selway in Idaho, and a dozen rivers in Colorado rank among the most beautiful rivers I have paddled.

CKM: What do you do outside of kayaking?

RK: I have been in graduate school at San Jose State University for the last couple of years, studying occupational therapy. Over last summer, I completed a three-month internship at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center in acute care rehabilitation. I completed my final internship at Idylwood Care Center, a skilled nursing facility, at the end of December.

I love to be active and travel when I can. I enjoy biking, backpacking, snowboarding, tennis, gardening,

cooking, and playing with our cat, Renge.

CKM: What were your results at last year's Santa Cruz Paddlefest?

RK: Last year, I got first place in women's International Class (IC) and third in women's High Performance (HP) class. [Editor Note – IC surf kayaks are between 3 and 4 meters long, and HP boats are sit inside surf kayaks under 9 feet in length.]

CKM: What were your results at the world championships you have competed in (Portugal in 2009 and North Carolina in 2011)?

RK: Portugal was my first world championships. I had been surf kayaking for 4 months prior to that competition. I didn't place in the individual contest, but I learned a lot which helped me place 1st and 2nd in the team heats. Our team took 8th place overall in Portugal. Things changed in North Carolina. I took 2nd place overall in women's HP and our team took 3rd overall.

CKM: How is surf kayaking different than white water kayaking?

RK: When I began surf kayaking, I thought it would be very similar to whitewater kayaking. Actually, I found surf kayaking to be more similar to snowboarding than it is to whitewater kayaking. Like snowboarding, surf kayaking uses precise edging and dynamic pressure control on a slope. If I edge a surf kayak too much, I end up burying the edge and losing too much speed. Conversely, inadequate edging will make me drop to the bottom of the

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Competing in North Carolina
Photo by Rob Avery

wave and lose the wave face. Both scenarios will ultimately result in loss of speed and control. River kayaks have a much more forgiving edge.

The steepness and height of the waves I've surfed in the ocean are much larger than I see in the river. This becomes a huge factor in not

only surfing the waves, but also trying to paddle out against the waves. Furthermore, waves in the river are much more predictable than in the surf. You can see what flow the river is running at to get an idea of what a section will look like with decent accuracy. On the ocean, there are

so many factors that dictate what the waves will be, including swell, wind, and tide height. Even knowing those factors, it is hard to know when you're out there. For example, if that next wave will be the one that is going to break outside of where you're lining up. In general, surfing in the ocean has made me a more confident river paddler.

CKM: Kayaking goals for the future?

RK: My first goal is to continue to volunteer for organizations such as Ride a Wave and Shared Adventures in order to enable people with disabilities the opportunity to experience and enjoy kayaking and the beauty of the ocean and river waters.

It was inspiring to watch the world class surf kayaking at the Outer Banks this year. My second goal is to add more maneuvers to my surf kayaking repertoire such as aerials and barrel rolls which leads to my third goal of taking home the gold at the 2013 World Championships. ❖

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Petaluma to Napa - The View From the Back Seat

by Nicholas Goulden

And they are off! Leaving Petaluma in the morning

The plan was to link the north bay towns of Petaluma and Napa by surf ski. We would travel down the Petaluma River (which an act of Congress renamed from being a slough so that it would be eligible to be dredged with federal funding) and up the Napa River. By sneaking through the network of sloughs at the top of the Bay, our exposure to extreme wave and weather would be limited.

I have long been intrigued by the possibilities of this route and have been mentioning it to various groups of people for years. The most enthusiasm I had managed to raise for this 40ish mile paddle was a “we could do it as a stunt!” Fortunately Carter Johnson—surf ski ultra-marathoner extraordinaire—had been thinking along the same lines. Although I had always intended to scout the middle section from Skaggs Island by launching into Hudeman slough, with Carter involved it was full-speed ahead.

Our group of four paddlers met at 6 a.m. on a February morning to set up the shuttle—I am not much at getting up early and I loath setting up shuttles. But getting up was easier than I expected it to be. I had been awake since 3 a.m.—either excited or worried? Probably the latter. The shuttle was ably assisted by Leif (many thanks!), who got up just to help us with this AND he knew the easiest way to get to the 3rd street bridge in Napa. We scored big time by getting some parking spaces very close to the bridge. After dropping off two vehicles, we all piled into Leif’s vehicle for the return to Petaluma, detouring to pick up Carter at a backwater slough. The dense ground fog only added to the sense of being in

the middle of nowhere—this was our mid-point, the ramp and dock at Hudeman slough. After examining the slough and observing large bundles of reeds moving surprisingly fast, we left Carter’s car there with our lunches in it and a spare boat on top of it—in case someone from the double needed a bail out option

Finally back in Petaluma we prepped the boats. Dave and Carter each in a new Huki Z, a narrow flat water surfski, and John and I paddling together in an older flat water K-2 double. One of the pluses for the K-2 is that it is easy to put extra “stuff “ in (toilet paper, dry clothes, spare paddle) and, with sprayskirts, is drier and warmer to paddle. I don’t remember if Carter had extra clothing with him—he does travel with a thousand calories of food down by his toes though. As for Dave—well you would think a guy who starts worrying about getting cold 30 seconds BEFORE he stops paddling would carry something warm to put on, but no—his backup clothing is a nylon wind breaker that fits in a zip lock bag. A small zip lock bag at that.

We left the dock in Petaluma a little later than intended, which meant that we caught some ebb and made good time (8 to 9 mph) in thick river fog down to the bridge at Hwy 37. We took a pit stop break at the Blackpoint ramp, where Dave ran laps around the parking lot to stay warm. Launching on the up current side, the strong ebb had pushed him into the dock and rolled him over. Investigating the under side of the dock wasn’t going to keep him warm.

The fog started clearing in perfect time for us to see the channel markers out into San Pablo Bay. A good thing as



Paddling in Hudemon Slough

Carter had accidentally cleared all the waypoints from his GPS shortly after the start and Dave had lost his maps while doing his underwater survey of the dock. We mud surfed along the very shallow shore, even though I wanted to go farther out. Dave's fabulous mud surfing technique proved its worth here as he moved out in front.

Even though we could see the next bridge on Hwy 37, it looked as if we might have somehow missed the entrance to Sonoma Creek, but there was really no way to do that. The channel just angles away to the east (away from us) a little. There was more ebb current against us in the sloughs than I expected—our speed now around 6 to 7 mph.

We had a sunny paddle through winding channels of tall tule reeds on the way to lunch at 26.5 miles. By then I was definitely ready to take weight off my butt. Entertainment was provided by the neighboring model aircraft runway that had the largest radio controlled model aircraft I had ever seen. After lunch, John decided that discretion was the better part of valor and withdrew due to some hip pain (and an evening swim meet).

So Dave moved into the front of the K-2, giving me pause for thought—there could be no bailing out from here. It took us a while to work out the rhythm. Every time Dave sees a mud bank he rushes it and surfs his own wake and the GPS speed jumps. He also has a very pro-

nounced power phase to his stroke. So I had to really pay attention and he was not as tolerant as John when we were not in sync, often yelling out "TIMING". Soon after lunch we made the connecting cut through to the next slough and then, after tangling with some fishermen at their self-declared "Nevada Line" shack, we were suddenly going with the ebb towards the Napa River—nice while it lasted.

Once in the Napa River we headed North and into the last of the ebb. We were not sure if we were in the right channel as the railway bridge looked as if it were off to the east quite a bit and the river seemed too narrow. After Carter had spent some time gazing into his GPS, he asked a fisherman how to get to Napa. After giving us a double take they replied "just keep going". The 10 miles to downtown Napa went by quickly, ebb notwithstanding (mid 6's mph) as there was lots to look at and Dave kept finding mud banks to rush at and I had to pay attention. I'm pretty sure he started deliberately changing his pace to make me pay attention, too. Somewhere in the last section, Carter told a story of doing a long race with someone who's presence "made no difference to the boat's speed." Thanks Carter. I bet that's exactly how Dave was feeling right

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then. We all stayed together, something that would not have been true if I had been in a single. When we got to Napa I had to break into Dave and Carter's racing conversation (these guys have a racing history that must be close to encyclopedic) and say "hey guys, this is it". I should have just let them keep going, if that didn't mean me going along for the ride also!

Even though Napa has spent millions developing the center of town at the 3rd street bridge, there is NO boat access; so it was a case of stepping and sliding through 25 feet of low water slimy mud, climbing up the river bank, passing the boats over the bridge railing (to avoid the chain link fence) and waiting for the lights to change at the cross walk. Home free.

Dave said our average speed was 7.2 mph. A perfect day for it. The paddle was surprisingly painless. Well, at least not as painful as I expected. Long term the K-2 is more comfortable for me—no pressure on the head of the femur. The biggest pain turned out to be my worries about letting the group down.

The tides were against us but we knew that. Carter's attitude was "I'm going to do this if I have to do it by myself and hitchhike back". It would be easier to start on a late ebbing tide on the Petaluma River and have a flood all through the sloughs and up the Napa River. The route is surprisingly attractive and it would

be fun to cruise it with a larger group and the right tides. Along with being relatively protected, there are multiple bail out points. The course also begs to be a long distance race with a relay option and refueling provided at the same bail out points. Anyone interested? ❖

Nicholas Goulden is a custom wood-worker in Petaluma where he paddles a K-1 on the Petaluma River several times a week. As a route to more challenging waters, he frequently paddles in Wave-chaser events where he finds himself chasing the person who was his first sea kayaking instructor—from over 25 years ago! Since the Petaluma to Napa paddle, he has achieved another long time goal, Petaluma to Golden Gate and back, using public transport back to Petaluma for the layover days in between the two legs.

Photos by Greta Goulden.



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The author in the back seat of the K-2 at the start of the trip

Building Your Own Kayak - A Primer

By Dave Jarrell



First launch of the Author's finished stitch & glue kayak

The first time that I went kayak shopping, my only goal was to find something that would allow me a little relaxation on the water. I left the kayak store with an inexpensive recreational style boat, but burned into my imagination were the long, sleek shiny composite sea kayaks that had been center stage on the showroom floor. Although I spent the summer enjoying my little boat, I couldn't get the sea kayaks

off my mind. One day at work a colleague mentioned that he had just built a kayak out of plywood. I questioned him about it, and before long the plans and instruction book for a 16' sea kayak were lying on my desk. In the ten years since that time, I completed that boat and two others, did an extensive remodel of that first one, and have carved a few paddles to boot. One lesson learned is that building boats can be an engrossing activity all its own.

I've learned that boat design criteria can make my head spin, and that Newton's observation that "for every action there is an opposite and equal reaction" is dead on. Want a boat that surfs well? More volume in the bow will help that. Want a boat that does well in the rough stuff? Less volume in the bow will help that. The fact is, just about anything that you design into a boat will make it do one thing better and something else not as well. To top it off, for any "rule of thumb" that you find in your research, you just might run into another source to refute the first. Fortunately, we don't have to be expert designers to end up with a good all around boat, as there is tried and true information out there, and folks who are happy to share it. The important thing is to identify what you want your boat to do, what conditions you'll usually be paddling in, and find a design that meets those needs.

Once you've decided what you want your boat to do, the type of construc-

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tion is the next thing to determine. The most common types of boats built by hobbyists can fall into two broad categories: wood boats and skin-on-frames, and there are two primary things to consider when making this decision. The first is that wood boats are much easier to fit with bulkheads and hatch covers, which provide not only dry storage but flotation at either end in the event of a capsize. Wood boats can also be outfitted with more comfortable seats. In short, once completed, your wooden kayak will be very similar to a production composite boat, at about a third of the cost.

Skin boats, on the other hand, are very much back to basics. These kayaks are usually very low volume, and are not necessarily the most comfortable boats that you can find. They should be outfitted with inflatable vinyl bags (float bags) in each end to provide this flotation, which greatly reduces their cargo capacity. It also needs to be noted that the technique used for the common T-rescue varies somewhat for boats



with flotation bags, and so paddling partners need to be aware of this. The flip side of this is that skin-on-frames are very light weight. The second consideration is cost, with the materials for wood boats easily running over twice as much than those for skin boats.

Regardless of the boat you choose to build, you will not need a full woodworking shop to build it. Many boats come in kit form, and for these not much may be needed beyond pliers, a drill, and a saw. To build a boat from scratch just using plans or other instruction, you can get by with just a circular saw, jig saw, drill, block plane, and a few other common hand tools. Of course, for a lot of boat builders, a new project is a great excuse for picking up new tools.

Like anything else, the time to build a kayak shortens with experience, and varies with the type of boat. My first one took about 6 months of only working weekends. Common estimates of 80–100 hours seem fair enough, but this does not include time spent searching through the lumberyard, mulling over tools at the hardware store, correcting beginner mistakes, or standing in the garage staring with pride at your work.

Wood Boats

Perhaps the best method of kayak building for the beginner is by the stitch & glue method, and the simplest way to do that is to buy a kit from one of the several kit manufacturers. These kits contain precut marine plywood panels that are tied together with little pieces of wire—the stitching—and then permanently held together with the supplied fiberglass and epoxy resin—the gluing.

I asked Lisa Ouellette, former president of Bay Area Sea Kayakers, about her experiences with building one of Pygmy Kayak's kits. "Other women are always amazed that I built my own boat," she told me. "I

The "threads" you can see on each chine are the stitching holding the boat together until they are glued with the fiberglass and epoxy.

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Boat Type	Pros	Cons	Weight	Cost	Resources
Stitch & Glue	Simple to build; comfortable; dry storage areas	Heavier and more expensive than skin-on-frame; limited to hard or multi-chine bottom	45-60 lbs	\$900-1400	Chesapeake Light Craft (clcboats.com); Pygmy Boats (pygmyboats.com)
Wood Strip	Beautiful patterns possible; boat can take many shapes	Most expensive alternative	< 40 lbs	\$1200-1800	Chesapeake Light Craft (clcboats.com)
Fuselage/Yost	Quick to assemble; very light weight	Bulkheads not easily installed; not always comfortable	< 30 lbs	\$350-400	Yostwerks (yostwerks.com); Kudzu Craft (kudzucraft.com)
Traditional Skin-on-Frame	Very rugged; light weight	Bulkheads not easily installed; not always comfortable	< 40 lbs	\$350-400 Class: \$1200	"Building the Greenland Kayak" by Christopher Cunningham; Wolfgang Brink Small Boats (wolfgangbrink.com); Cape Falcon Kayak (capefalconkayak.com)

*Right: You can see the individual wood strips and the wood's grain in this wood strip kayak. Also note that the hull is round—it doesn't have the hard chines that would be required of stitch & glue wooden boats.
Photo by Glenn Box*



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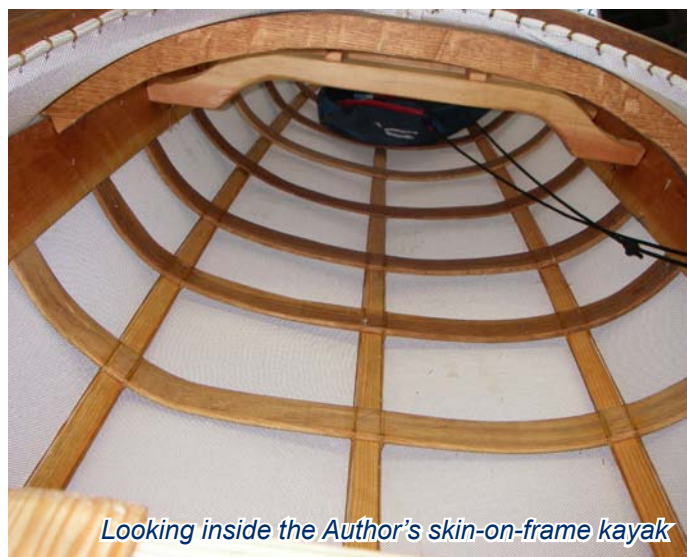
One limiting factor with stitch & glue construction is that with the plywood panels, the builder is constrained to a boat with sharp or multiple angles (or chines) on the bottom. While many paddlers do prefer these configurations, those who prefer a boat with soft or rounded chines would do well to look elsewhere, which brings us to the wood strip boat.

Wood strip boats are made by attaching long thin wood strips, typically cedar, to a frame and then covering the boat with fiberglass. These may be the most striking boats that you can build, as intricate patterns can be inlaid using wood strips of varying shades. Additionally, these boats can be built in a wide variety of styles, and it seems that most are very rounded and graceful in appearance.

Plans, which are included in kits, can be purchased on their own. For the builder with more woodworking skills, this is a good way to realize some savings on the cost of the materials

Skin-on-Frame

Skin-on-Frame kayaks hark back to the Inuit people who invented these craft in the first place. As the name states, they are made by sewing a fabric skin over a wooden frame. These boats are lightweight, rugged, and inexpensive to build. The ancient Inuit used sealskins to cover their frames, but modern builders have other, more PETA-correct choices. Nylon, polyester, and canvas (among others) are all commonly used, and each needs to be coated with a waterproofing material. Not many coatings will stick to nylon, so it is almost always coated with polyurethane. And while nylon and polyurethane provides a more durable skin, polyester and canvas can take a wider variety of coatings, and polyester in particular seems to be becoming more popular. Polyester or canvas



Looking inside the Author's skin-on-frame kayak

More Resources

Two resources that I have found invaluable are the chat forums at qajaqusa.org and kayakforum.com. Searches through their archives will provide answers to most of your questions and have a wealth of information.

A lot of other good resources are available. The companies mentioned here are but a few, and are meant only as suggestions based on my experiences and conversations with others. A web search will lead you to their sites and many more. In addition to the commercially available kits and plans, there are many free designs out there, including some from commercial vendors. A number of the web sites also have good instructional videos.

"The New Kayak Shop" by Chris Kulczycki, founder of Chesapeake Light Craft, is an excellent "how to" book on stitch & glue construction that includes plans for three of their boats, and has perhaps the best overview of boat design/performance characteristics that I have encountered to date.

Also, there are manufacturers, such as SEA-LECT Designs, that make small parts (foot pegs, rudders, deck rigging hardware, hatches, etc.) that can make finishing your project easier. Many specialty kayak retailers carry these small parts.



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The skins on skin-on-frame kayaks are often translucent, revealing the frame

coated with an oil based paint, such as Rustoleum, can be given a finished look that incorporates multiple colors and graphics, and still be tough enough for most paddling conditions.

There are two general frame types. The quicker of these to construct are fuselage frames, sometimes referred to as Yost Boats, after Tom Yost who has championed this form of frame and has free designs and instructions on his website, yostwerks.com. These frames are made with plywood stations, or hollowed bulkheads, that are connected by long stringers running from end to end. These stringers can be made from a number of materials, and while wood may be the most common, aluminum tubing and even PVC piping have been used. While the frame itself may not hold much beauty in the eye of the traditionalists, it goes together relatively quickly and simply, and is typically very lightweight—often coming in at under 30 lbs.

For the traditionalist, the intricate frame construction based on the practices perfected by the inhabitants of the Arctic regions stretching from Siberia to Greenland holds the most allure. These frames are notable for the steam bent ribs that make up the body of the kayak, and can be made to have a very rounded bottom, as is common to Alaskan boats (known as “baidarkas”), or flat and angular like the popular Greenland style.

Most builders of traditional skin-on-frames, including this writer, have used one of the several instruction books that are available. I used “Building the Greenland Kayak” by Christopher Cunningham in concert with “Building Skin-On-Frame Boats” by Robert Morris (now out of print). Suitable wood is often found at the local big box store, and my two skin boats averaged about \$350 each, including the skin systems. Classes are also offered by a number of small schools where, in about a week’s time, you can take your boat home for about \$1200.


John Gerlach is a Sacramento paddler who built a boat from Cunningham’s book and later another at the Cape Falcon school on the Oregon coast. At the time of this writing, John was in the midst of remodeling the first boat to correct some design issues that didn’t please him. John told me that while putting together a surf kayak under the eye of a highly regarded designer and builder was a valuable experience and that he learned a lot, “There’s something about developing my own skills through trial and error that I find very gratifying”. Spoken like a true boat builder! ❖

Dave Jarrell lives in El Dorado Hills and works at California Canoe & Kayak. He frequently paddles on the local lakes, although he goes to the coast whenever possible. He has built a stitch and glue wooden kayak and two skin-on-frames, and “went over” to the Greenland paddle a couple of years ago and has no plans to switch back.

Photos not otherwise attributed are by Dave Jarrell


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Sea Kayaking with Gordon Brown Volume 2

Gordon Brown is one of Scotland's premier instructors. He has the highest instructor certification by the British Canoe Union, and is the only American Canoe Association certified coach in Scotland. He has also been a guest instructor at the last 2 Golden Gate Sea Kayak Symposiums. Gordon owns and operates Skyak Adventures on the Isle of Skye.

Sea Kayaking with Gordon Brown Volume 2 is his second video in a series that is planned to be 3 videos. *Sea Kayaking with Gordon Brown Volume 1* video covers the foundations of sea kayaking—paddling, turning, steering, edging, etc. and features paddling scenes from the Beautiful Isle of Skye, off of Scotland. California Kayaker reviewed the first video on our blog at calkayakermag.blogspot.com/2012/02/sea-kayaking-with-gordon-brown-volume-1.html. But you do not need to watch Volume 1 prior to watching Volume 2, as the skill sets covered are different.

Volume 2 uses the same format as Volume 1—it has 8 coaching segments intermixed with a trip to a beautiful area. You have the choice to watch the entire DVD, individual chapters, just the lessons, or just the tour. The trip this time is to Saint Kilda, a remote set of sea stacks about 50 miles off the west coast of Scotland. The educational portion of the video covers assisted and self rescues, tows, technical landings and launches, and anticipating/avoiding troubles. The educational scenes show each skill on both flat water and in more challenging conditions. The video is over 130 minutes long, with almost 80 minutes of that being coaching segments. The video's trailer can be seen at www.vimeo.com/27091840.

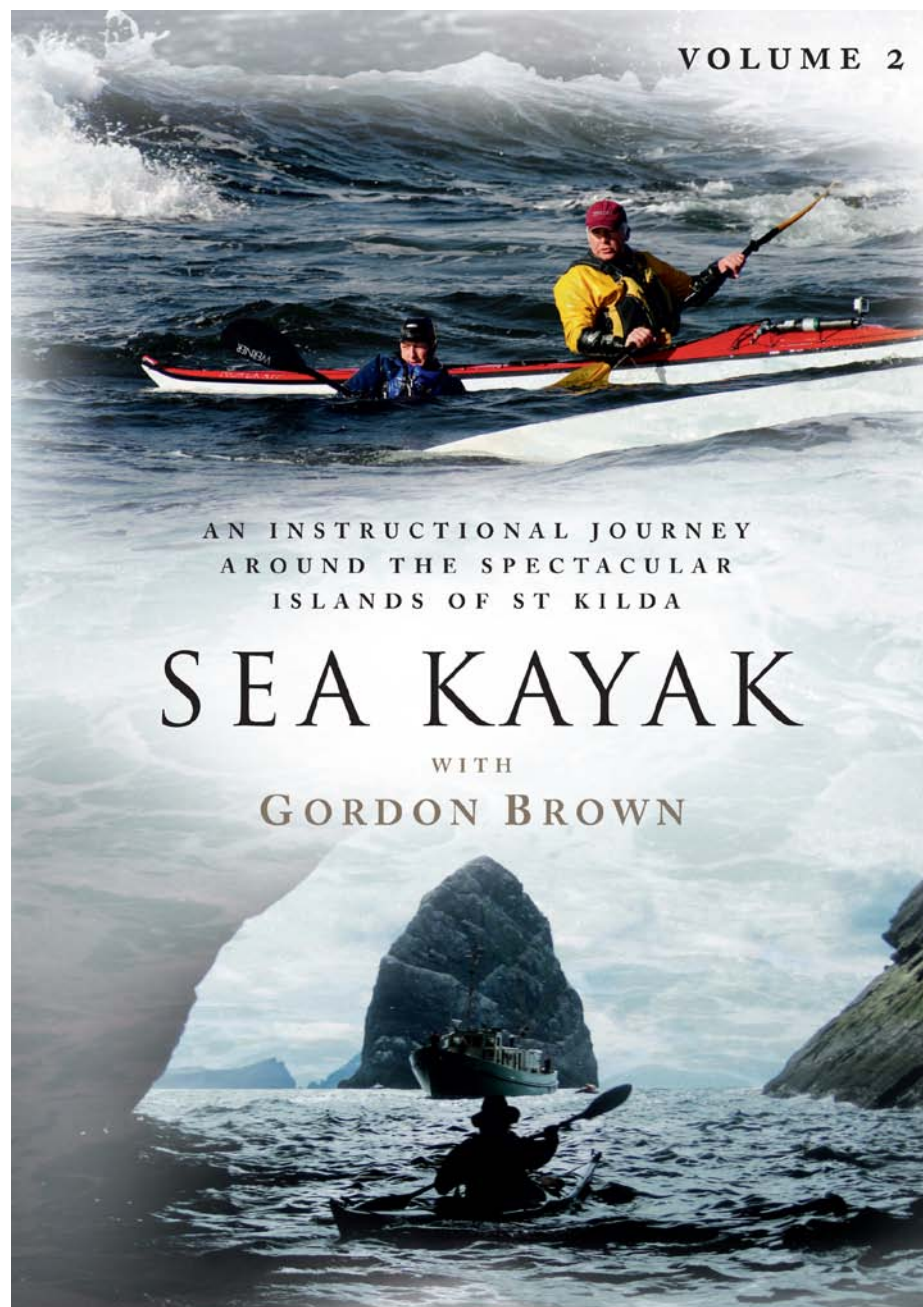
The producer suggests watching the entire video once straight through before rewatching segments. Both of

California Kayaker's reviewers came to the same conclusion that you will want to rewatch these segments multiple times and to focus on one segment at a time. There is a lot of content in this, too much to absorb on your first (or possibly even fifth) viewing.

The video shows an excellent set of activities to practice balance that are well worth trying. But be prepared to swim, as you will likely have a few

flips (but that gives you an opportunity to practice some of the rescues talked about in other segments). Learning these balance skills will reduce the amount of swims you will make in the future.

As with all skills in kayaking, different coaches believe different things. It is best to learn many different ways of doing something, so you can pick the right skill to use for the conditions you find.





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Even in a video with as much information as this, it can't cover everything. One example we found was the straddle/cowboy self-rescue segment. In the Fall 2011 issue of *California Kayaker Magazine*, we ran an article by Roger Schumann on this, allowing us to compare the two. Both covered much the same content, with Gordon covering a lot more balance practice skills, and Roger's article went into a little more detail on the rescue itself. In the rescue sequence, Gordon doesn't talk about using a brace to help maintain balance, but in the rough water sequence you may notice that he does use one. Roger's article does talk about using a brace for support.

One instruction segment that we found to be contrary to what is being generally taught here was the paddle float rescue. Gordon advised righting your boat first, inflating your paddle float, and then placing it on a paddle. In general, keeping your boat

upside down seems to be the more often taught version in California, as this lets you keep a leg in the cockpit to prevent the boat from floating away, while keeping your hands free to work the paddle float and hold on to your paddle. And we usually are taught to put the paddle float on the paddle before inflating for similar reasons—if an inflated paddle float gets away in the wind, it will blow away faster than you can swim. You may want to give both methods a try and see which works better for you.

Gordon talks about using a heel hook for getting back into a boat after most assisted rescues and paddle float rescues. These have only recently been taught by many kayak shops in California. If you learned your rescues more than a few years ago, it would be worth paying special attention to these segments, as the heel hook requires a lot less upper body strength.

The DVD appears to be directed toward intermediate paddlers. Still, it progresses from less advanced to more advanced material. One of Gordon's later demonstrations is a swim landing and launch in rough water on a rocky coast. His discussion afterward may have been the most valuable part of that lesson. Gordon talks about how exhausting the exercise was, how long it took him to recover, and what a difficult position he would have been in if he had been leading a group and, after the swim landing and launch, he needed to assist another paddler.

Overall, the video would make an excellent addition to any sea kayaker's library.

The video has a suggested retail price of \$29.95 and is available for your local kayak shop or online from www.seakayakwithgordonbrown.com. ♦

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