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# NEW ZEALAND SEA KAYAKER

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## EDITORIAL

### KASK Subscription Renewal

The end of July marks an end to the KASK financial year. You will have received an email membership renewal request dated 10 July. Please follow the instructions as listed. Aside from the wonderful bi-monthly magazine, there is much achieved behind the scenes by members of the KASK committee, such as its membership of Water Safety NZ, and participation with the Maritime NZ-hosted Safer Boating Forum. KASK is also actively involved with the data collection sub-group of the Safer Boating Forum, which looks at compilation of recreational boating incident reports with a view to targeted education to reduce such incidents.

### Membership Fee Increase

With magazine postage increasing as of 1 August, our committee has decided to nudge a single KASK membership and that of overseas membership to \$40, an increase of \$5, but to hold the family membership at \$40.

### Contra-Magazine Exchanges

Our magazine is well received overseas via contra exchanges (USA, GB, Australia) which allow reprinting of relevant articles, such as the 'Capsize and Wet Exit Fear - How Much Support Should I offer' by Tasmanian paddler Veronica Steane. Her article has reminded me that although I am so used to getting trashed in big surf on my wave ski, the fear of capsizing and being underwater with legs in a kayak cockpit can be just so strong with newbie paddlers. I am reminded

of a summer day on Lake Brunner when I took a local lass paddling. She was a highly skilled mountain biker but she had an immense fear of capsizing, even on a sunny day into the warm, shallow waters of the lake. Even when I was standing alongside, she was paranoid about capsizing. The first capsize and wet exit seemed like a colossal achievement to this lass. Veronica's article is a good reminder that sometimes we need to work carefully with novice paddlers and wet exit drills.

The message that it took me quite a while to understand when compiling the paddlecraft fatality statistics is that when paddlers are showing signs of hypothermia when paddling, it will not be hypothermia that kills them, but drowning. Hypothermia will lead to chilling down of manual dexterity, fingers unable to pull on a parka or pogies in order to reduce heat loss, then a capsize with inability to roll or complete a paddle-float rescue.

### Be Bright at Night

Ever since writing a submission for the Dunedin coroner on the tragic drowning of two young Frenchmen on Lake Wakatipu in December 2010, I have felt obliged to write up the story of what transpired. With three examples now of the importance of carrying a light to signal to rescuers, it was time I highlighted the vital necessity of carrying a light at night.

### Scott Donaldson

Congratulations to Scott for achieving the first solo paddle across the Tasman.

### Cover photo:

*Dennis Hynes, who comments: 'Tennyson Inlet is, in my view, the most picturesque of the Marlborough Sounds. Reminiscent of Fiordland, with the dull misty light conditions and layers of cloud clinging to the steep native bush clad hills. John Gumbley in the red Nordkapp, Evan Pugh in the Albatross. After a comfortable night at Matai Bay Hut, we followed the Tennyson Inlet shoreline via Duncan and Penzance Bays back to Elaine Bay. Penzance Bay was apparently named after the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta Pirates of Penzance, after a notorious former resident of the bay who, along with her family, engaged in a variety of criminal activities.'*

### Page 2 Top Left:

*Tara Mulvany and Fiona Lee, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, at being underway on their paddle down the west coast of Grønland. Landing on remnants of the winter snow pack saves carrying heavily laden kayaks up rock slabs, allowing an easy tow on top of the snow.*

*Photo: Tara Mulvany*

### Page 2 Bottom Left:

*This terrain appears to be high on a mountain range, given the sparseness of vegetation, but is in fact glaciated granite terrain at sea level on the West Grønland coast. A freshwater tarn, a gravel beach for camping and a snow bank for dragging the loaded kayaks ashore mark this as a three star \*\*\* campsite. Such sites are very rare in Grønland. Photo: Tara Mulvany*



## NEW ZEALAND REPORTS

### Cape Brett 2018 by Jess Gibbs

**Summary:** A seven day trip in the Bay of Islands with Chris Wallis and Jess Gibbs  
See also photos on page 23

Plans came together in a fortunate convergence of favourable weather, tides, helpful friends for lifts and time off work. Originally we planned to paddle from Waitangi to Whangarei. However, once we started to plan our trip in detail we realized that it would be a significant push to make that distance in seven days. We decided to just wing it and see how far we got. A final check of the weather on Friday night confirmed that it was still looking good which led to a frenzy of packing.

We both paddle plastic *Shearwaters*; these have served us well on several multi-day kayak trips. They have plenty of space and are stable whilst still being a fun boat to paddle. Our safety gear included: split paddles, a paddle float, pump, VHF radio (with spare batteries) and a set of flares. We also both carried our PLBs.

#### Day One 18 kms

##### Waitangi beach to Urupukapuka Is (Urupukapuka Bay)

After the traditional pack, repack and repack again on the beach at Waitangi we managed to get all our gear into our kayaks (much to the astonishment of several passerbys). We had a reasonable tailwind (westerly) pushing us across towards Russell Peninsula which made for a flying start to our trip. As we turned to head along the coastline towards Tapeka Point, the wind picked up and the fetch increased leading to bigger waves hitting the beam of the boats.

The clapotis along this section were interesting, making me feel like I was working out on a balance board. Rounding Tapeka Point the wind came back onto our stern giving us another helpful push along to our

lunch stop on Roberton Island. We explored round the coast of Motorua Island and across to Urupukapuka Island.

Our first campsite was in Urupukapuka Bay which was nicely sheltered from the westerly winds. After setting up our tent, we wandered up the hill to admire the view and take a look at the exposed side of the island.

#### Day Two 29 kms

##### Urupukapuka Bay round Cape Brett and to Outu Bay

A forecast of rising westerly winds meant that we made the effort to make an early start. Admittedly our definition of early means launching off the beach before 9:00 am, which probably doesn't count as properly early in the grand scheme of things. We took a beeline from Albert Channel to the north side of Deep Water Cove which gave us an hour long open water crossing. A local dive boat moored up above the *Canterbury* – a wreck which is a popular diving site, provided an opportune break, both to greet friends on the boat and use their facilities.

As per the forecast, the westerly wind was continuing to build so we continued up the coast fairly

quickly, straight-lining across bays and staying out from the cliffs. Arriving at Cape Brett, provided a great view of both the DoC hut and the lighthouse. We paddled into the channel beneath the hut to check out the possibility of landing and swiftly decided that although it might be physically possible it would not be much fun.

After all that effort, we decided that it would be rude not to paddle out to Piercy Island and through the Hole in the Rock itself. The return trip to the mainland proved somewhat interesting with significant wind picking up the waves through the channel.

As soon as we were round the cape, we were completely sheltered from the westerly winds. We started to coast hug and explore the cliffs properly. The section immediately along from the point has impressively high cliffs which produced some significant down drafts and kept us on our toes. There were no good landing spots for several kilometres along the coastline. As we had been in our boats for about four hours at this point, both lunch and a toilet break were becoming significantly important. Luckily there was almost no swell which made a rocky channel a possible lunch stop.



*Chris heading for The Hole in the Rock through Piercy Island*

We continued our explorations along Te Wi Bay and round to Outu Bay which was identified as a very sheltered potential campsite. We found a snug little platform just big enough for our tent a few metres above the beach. We had plenty of wildlife to entertain us; we spent several minutes watching a seal roll around the rocks and an Eagle ray looped past us several times. Less welcome wildlife included a wasp which stung Chris as he was putting up the tent. Lesson learnt – make sure the first aid kit has antihistamines in it.

### Day Three 12 kms

#### Outu Bay to Whangamumu Bay

The forecast for the day was for a strong westerly swinging round to NW and up to 30 knots. We had planned for a short day due to this and had a leisurely lie-in. We did a litter pick-up along the beach finding a depressing collection of plastic items. Also, a number of dead little blue penguins washed up on the beach. This was to become a sad theme of the trip – apparently the warm water and poor weather of this last summer had led to a high mortality rate among sea birds this year.

Conditions were slightly less sheltered out of our snug little hidey hole of Outu Bay but still significantly kinder than those visible further out to sea. We kept in close and rock hopped along to a windy lunch stop in Te Toroa Bay. We got a freshwater rinse in a short downpour as we paddled round into Whangamumu Bay. One of the joys of adventuring is how fast conditions can change. By the time we paddled into Whangamumu Bay there was a clear blue sky and sunshine. From our campsite here we enjoyed a beautiful sunset.

### Day Four 36 kms

#### Whangamumu Bay to Whangaruru

We had planned this as another long day of paddling so made an early start. As we paddled out of Whangamumu we found a super secret campsite on the south side of Whangamumu Bay that will definitely need a revisit. We also found the biggest cave of the trip with a beautiful view back up the coastline we had paddled

the previous day. We continued to explore down the opposite side of the Whangamumu Peninsula and along to the beach at Taupiri Bay which would be a possible put-in location for a shorter trip. The coastline from Taupiri Bay down to Ngaiotonga Bay was surprisingly interesting – lots of rock platforms with channels through and between them. As there was not much swell, it made good exploring territory.

All was going swimmingly until just before lunch when I mis-timed my passage through a little rock channel. I heard the roar of a swell behind me and didn't manage to get a stern rudder in on time. My boat ended up diagonally across the channel and, as the water retreated, was left stranded on the sloping sides of the channel.

As I slowly tipped over sideways and ended up upside down, I had plenty of time to pull the sprayskirt and bail out. My first unintentional capsize in a sea kayak! It was a good practise for our rescue skills and also a timely reminder that, even on a calm and gentle day, things can end up with the word "Bugger!" being said. Luckily, in the winterless north, the water was warm enough that my dip caused no serious consequences.

Over our leisurely lunch stop the wind had picked up making the trip around the peninsula to the north of Bland Bay more interesting.



*Jess with her favourite new thing - her kayak trolley*

There was a good crosswind and the fetch was big enough that a bit more concentration was needed to deal with the beam-on winds. Approaching Home Point we were pleased to see a channel between the island and mainland that avoided a difficult paddle directly into a stiff headwind to get round the island. Just around this point was Pink Cave. The fact we both said, "I've seen better", was probably a sign that we had been spoiled by all our other caves on this section of coastline.

We were both quite tired by this point and were hoping that the campsite at Bland Bay would be open. I was even having secret hopeful thoughts about a possible fish and chip dinner. Sadly all these hopes were cruelly dashed as there was no fish and chip shop and the campsite was closed. This meant we had a portage over the peninsula into Whangaruru Bay. It was the first test of our Warehouse special kayak trolleys which managed the job admirably. In fact,



*The biggest cave we found and paddled through on the trip*

I declared my kayak trolley to be my new favourite thing - ever. Once back in the water, it was a short two kilometre paddle down to Puriri Bay. We arrived with just enough time to put up the tent before darkness descended.

#### **Day Five 19 kms**

##### **Puriri Bay to Mimiwhangata**

Unhelpfully the wind swung round to the south-west which meant we had a good warm up paddling straight into a stiff headwind first thing in the morning as we crossed from Puriri Bay to Oakura.

We spent the day exploring through rocky channels and round the small islands that dot the coastline. As the brisk south-west wind continued through the day we opted to miss out several of the bigger bays to avoid an upwind slog.

It was a shorter day of paddling so we arrived at the beautiful DoC campsite a Mimiwhangata in Waikahoa Bay. We found an amazing campsite under a huge twisted pohutakawa tree. In a bid to exercise some slightly different muscles we took a walk up the hill to try and get a view back along the coastline we had just paddled.

There was some evening excitement as just after we went to bed we heard a plane flying directly overhead. The plane then flew over again shining a big spotlight and was obviously flying a search pattern. This prompted a slight paranoia that one of us might have set off a PLB accidentally so we turned on our VHF radio and listened on channel 16. We eavesdropped on the communication between an Orion and two helicopters looking for a reported overturned boat.

Reading news reports a couple of days later, it seemed that it had been a false alarm but it was a reassuringly impressive response to a suggested capsized boat.

#### **Day Six 23 kms**

##### **Mimiwhangata to Otamure Bay**

Looking at the maps when planning our trip, this was a day that I had

been looking forward to. A beautiful morning and a day that featured a large number of islands. We started the day with a circumnavigation of Rimariki Island and an exploration of the Wide Berth Islands. This is excellent sea kayaking territory but would be terrible waters for anything bigger as there are a significant number of only just submerged rocks.

We both ended up stranded on top of hidden rocks and were thankful for our plastic kayaks which took the impacts well. We took our time exploring the coastline and enjoying all the opportunities for playing that the rocks and caves offered (I managed to avoid any more swims).

We arrived at Otamure Bay and were immediately greeted by a group we had met at Puriri Bay a couple of nights previously. Although this is an extremely well set up DoC campsite, we both missed the remoteness of some of our previous camps. As this was the last night of our trip, we needed to decide on our end point. We decided that we wanted to continue our explorations and not rush our last day and arranged our pick up from Matapouri.

#### **Day Seven 22 kms**

##### **Otamure Bay to Matapouri**

Our launch off the beach was slightly high pressure as we had an audience consisting of the two small children camped next to us, their mother and another nearby couple. We had lots of interesting questions about various bits of gear we were carrying and what we were doing. Also questions on what wildlife we had encountered and what our favourite animals were (turtles and orca). Luckily our beach launch was successful and we managed to maintain the pretence that we knew what we were doing.

Our final day was filled with rock-hopping, channel surfing and cave exploration. This entire coastline is a sea kayaking mecca – there was not a boring section in the entire trip. We were lucky with the paddling conditions as both wind and swell were pretty minimal which allowed



*Our final day was filled with rock-hopping, channel surfing and cave exploration*

maximum playing but it would be a brilliant paddle regardless. We were both feeling fairly weary by the time we pulled into Matapouri and wrestled our kayaks up to the carpark to greet our friendly car shuttle.

In conclusion, we both agreed it was one of the best kayak trips we have done in years. Outstanding coastline, friendly wildlife and crystal clear sea, all helped by the climate of the far north being particularly mild.

#### **Author Bio:**

Having spent several years trying (unsuccessfully) to become a river kayaker, I saw the error of my ways on a seven day sea kayaking trip along the coastline of the Isle of Skye in Scotland.

Since then I have paddled in North Wales and Scotland before moving to New Zealand where I was fortunate enough to end up in the sea kayaking paradise of the Bay of Islands.



#### **Photos & captions:**

All photos taken by Jess Gibbs



## Overseas Reports

### The Barefoot Kid paddles West Grønland from Tara Mulvany's Blog [www.explore-greenland.com](http://www.explore-greenland.com)

Lured by its vast wilderness, and with a focus on exploring both by paddle and on foot, two Kiwi women will spend 60 days kayaking from Ilulissat in Disko Bay, to the community of Nanortalik which lies near Greenland's southern tip.

Tara Mulvany and Fiona (Fi) Lee plan to set out on June 1st, which should coincide with the breakup of sea ice along Greenland's west coast and the Disko Bay area. As they paddle south, they will venture up valleys, peaks and rivers along the way, stopping occasionally in small towns to resupply with food and fuel. In between, they will be self-sufficient for weeks at a time.

Some of the major challenges they will face on the journey itself are strong winds, freezing temperatures – particularly in the first few weeks of their expedition, the potential of sea ice in the early stages, and rough seas.

Fi and Tara are a strong team with ample expedition experience. They thrive when faced with challenges, and have a passion for travelling by simple means into wild and remote places. But most importantly, they share the same motivations and style of adventuring. Fi puts it simply; "For us, it's all about the journey."

Greenland's west coast is home to not only large stretches of vast wilderness, but also Inuit communities and coastal villages. This is one of the major pulls for both women, who hope to connect with the birthplace of the kayak, and its people, on more of an intimate level. Fi states, "Encounters with people in isolated and remote places has been a rich part of our individual adventures in the past. The kayak is a key link for this, and we hope to engage with those we encounter along the way."

Since completing a gruelling 71 day circumnavigation of Svalbard

in 2015, Tara continues to be lured back to the far north. The idea of paddling Greenland's west coast came about in mid-2017 through a desire to explore more of the Arctic, and the realization that the best way to do that was by sea kayak. In her words: "There is something just so fitting about travelling Greenland's coast by kayak. Nothing compares to the beauty of the midnight sun, the windswept landscapes, the glaciers, wildlife and ice." Just as the Greenlandic Inuit have done for centuries, Fi and Tara will also traverse coastlines with sweeping tundra, giant glaciers and narrow fjords.

For this adventure, they have partnered with Tahe Outdoors, who as a major sponsor will provide them with *Zegul Arrow Empower* kayaks. This is the same model of kayak that Tara and the team used for their 2015 Svalbard circumnavigation, and during her 3,600km solo paddle down the coast of Norway in 2016. Proven in rough conditions and in the ice, they are excited to be paddling *Arrow Empowers* once again in Arctic waters. Kokatat will also be providing them with drysuits, PFDs and mitts – key pieces of gear for staying dry, safe and comfortable out on the water.

#### June 5, 2018 - Air Greenland and a Detour to Norway

Usually when travelling, flight delays are pretty annoying – people get stressed and the chaos and tension grows with airport queues. Things had gone smoothly for us as far as Copenhagen, and it seemed that we might just make it to Greenland on time with our luggage. As we flew over the Norwegian Sea, we tracked over Norway on a line towards Iceland. The beaches and bays of the coast below looked somewhat familiar from my paddle a few years before. My eyes followed my route across a string of islands where I had

sailed my kayak for hours with a following wind.

A call came over the PA system "do we have any doctors on board?". Ten minutes later and watching our position on the screen in front of me, I noticed we were no longer heading on a bearing north-west. The line showed a tight U over the Faroe Islands and we had clearly turned around.

A while later they informed us that we were heading for Stavanger, Norway. Ironic considering my migration north for the last three years has taken me to Norway. We touched down for half an hour before we flew away again, Greenland bound. The mountains, volcanoes and lakes of Iceland were bold and bleak from above, the island's interior still covered in snow.

Approaching Greenland's east coast we watched the mountains and peaks slowly flatten and fade into the ice cap, a place desolate beyond comprehension. On the western side we peered yet again out the windows, trying to catch glimpses of our paddling route south. But our next airport, Kangerlussuaq lay a few hundred kilometres inland at the head of one of the island's longest fjords. We landed to discover that we had missed our connection on to Ilulissat, so unfortunately we would have to spend the night as the next flight wasn't until 9:00 am the next day.

It couldn't have worked out more perfectly – we were put up in a hotel, had our last shower, washed some clothes, and ate large amounts of free food! We had planned on wandering out of Ilulissat's airport and camping somewhere on the outskirts of town, so understandably we were pretty happy with the whole situation.

The next morning we were in the air again, heading north. Fi sat by the



*Where else could this camp be but in West Greenland? Fi and Tara's campsite at Ilulissat with the local club's kayaks on the rack- and bergs from the local calving glacier in the background. Photo: Tara Mulvany*

window, eyes wide and amazed as we flew over Ilulissat's famous glacier on our descent. The whole bay was filled with more ice than I'd ever seen! So much glacial ice.

#### **June 5, 2018 Ilulissat and Ice**

In Ilulissat we lugged our bags to the yard down by the port that belonged to Royal Arctic Line, one of the country's biggest shipping companies. Only 24 hours before had they sent us confirmation that our *Zegul* kayaks from Tahe Outdoors in Estonia had arrived.

The question was though, what state were they in? I was nervous as we wove through a maze of mud puddles, forklifts and trucks and entered the office. Through broken English we managed to locate the kayaks which to our relief didn't even have a scratch! We ripped open the packaging like children opening Christmas presents!

From the port we carried the kayaks up the road, up a big hill and through the edge of town. With beaches unheard of here, we located what looked like a suitable spot to launch – right by the local kayak club.

After another trip back to collect our bags we collapsed in the sun, right next to the kayak racks.

It was 11:00 am and the day had barely begun and things were going way too perfectly for the beginning of such an adventure!

In front us icebergs filled the ocean for as far as we could see, huge bergs, gigantic bergs, and the largest bergs I'd ever seen! We spent the afternoon buying food for the weeks ahead and attempting to buy fuel for our multi fuel cooker. Well it's meant to run on many fuels, but it became quickly evident this isn't the case. We bought some fuel which we thought was kerosene. It didn't work.

We asked around town and no one seemed to know what we were after. Attempt two ended poorly, the fuel burned at a high heat but the cooker kept stalling and blowing itself out. We thought it was my 'not so trusty *Whisperlight*', which was a logical assumption. I tinkered with it, pulling it apart many times before eventually giving up – I couldn't find anything wrong with it. The last and final test lifted morale with its sooty flames. We pumped petrol into the cooker, lit it and a familiar hissing noise of the liquid vaporizing filled the air. Success!

So we scrambled to return the rest of the fuel before the shop closed and have resorted to using petrol for our trip. It might burn quite dirty, but it's

cheap, easily available, people know what you're asking for, and most importantly, it works!

We camped beside the kayaks and on our first night it snowed. In the morning we woke to the tent resembling an igloo, but by late morning most of the snow had melted away.

Ilulissat is a bustling place. Cars zip around the streets at an alarming speed. People are out and about enjoying the clear weather, and dogs bark on the edge of town. Tourist season has barely started so things were still quite quiet.

We hoped to set off tomorrow, weaving our way through the ice in an attempt to get to the other side of the glacier. From the hilltops here this looks like it could be the most challenging part of our trip! The ice is everywhere and we can't see a route through. But often it's not until you're down there that you realize a kayak can slip through! Let's hope anyway!

From here we will likely be out of contact until we reach Sisimiut, in roughly two weeks' time. The adventure begins!

#### **June 16, 2018 Sea Ice and Eider Duck Ilulissat to Sisimiut**

After spending five days in Ilulissat, watching masses of ice fill Disko Bay, we were beginning to wonder if we would even be able to paddle away. The prospect of having to catch a ferry 20 kms south to begin was seeming more likely by the day.

Each evening we would climb the hill to a viewpoint at the edge of town to scout any possible route. Through my time in Svalbard and guiding in the Antarctic, I have developed a huge amount of respect for the ice – for how quickly it moves, how it can be solid one day and gone the next.

On the evening of our 4th day it looked like a line was beginning to open up for us. To the inside of a band of huge bergs open water lay





*Tara and Fi at last underway*

still and surprisingly clear of brash. We decided to come back in the morning and if it still looked good we would give it a go. The worst that could eventuate would be the ice on the far side rejecting us.

So the next morning we trudged once more to our vantage point half an hour away. All looked good and a small, yet promising channel had opened on the far side, 10 kms away. The question was though, for how long would it stay open?

We rushed back, packed up and slid our loaded kayaks onto the water. Paddling through a small amount of brash on the edge of town we slowly left Ilulissat behind and worked our way behind the big icebergs. Navigating by the large berg and the possible opening we had seen from above, we sped along.

Approaching the far side a water taxi appeared ahead. Spirits were high as

we paddled in that direction, weaving through the last of the bigger bergs. We were home free! Our adventure had just begun.

For the next week we worked our way towards the southern end of Disko Bay, and then west, to the open coast. Large icebergs followed us, drifting with the tides and the wind in all directions. Sea ice stalled us on our first attempt to paddle through a 30 km long narrow channel, our most direct route west.

Morale dove as we turned back into the wind and backtracked to where we had come from. We turned north, hoping the next passage would be open. I was unconvinced, it was a large body of water feeding into the gut, but the actual gap was small and likely still frozen.

On a foggy damp morning we stopped by a small village to ask if the passage was clear. Climbing over carcasses of seals on the beach we clambered up towards civilization. We chatted with a young guy who spoke good English and he assured us the channel was clear. These guys would know after all, living off the sea and fishing for an income. Surely?

We paddled off and two hours later, still 20 kms from the gap, we hit fast ice! The whole bay, at least 10 kms across was frozen solid! So we jumped out and pranced around on

it, leaping puddles to warm up before resuming our track north.

Thankfully channel #3 let us through and with humpback whales cruising and surfacing around us as we paddled west.

The wind followed us for days, blowing consistently at our backs and pushing us along. We island-hopped through the fog, navigating by compass and the GPS on my trusty \$200 phone. What could possibly go wrong?

Campsites were often tricky, there were beaches, but summer hadn't yet arrived and most of the 'good' landing sites were still encased with ice. Sometimes we found just enough driftwood to light a small fire to cook on, and downed cups of steaming tea.

With passing kilometres, the low lying rocky hills and islands grew into steep mountains. It feels like the best is still ahead.

As the days go by we have become 'Arctic Ornithologists' identifying and naming bird species as we pass. The only problem is it's all speculation, neither of us really know what they are. We played games with passing boats – the aim of the game was to get its occupants to wave. It sounds easy but it's surprisingly not in Greenland! But as we moved south we have managed an occasional hesitant wave.

Today we will explore the bustling metropolis of Sisimiut and top up our food supplies for the next leg. We have been moving consistently since leaving Ilulissat behind and anticipate slowing down further south – once things warm up and we're more inspired to spend more time exploring on land.

Both of us (even Fi!) have been enjoying the freezing days – the ice, snow and wind. Summer still feels far away, but for now we're okay with that. In icy places there is always beauty and right now it's way too cold for mosquitoes! The adventure continues.



*Landing on remnants of the winter snowpack can be tricky where sea action has undercut the snow, often leaving a fragile edge to the shelf*

## Overseas Reports

### SAMOA – Sea Kayaking with Outdoor Samoa by Rowena Hayes

If you're thinking of an island getaway this winter, I can highly recommend Samoa. Only three and a bit hours away, warm, colourful and incredibly beautiful, the two islands of Upolu and Savaii tick all the boxes.

Even better, you can go sea kayaking – for a day, or five – with Outdoor Samoa run by Kiwi Ross and his awesome team. I stumbled upon one of his drivers, the outgoing and colourful Henry who has his pitch outside the Info Centre in Apia. You won't find any info on sea kayaking on the brochures in the Info Centre so I was grateful to be accosted by Henry who very quickly had me on the phone to Ross and all lined up for a paddle the next day.

We were picked up at 8.30 from our resort (Return to Paradise on the south coast of Upolu) and driven round to the west coast where Outdoor Samoa is located. After the usual briefing we were set up with a couple of shearwaters and a guide, and were on the water paddling to Manono Island just 5 kms off the mainland.

The trip over involved exiting the reef and re-entering it again to get to the island so a guide was helpful in order to avoid getting surfed backwards or sideways over the coral. We left at high tide when the water was fairly deep, however if your departure coincides with mid tide you could easily get out and do some snorkeling halfway across. There is also the opportunity to see sea turtles but these are very shy and tend to duck out of sight once they know you are there.

We met a local fisherman – a generously proportioned gent in an extremely skinny hand-hewn dugout with outrigger which he had made himself. He had been spear fishing on the reef and showed us an impressive catch of small brown fish that he assured us were very good eating.



*Rowena, the lucky kid, following her guide in the tropical paradise of Samoa*

It was interesting watching the water change colour from deep blue, to brownish colours where the coral was, to the most amazing azure blue once inside Manono's lagoon.

Just off the tip of Manono was Bat Island, a small, picture perfect island with a white coral sand beach. Although we didn't land there I paddled around it to see the fruit bats which live there and were hanging upside down in the trees.

Bat Island is separated from another tiny island by a small channel and the surf breaking over the coral meant that I paddled through this channel rather than going round both islands. It was still quite a bumpy ride!



*The small brown fish - good eating!*



*The generous stir fry with a freshly opened coconut. Ignore the black fly on the thumb!*

Lunch was provided by the villagers on Manono, a generous stir-fry washed down with a freshly opened coconut which was totally delicious and the perfect thirst quencher. After lunch you had the option of sleeping (very Samoan), swimming or doing a bit of a walk through the village.

The village was colourful with tropical flowers everywhere and I passed several churches, which are everywhere in Samoa and some are quite beautiful. At this time of day the heat really sapped you and the thought 'mad dogs and Englishmen' came to mind. Anyone with half a brain was asleep.

There was still time for a short nap and a swim before getting back into our kayaks and paddling back to the



mainland. The tide had turned, as had the wind. They were both going in our direction. Manono is very pretty both from the sea and the land and on the way home we kept an eye out for sea turtles, who sadly didn't cooperate. We could get a glimpse down Samoa's rugged south coast which looked like a very tempting place to explore.

A nice surf break was happening as we approached our destination so a bit of a play was had before paddling into the lagoon and landing. The paddle was probably around 20 kms.

Outdoor Samoa is Kiwi operated and Ross is very helpful and friendly. He offers both bike and kayak trips including a five day kayaking option where you can see the best that Samoa has to offer. Accommodation is in open air fales on the beach and I would be very keen to further explore the coastline of this exciting island. For further information see:

[www.outdoorsamoa.com](http://www.outdoorsamoa.com)



*The open fale on the beach - so close to the water*



*Just off the tip of Manono was Bat Island, a small, picture perfect island with a white coral sand beach.*

## SAFETY

### HYPOTHERMIA

by Phil Alley

Reprinted with kind permission from *BASK Bulletin No 51 May 2018*

On a BASK paddling trip out to Tuhua last year, led by Phil Alley, Tony Snelling-Berg went snorkeling and suffered from hypothermia. The weather was lovely, warm and sunny, but the time he spent swimming was enough to endanger him.

As the party leader, I was disappointed to be the last person to be informed of his condition, and when I was, I was shocked to find out that, with the best of intentions, those who were trying to help him had attempted to put him under a hot-shower. Fortunately, the water hadn't heated up as such treatment could well have been fatal.

But, by using sleeping bags and being put in a sunny position he was able to very slowly recover. If I had been informed of his condition when I should have been, my first consideration would have been an immediate aerial evacuation to Tauranga Hospital.

I asked Tony if he could record how the experience felt; unfortunately, he wasn't able to do it for some time, but I think the essence of the experience has been captured.

#### Tony's Story

Hypothermia is mentioned now and then among kayakers. What does it mean, what does a person experience? I was unfortunate to be in this predicament at Tuhua Island. After a fantastic circumnavigation, I decided to go for a swim. Being warm from the trip, it was pleasant to be in the water but not for long.

Snorkeling around I soon got cold and wanted to go back to the beach but a kayak buddy told me there was a stingray, have a look. Reluctantly I did. Swimming back, I realized I had been in the sea for too long. I felt funny and thought it wouldn't surprise me if I would die. Everything looked different and strange. Back on the beach I wasn't able to think properly

and shivered unstoppably. I wasn't able to speak because I was not able to control my jaw. I have been told it was the first stage of hypothermia. It makes me wonder what the next stage would be. It took several hours under three sleeping bags in the sun to recover. It was a frightening experience!

#### Assessment of Tony's Hypothermia

The comment below is from Anja Morris, who offers Outdoor Skills courses and regularly runs outdoor first aid courses for BASK. Phil asked Anja for her assessment of the condition Tony found himself in:

Hi Phil,

You are right, the patient was in a hypothermic state that could have potentially got a lot worse.

Falling into cold water, a sudden immersion, is referred to as cold shock and can often be easily rectified if the person gets out straight away as the core temperature wouldn't have dropped yet. Main risk here is the gasping for air as that automatic initial reaction on falling into cold water, inhaling of water and drowning.

Your mate didn't experience cold shock though seeing he didn't fall in and get out again quickly but apparently spent quite a bit of time swimming - with the stingray episode even longer than intended. Initially feeling warm from the trip and snorkeling would have distracted him from the coolness of the water. Heat loss is much faster in water - so it catches us suddenly.

Your friend was fast progressing from 'Cold Exhaustion' into 'Hypothermia'. In the first stage we are still alert and can help ourselves but once hypothermia sets in, we rely on our buddies to take charge as the confused mind and uncontrollable shivering means we are beyond self-help.

A hot shower and the nerve endings in the extremities sending signals of warmth would fool the brain - it would 'release' warm blood from the core and as it circulates around the body. What comes back? The cold blood from the extremities which can then 'shock' the heart. So, just as well they ran out of hot water on Tuhua!

Treatment will definitely need to focus on shelter, removal of wet gear, replace with dry warm clothing, sweet warm drinks (if patient fully conscious).

The sleeping bags in the sun were a good idea and another good sign was that your mate was actually still shivering, an involuntary response of the body trying to produce heat. Once that had stopped, it would have been a very serious situation.

I am glad you got home safely after that trip and agree with you that it would be a good idea to write about the situation in your newsletter.

Cold Exhaustion / Hypothermia signs and symptoms are often ignored or misunderstood, sometimes with tragic results!

### **A Close Call with Hypothermia by Phil Alley**

The object of the following story from me, is to demonstrate how quickly hypothermia can develop, with a potentially fatal outcome, no matter how fit and strong, male or female, how young or old the victim is.

Many years ago, I undertook an animal and vegetation assessment for the then NZ Forest Service in the Ruakituri, which lies to the east of the Huia Range and north of Waikaremoana. To assist, I had a team of five trainees, all in their late teens, and fit as, four really top young guys, fortunately as it turned out! And one lazy bugger, and typical of that type, he thought he was smart. Normally, I would spend time with such a crew before starting work in an isolated area, to weed out any problems, but unfortunately things didn't work out

quite how I wanted, and so it wasn't until we were into the Ruakituri that I discovered the liability.

His main purpose was to avoid anything associated with work, and a favourite was to 'forget' his coat. It was mid-February when we started the job, and it took quite some time for me to convince the crew that they must take rain gear every day, as even though the weather was so fine and hot, it could change very quickly.

And, if for some reason someone was incapacitated, and they couldn't make it back to camp, a coat would make a night out just that much more bearable. Leading by doing, my hat and coat were always in my pikau (pack), and I didn't feel fully dressed until it was on my back.

We had fly-camped the outermost lines, until we were able to work from our main tent-camp. It was early March when we had just about completed the assessment lines; the three we had to do were close to the tent-camp, and being the Boss, I took the furthest away one, which headed up onto Maungapohatu.

Normally, when working and because of the inconvenience, I wouldn't take my rifle, but as this was the last line, relatively close to camp and in some reasonable looking country I did so. And that was the mistake that very nearly had such tragic consequences as I wasn't focussed on the job as I should have been.

With me was the young guy who made a habit of forgetting his coat, and he did so on this line. Being the last line and a hunt coming up, instead of telling him to go back and get his coat, all I said was that he could well suffer if the weather changed.

Which it did, and as we approached the line start, I could feel the change starting to happen. We had just started the line when the rain and wind came and a drop in temperature. I was fine with my gear but all he had on top was a thin cotton shirt. We weren't that far up the hill when I noticed he was even slower than normal. What I took for surliness in his responses to

my insistence that he get his "a into g" wasn't. It was that he was in the first stages of hypothermia and rapidly getting worse.

Shortly after this he went down. Checking on him, I found he was unconscious and it was only then that I realized just how serious the situation was that I had allowed to happen. I carried him down the hill to the stream that led back to camp, and was walking down this when I was met by the rest of the crew.

They had guessed something was wrong and had the initiative to come looking. We shared the load back to camp, and when there zipped three sleeping bags together and put him in the middle, with one of us on either side.

We took it in turns throughout the afternoon and night doing this. He was so cold that it didn't take long to become unbearable. My abiding memory of this was just how cold he was, it was like snuggling up to a block of ice and how shallow and intermittent his heartbeat was. The weather progressed rapidly to one hell of a storm: thunder, lightning, very strong winds and even heavier rain.

Periodically, we would have to go outside to reset pegs and ropes; the tent wasn't blown away, but it was very close a number of times. Even if we had of been able to radio for assistance, the conditions would have prevented any response, so we had to manage the situation ourselves.

It was about 2:00 am when his heartbeat changed from being hard to detect, to slow but regular. The storm had blown over by the morning, with a lovely day afterwards. He woke up about 11:00 am but had no recollection of what had happened.



## TECHNICAL

### Practising in Real (Rougher) Conditions by David Cook

Is Shaun Maclaren in trouble in the photograph below? Read on to find out how serious the situation was.

But first the background. A group of us from Wellington attended the International Kayak Week in the French Pass area. We realized some of the Aucklanders were developing skills it would be desirable to have in Wellington. Could it be something to do with the SKISLs (Sea Kayakers Inspired to Stretch Limits) group that was running in Auckland. After discussion with Shaun Maclaren, Noel Pepperell, Peter Fuller and myself, we decided to set up a group in Wellington.

Note re SKISLs: Deb Volturno was the instigator and the initiator. See the KASK magazine, *NZ Sea Kayaker* No. 190 August - September 2017

So, we made some decisions. We would meet regardless of weather, on the third Saturday of each month from 8:00 am (Boats ready and start group meeting on beach) to 10:00 am, at a location to be decided. We would encourage others with advanced beginner's skills or better to

join in.

The objectives are:

- to have fun.
- to learn from each other by trying new or challenging activities. (Note: it is not training and all participants must take responsibility for their own safety.)
- to encourage others to take up the sport of sea kayaking.

We intend to try and choose locations so participants will be safe and wash up on a sandy shore, even if they cannot re-enter their kayak on capsizes.

We may invite an experienced kayaker to share their experience sometimes and lead us in trying new techniques.

So, the first meeting was in Titahi Bay, with a fairly strong north-westerly. We all enjoyed surfing in smaller waves at the northern end and then did some assisted rescues. Noel Pepperell demonstrated the heel hook used with a T-rescue and we all practised. Next stop was a lo-

cal café where we spent almost as long talking about the day.

Of course, yours truly feels if you have not capsized you have not tested yourself far enough at a SKISL's outing. Yes, I was tipped over by a wave that was too big for me to be side on to. I was just getting sorted when another came along and ripped the kayak out of my hand. Actually, the coaming cut into my hand and I let go. I could not catch up with my kayak so just followed it in to the beach, taped up my fingers with electrical tape and went out again. (I have now sanded a smooth curve on the edge of the coaming and hopefully will not lose my kayak again!)

The following month the northerly was even stronger. We met at Paremata beach, a good sheltered launching spot on the sand just north of the Paremata bridge and east of SH1. Facilities include toilets and a warm-ish shower. Some ventured out Paremata Channel towards the waves on the bar opposite Onehunga Bay, there was an incoming tidal flow so capsized kayakers would have been



taken into the relative safety of the Paremata channel towards Porirua Harbour. Others were content to challenge themselves with the wind and short chop on the inner harbour.

For the June meeting we agreed to trial towing. With a light to moderate northerly forecast we met on Titahi Bay beach. Waves were small and just large enough to give some realism to the exercise.

It is well and good to learn in a swimming pool but no one capsizes or gets into trouble in millpond conditions. I am looking for a 20 knot southerly to practice re-entry on approaches to Petone beach. The challenge of a headwind out to Soames Island and a good chop to practice re-entry on way back.

As well as the conventional long tows, we tried a short tow (1.5 to 2.0 m), useful for quickly pulling a kayak a short distance away from danger while they get sorted again.

And now back to the photo at the bottom of page 13. Shaun Maclaren was the only person in a drysuit and graciously offered to be the guy who fell out and lost his kayak close to rocks. The photo shows Bohdan Szymanik rescuing Shaun Maclaren. He is clinging to the bow of Bohdan's kayak and being moved to safer water. I think it was Robby Benson-Cooper who retrieved the kayak so Shaun could be reunited with his boat.

*Noel Pepperell pushing an injured kayaker supported by a helper beside them. While not a long distance tow option, this technique could be used to get an injured kayaker to a safe location.*



*Robby Benson-Cooper is holding on to Peter Fuller's kayak as he tows him away from danger while paddling backwards. This technique could be used to quickly get a kayak away from rocks or other dangers*

A great time was had by all, I am sure made even more useful and enjoyable with the advice given by Shaun. Thanks, and we hope you can come and paddle with us again sometime, soon.

#### FOOTNOTE:

The following sections have been added at the request of the Editor to provide further comment with reference to other articles in the magazine:

##### a. Colder Water Temperatures

Google earth says the water temperature on the day was around 12°C. Shaun commented it was colder than Auckland but as he had layered up under his drysuit it was not dangerously cold. I was in the water for

about an hour at the same temperature last winter. I was wearing Sharkskin top and bottom, thin neoprene over jacket, paddling jacket, PFD and booties. But I had lost my cap and so had a bare head and I am bald. My body temperature went down by 2 to 3 degrees. I would not like to lose any more body heat (temperature). (See NZSK 190/14 – Can You Re-enter Your Kayak after a Capsize?) As a precaution I have ordered a drysuit. Being retired, I kayak on my own frequently. I also now wear a helmet most days. This keeps the cap on my head and would aid heat retention.

##### b. Fear of Capsizing

I have been learning to roll in a very tight fitting river kayak. As a precaution when I capsized the first time, I asked to have a person beside me in case I had trouble getting out of the capsized kayak. It was not as bad as I thought.

So, my advice is to try exiting with help beside, and see how long you can stay under water. We were asked to wait at least 15 seconds before exiting on my initial training. But of course you should also practice an assisted rescue (like T-rescue) and a reliable method of re-entry that works without help. Both methods should be practised in rougher conditions.



## TECHNICAL

### Caught Out at Night? Carry a Light! By Paul Caffyn

Winter months have closed in, and water temperatures are nearing their lowest for the year. In the event of an 'out of boat' experience, our survival time in water is also at its lowest. Wearing a PFD and dressing for immersion will increase our survival time while carrying two means of emergency communication will vastly improve your chances of a fast and efficient rescue.

If an 'out of boat' experience occurs after dark, even though a call for rescue is made and we are dressed for immersion (and wearing a PFD), the chances of being located by a searching boat or helicopter are very slim if we cannot communicate our position by a light source or means of emergency comms. The situation is worse than slim if the night sky is overcast and the sea or lake surface is choppy.

To reinforce a message to carry a light at night, I will draw on three instances where rescuers have been hindered by a paddler not carrying a light or waterproof means of emergency comms.

#### 21 March 2018 Baylys Beach – Northland Solo Paddler Rescue

A New Zealand army Orion aircraft, landing at Whenuapai airbase, picked up a personal locator beacon alert and raised the alarm in what was described as a 'fluke' discovery, after 58 year old Hamilton man Paul Gasstra triggered his PLB after capsizing in surf north of the Kaipara Harbour entrance.

In a pedal-powered home built kayak, with outriggers to balance the boat, he was attempting to paddle/pedal around New Zealand. In August 2016, he was helped ashore by police after he was unable to get back in his kayak when it capsized off Opotiki in the Bay of Plenty. He had spent 30 minutes in the water be-

fore he was rescued. He was shivering with cold when he reached shore but was not injured.

On the evening of 21 March, as he headed north from Bethells Beach, Gaastra struck trouble 20 kms north of the Kaipara Harbour. 'The swell on the coast was large and building. He got overturned by a wave and wasn't able to get back into his kayak,' Northland Rescue Helicopter chief pilot Pete Turnbull said. "A personal locator beacon saved his life. It wasn't a powerful signal. We didn't pick it up until we were two miles away."

The Northland helicopter was first to arrive at the remote Ripiro Beach, off the west coast not far from Dargaville. "The seas were rough, it was blustery wind conditions combined with lack of light, Turnbull said. Hovering above, Turnbull could see the man floating just outside the breaker line. "He was in serious trouble. He couldn't break through it to get to the shore, the current kept him out." Turnbull said the man was wearing an inflation device and clinging to the overturned kayak about 300 metres from shore.

Gaastra had no light source on his inflation device, and was barely visible to the helicopter crew as waves swept past. The crew dropped three



*Rescued paddler Paul Gaastra*

torches into the ocean. "We'd found him but we kept losing him because he had no lights. The torches dropped into the sea worked well as a reference."

Advanced paramedic and rescue swimmer Andrew Ferguson was lowered down to pluck Gaastra from the ocean.

Exhausted, he simply 'let go'. "He was winched up with the rescue strop assisted by two paramedics. By then, Gaastra was 'barely coherent' and suffering from severe hypothermia. Had the man not been carrying a distress beacon he would not have survived", RSCC Mission Coordinator Dave Wilson said.

Without his PLB, Gaastra would have drowned, however he could have helped the searching helicopter



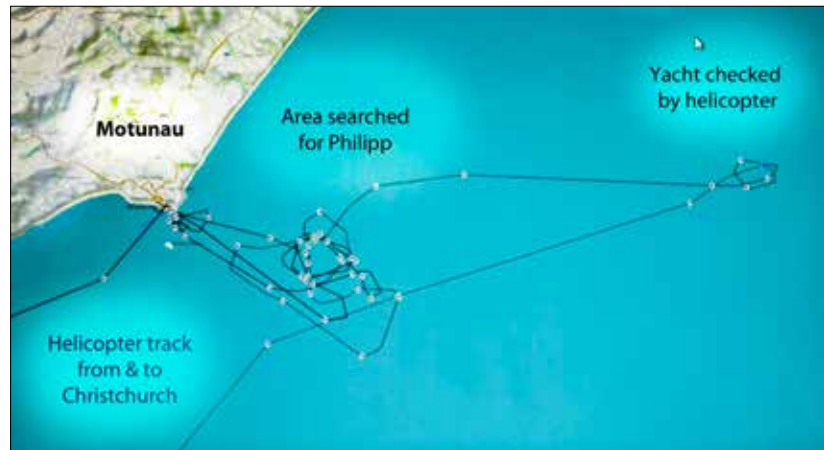
immensely if he had carried a fixed (or strobe) white light attached to his PFD. Some quick thinking by the helo crew by dropping three torches gave them a reference point to the paddler in the water.

### 20 April 2014 Motunau – North Canterbury Solo Paddler Rescue

A 19 year old solo German paddler had a near miraculous night rescue off the North Canterbury coast after he was unable to make progress towards shore into strong offshore winds. John Kirk-Anderson wrote a detailed 'Bugger File' report including feedback from the paddler, Met. Service, RCCNZ (Rescue Coordination Centre) and the helicopter rescue medic (*New Zealand Sea Canoeist* No. 170, April-May 2014, pp 8-11).

At 6:00 pm on 20 April, Philipp Cartier triggered the SOS function on his Spot Messenger. Although he could see the lights of the small township of Motunau, offshore winds had prevented any progress towards shore for the past three hours. RCCNZ received a relayed call at 6:26 pm and a helicopter from Christchurch was tasked for a search. A local fisherman was also alerted by police.

Using night vision goggles, the helicopter crew located Philipp just after 9:00 pm, still upright and paddling, and logged the GPS position. However after landing to fit a powerful searchlight, and returning to the



*Helicopter search track for Philipp Cartier. Any source of bright light on the kayak or paddler would have helped searchers locate him.*

search area, the crew were unable to find Philipp. Due to the rough sea and windy conditions, a night winch rescue was ruled out, so the fisherman launched his vessel to join the search.

Phillip had a small red light inside a waterproof box, but when he got it out to signal the helicopter, he fumbled and dropped it overboard. With his smartphone in a hatch, the only light source he had was the small blinking LED on this SPOT messenger.

That is what the helicopter crew saw through their NVGs, the tiny LED on Philipp's SPOT Messenger, his only light source. The helicopter guided the fishing boat then to pick up Phillip and his kayak.

Not having a waterproof light secured to his kayak or PFD was a cru-

cial failing in assisting the searchers to find him. A lack of any reflective material on his clothing, equipment or kayak reduced the effectiveness of the lights and NVGs used by the searchers. He was a very fortunate young man to be found.

### 6 December 2010 Lake Wakatipu Two Paddlers Drowned

Two young Frenchmen launched an older type of recreational, open cockpit kayak about 9:00 am from near Queenstown to paddle south across the lake to Hidden Island. Lake conditions for paddling were good with no wind. At 11:30 am, with a strong southerly change due after midday, a local boat operator advised the two men of the weather deterioration and offered them a lift back to Queenstown, which they declined. He also gave them his phone number.

The two young men were only lightly dressed. Their kayak had no decklines, no rudder, no sprayskirt, no bailing devices and just minimal foam buoyancy in the bow and stern. They possessed just one paddle between them but carried two of the old-style neck-yoke lifejackets. A single cell phone was carried. No



*Philipp Cartier - easy to spot in daylight, but exceedingly difficult at night with no visible white light or rescue strobe light. Photo: JKA*



*The large volume recreational kayak used by the two Frenchmen.*



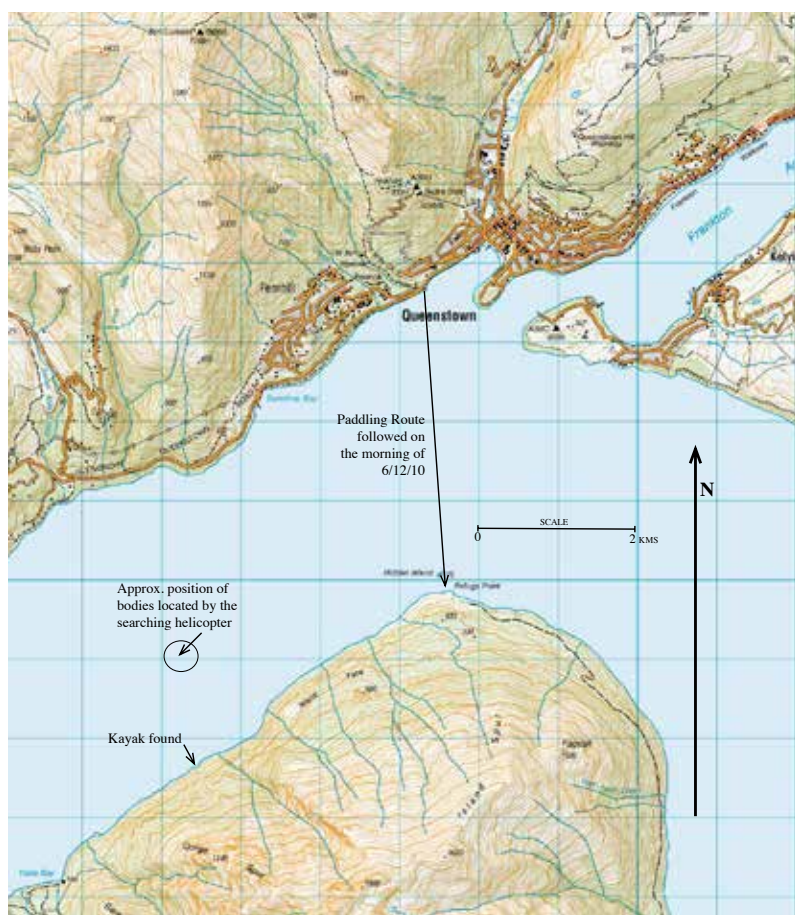


Figure 1. Location map of Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu showing the route paddled by the two Frenchmen on the morning of 6 December 2010 to Hidden Island. Also the approximate position where the two bodies were located by helicopter and where the kayak was recovered next day.

light source, such as a headlamp or torch was carried.

After 9:00 pm, the Frenchmen launched from the lake shore, south of Hidden Island, intending to paddle back to Queenstown before the onset of darkness. Northward from the island, lake conditions progressively deteriorated with waves breaking into and filling the cockpit. At 9:53 pm, the boat driver received a panicked phone call from the Frenchmen, who were in the middle of the lake, their kayak was taking on water and they wanted a boat to rescue them.

The 9:53 pm phone call for help was made before the kayak was fully submerged. With no decklines to allow the men to keep in contact with the kayak, and night falling, the lightly clad men drifted apart, succumbed to the 10°C lake water and drowned.

Subsequent repeated return phone calls to the cellphone went straight to voice mail, thus it was not in a waterproof bag. The boat driver quickly

contacted police and Coastguard and launched his own boat to initiate a search. A helicopter joined the search at 11:50 pm, equipped with NVG.

By the time of the 9:53 pm distress phone call, conditions had deteriorated with a 25 knot southerly wind, rough lake conditions with white-capping waves 0.5 to 1 metre high. There was no moon with approximately 7/8 cloud cover.

Sadly, despite the efforts of vessels and helicopter searching the lake, the first body was not sighted by the helicopter crew until 12:50 am, almost three hours after that initial phone call and the second body soon after.

The first rescue boat was launched only 12 minutes after the phone call for rescue. With their kayak capsized, even though they wore the PFDs, given the overcast sky, darkness and choppy sea, it was nigh on impossible to spot the two men floating in the choppy water unless they were able to signal their position to the search-

ers. Even when the helicopter joined the search, it was a full hour before the first body was sighted.

Could the outcome have been different? Once their kayak took on water and capsized, if the men had been able to signal to the boat operator who had launched 12 minutes after the call for rescue, in my view there is a strong chance they would have survived. But lightly dressed, with a breaking chop and a water temperature of 10°C, another five to ten minutes could have been too long to survive.

Note: I have condensed this information on the double lake fatality from a report I prepared for the Dunedin coroner.

### Carry A Light

Leaving aside carriage of two waterproof means of emergency communication (VHF radio, PLB, EPIRB, cellphone) what can we carry to show our presence at night if a call for rescue is made?

#### 1: A waterproof headtorch

An essential bit of kit for multi-day or overnight trips. The red bulb/light allows night map reading and compass navigation without loss of night vision, while the quick flashing white strobe is for signalling your position to a searching vessel or helicopter.

If you are paddling in congested areas and it is necessary to show an all-round white light (or torch capable of signalling an approaching vessel), please remember not to set your headtorch in strobe mode – this is only to be used when you are requesting a rescue.

#### 2. Chemical light sticks

#### 3. Flares

#### 4. Laser signaling device

5. Other alternatives include a camera flash, or a light on a cellphone.

6. Reflective tape on your kayak deck and or PFD.



## TECHNICAL

### Capsize and Wet Exit Fear How Much Support Should I Offer?

by Veronica Steane

Reprinted with kind permission  
from *Sea Canoeing – Journal of the  
Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club Inc.*,  
Issue 59, February 2018.

Avoidance of capsize in a kayak is normal and self-protective. For some people, throwing themselves into a capsize, and wet exiting the boat, is a major difficulty. Fear of being trapped, unable to get out of the capsized boat, and unable to reach air, can be a big part of the problem. Fear of capsize and wet exit blocks learning of all subsequent skills that we need to be safe and mutually supportive paddlers. The first thing new paddlers need to learn is how to exit a capsized boat calmly and safely.

On the TSCC Introduction Days that I have been involved in, we practise a dry run of releasing spray decks and pushing out of the boat on the beach, checked by an experienced paddler, before launching. We also demonstrate a dry run of assisted rescue should an unexpected capsize occur. Unless a participant is clearly nervous and needs extra support of a supervised capsize in shallow water prior to a deep water capsize, we assume that everyone will be able to bail out and resurface successfully – and are always relieved when each paddler surfaces safely after their first capsize.

We work through everything else we have to cover and save capsize and rescues till the end of the session, so everyone can stay dry and avoid wind chill on wet clothing. Part of my risk management of the day is to hold the session in calm water, sheltered from wind, with a ratio of one experienced to about three unknown paddlers, so we have a good chance of giving assistance quickly. However, I have been rethinking this over recent weeks, and facing more squarely to the risk of underwater inhalation. I now quiz new members



*Doug Aitken practising to minimize full immersion with a bombproof roll*

on their capsize and underwater confidence, and if they have any doubts about their ability to wet exit safely and easily, I am offering they come an hour early and we will go through the process in a graded and supported way. They can bring a full change of gear so they start the main introduction session warm and dry again; and confident of safe wet exit.

The wet exit procedure is actually very simple and easy, but you need to know what to do, and it is not intuitive. There is a small risk, but a risk with dreadful consequences, that in the event of an unexpected or fearful capsize, the person can panic and inhale water. They can come to the surface conscious and able to speak and be dead within a few minutes.

Jean has pointed the club to an article in *Sea Kayaker* magazine Dec 2004, pp 42-45, titled 'The Loss of a Novice', written by Charles Sutherland. This article analyses the death of a novice paddler, who capsized unintentionally in water of 14.5°C and failed to wet exit.

The instructor got him to the surface, he was able to speak at that stage, but with lungs full of water, drowned before effective help could be given. He had practised a dry run of wet exit on the beach three hours beforehand. Sutherland recommended that novices practise under close supervision, without sprayskirts, before going on a paddle. He advised new paddlers paddle without sprayskirts

until they are both confident and competent with their wet exit.

Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) have published a booklet *Tassie's BoatWise Buddy*, also advising of the risk of water inhalation on capsize. It is more likely to happen in waters below 15°C. Our waters vary from 8°C in winter to 20°C in summer.

So the time has come to try a wet exit. You need to think clearly in the situation. It is much simpler than the length of the following 'Do It Yourself' description suggests.

A graded fear reduction session can include the following steps, starting off on a beach with a safe gently graded sandy bottom with good visibility through the water. Find a knowledgeable partner to work with; to support, problem solve and learn together:

1. On land, sit in the kayak, and practice the correct bail out movement, which is: place your hands either side of the cockpit beside your hips, push up and forwards, lifting your bottom off the seat, and imagine continuing that forward movement to unthread your legs from inside the boat. Repeat that movement holding the paddle in one hand whilst pushing up.
2. Still on land, fasten the spray deck, practise running your hands around the coaming of the cockpit till they reach the pull tab. Get into the habit

of pulling the tab forwards to clear the cockpit rim – some decks are loose enough to release with a pull back towards you, but a tight deck needs this forward pull to be sure of clearing the rim.

Do this with two hands, then your dominant hand, then your non-dominant hand. Follow deck release with step 1 to drill the routine. Remember to clear the back edge of your spray deck from the cockpit rim behind you if it tends to hold on there. Repeat with your eyes shut, relying on the rim to guide your hand to the release tab. Repeat keeping hold of your paddle in one hand.

Later on, it is good for everyone to learn how to release the spray deck without using the pull tab, in case it fails one day. The deck is tightest at the ends, and most relaxed on the long sides of the cockpit. Use the palm / heel of your hand to push a fold in the deck, from your lap to the side edge, then grasp that loosened fabric and release it from the side coaming. Work the whole deck free from that opening.

3. Dressed in canoeing gear, leaving your boat on land for this step, go for a swim with a companion. Splash your face, duck under the surface, while sitting or standing on the bottom. Stay under and count off seconds in your head – ‘one and two and three and’... Determine what time limit you have for holding your breath under water. This helps clarify your ‘time window’ in a capsize situation. Often it helps to start off wearing goggles or a mask so you can see what is happening around you, and maybe avoid getting water in your nose initially.

4. Still in safe fully controlled conditions, standing in the water, have the capsized kayak beside you. Grasp the cockpit on either side; put your head under water and into the seat space. Discover the pocket of air there. Breathe there, develop an awareness of the upside down kayak floating, your independence of it, and the buoyant support it offers to a swimmer. Come up to the surface when you need to, holding onto your

kayak either by the deck-lines or the cockpit rim (coaming).

5. Sit in the kayak, launched on the water, still with standby assistance and feeling in safe controlled conditions. Don’t fasten the sprayskirt yet. Mentally rehearse the bail out procedure of step 1. Then tip yourself into the water and bail out calmly, knowing your time window. Hands beside hips, pushing away from the seat and forwards, allowing your legs to follow you comfortably. (Skinned or bruised shins are a sign of too fast an exit attempt – slow down, you have plenty of time!). Come to the surface, breathe, hold onto your boat by deck-line or cockpit coaming, be aware it supports you, and develop confidence that you are in control, and your kayak is your friend. Again, you may feel better doing this with mask or goggles until confident that you can do it without having to see what you are doing.

If the capsized person shows signs of panicked thrashing around under water, or of no movement, the helper must immediately retrieve them by reaching over the hull, grabbing the far cockpit coaming or deckline, and use their weight to haul the kayak upright.

6. Do this a few more times, introducing time delays before bailing out. Hang upside down for a few counts before exiting in a controlled manner. Repeat, giving yourself a task while hanging in the upside down kayak, that demonstrates you can control your mind in that situation – for example reach your hands up onto the hull, and tap out a rhythm or short tune, before placing your hands beside your hips and pushing away and forwards, bailing out calmly.

Other ideas for mind control tasks include: twist around in your seat and tap the boat behind with your left hand, then same to the right; have your helper show a number of fingers under water, and reply showing the same pattern to the helper, before bailing out.

7. Once comfortable with that, fasten your sprayskirt. Before capsizing,



Article author - Veronica Steane

rehearse Step 2 till you are fully confident you can release the deck under water. Repeat steps 5 and 6 till confident. Then add the paddle – hold it in one hand while releasing the deck, and while pushing up and out, coming to the surface holding onto kayak and paddle.

My thanks to Peter Dingle especially for much discussion and advice on this topic. Peter is a professional sea kayak instructor, and member of the Victorian Sea Kayak Club. Also thanking Karoline Dingle, and TSCC members Jean Jackson, Allan Lee, Bette Roberts, Terry Sykes, Bill Reynolds, Mike Emery and Greg Simson for input into these ideas.

#### Author Paddling Bio

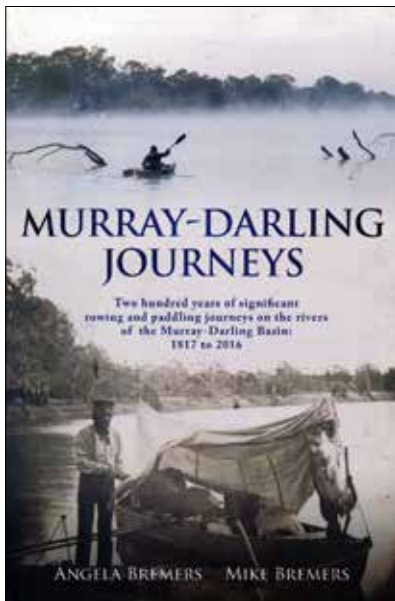
Sea canoeing came to Veronica when she met her life partner Mike Emery around 1984. The Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club provided a nurturing environment for her to develop into a proficient paddler and instructor. TSCC was one of the earliest sea kayak clubs in the world. As new clubs emerged in Australia and internationally, TSCC made an effort to engage with them through exchange of magazines and occasional visits.

One such event was a tour of Wilsons Promontory, hosted by the Victorian Sea Kayaking Club in Easter 1992. Peter Dingle, a senior paddler and professional outdoor sport instructor on that trip, has maintained the friendship with Mike and Veronica. This article was developed over several days of discussion (and some paddling) when Peter and his wife visited Hobart recently.

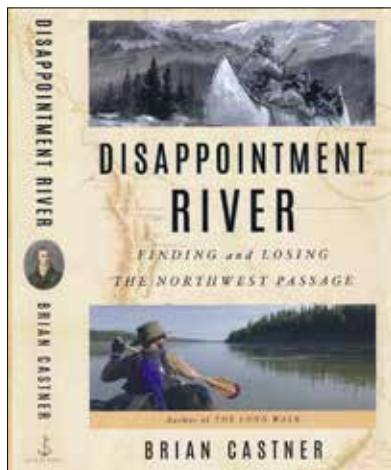


## Book Notes

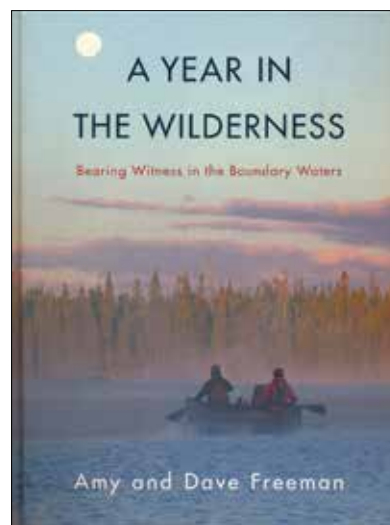
Recent additions to the 12 Mile library include the following:



A master's thesis undertaken by Angela Bremmers led to a more comprehensive compilation with her father Mike of 200 years of paddling and rowing journeys undertaken on the rivers of the Murray-Darling Basin (published 2017). This comprising the watersheds of a vast area of NSW, a modest area of southern Queensland and a little bit of eastern South Australia. Starting with the first river explorers in 1817, the Bremmers list the paddlers and rowers who achieved significant voyages through to 2016. A nice soft-cover with a reasonable number of photographs and a comprehensive reference list and index. It is neither a book of how to paddle these long rivers nor an intimate narrative of those who made the journey.



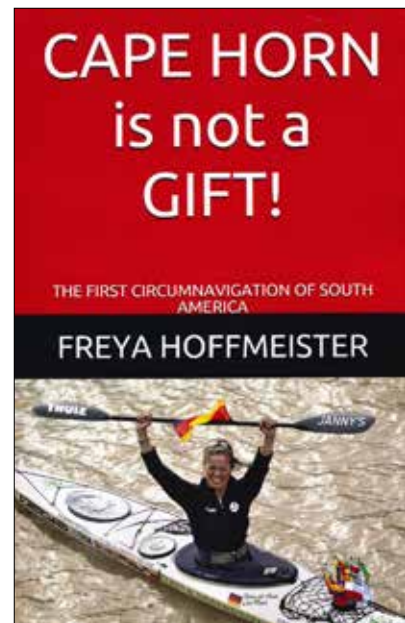
*Disappointment River* (2018) follows the pioneering canoe voyage of Alexander Mackenzie down the river named after him. This is a lovely casebound book with a dustjacket but very scant on illustrations. Broad brush route maps are inside the cover and despite the modern author's canoe voyages, illustrations are confined to a four page colour plate segment. Rated highly by advance reviewers as writing 'with the poetry and eye for detail of all great writers', for me it disappoints with a lack of readable maps and a mix of historical and current photographs / illustrations. If only the dustjacket designer had been allowed to illustrate the text.



Perhaps an understated choice of title, this book (published 2017) is a gloriously well illustrated feast of a year in the wilderness of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness of northern Minnesota. Amy and Dave Freeman capture four seasons eloquently with words and stunning colour photographs.

My only niggle with this book is that the text point size is overly large, perhaps 14pt, seemingly for older poorly sighted readers. Some of the beautiful full or half page photos lack captions, but the text does carry explanations.

The photos fully met my exacting criteria of not only telling a story but cover the full gamut from really tight shots (a dragonfly hatching or a lady's slipper flowering) to landscape action photos. Put this on your wish list for Santa's visit. Price of \$42.08 from Book Depository.

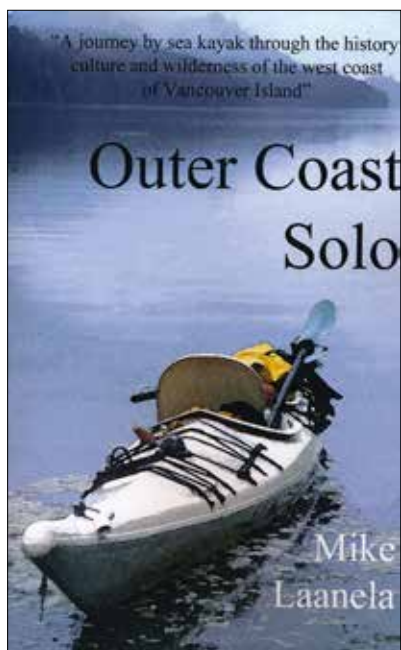


Freya's account of her four year mission to paddle around South America was first published in 2016 - this was in German and included a central colour plate section. My translation of the title went something like 'alone in a kayak around the world'. Just a minor exaggeration! The page count ran to 313 pages.

When Freya and I last phone chatted, she was undertaking a translation of this book into English. My schoolboy German is rather rusty, but even so I find it difficult to see why this English translation has a page count of only 216 pages. Very much the same point size! The only photograph is the cover shot of Freya finishing her paddle at Bueno Aires. Sadly a book without without photographs, maps or illustrations.







Sub-titled, 'A journey by kayak through the history, culture and wilderness of the west coast of Vancouver Island', this delightful paperback (published 2015) is a wonderful mix of both paddling, maritime exploration and history of the people who inhabited the island before its so-called discovery by westerners.

It is not such a really big paddling trip that Mike Laanela achieved, but he must have taken up as much time as paddling with his meticulous research.

The book is light on illustrations, with just one tiny scale map of the island and the only photographs are fuzzy black and white chapter heading pics.

My other niggles are his use of the first person for his paddling narrative. I do this and I do that', and that annoys me.

However if you are planning a paddling mission to the western coast of Vancouver Island, like Barkley or Quatsino sound, I would recommend this tome for background research. 'Tis not a how to paddle that coast, but a guide to the rich history of discovery on that exposed coast.

US\$14.95 from Amazon with another \$10+ for postage.

## HUMOUR

### Not Paddling Weather

Saturday morning I got up early, put on my long johns, dressed quietly, and slipped quietly into the garage to put my kayak on the truck, and proceeded to back down the driveway into a torrential downpour. There was snow mixed with the rain, and the wind was blowing 35 knots. I turned on the radio and discovered that the weather would be bad throughout the day. I went back into the house, quietly undressed, and slipped back into bed. There I cuddled up to my wife's back, now with a different anticipation, and whispered, "The weather out there is absolutely terrible."

My loving wife of 20 years replied, "Can you believe that idiot husband of mine is out kayaking in that shit?"

### 60th High School Class Reunion

He was a widower and she a widow. They had known each other for a number of years, having been high school classmates and having attended class reunions in the past without fail. This 60th anniversary of their class, the widower and the widow made a foursome with two other singles. They had a wonderful evening, their spirits high, with

the widower throwing admiring glances across the table and the widow smiling coyly back at him. Finally, during one dance, he picked up courage to ask her, "Will you marry me?"

After about six seconds of careful consideration, she answered, "Yes, yes I will!"

Needless to say, the evening ended on a happy note for the widower. However, the next morning he was troubled. Did she say 'Yes' or did she say 'No?' He couldn't remember.

Try as he would, he just could not recall. He went over-and-over the conversation of the previous evening, but his mind was blank. He remembered asking the question, but for the life of him could not recall her response.

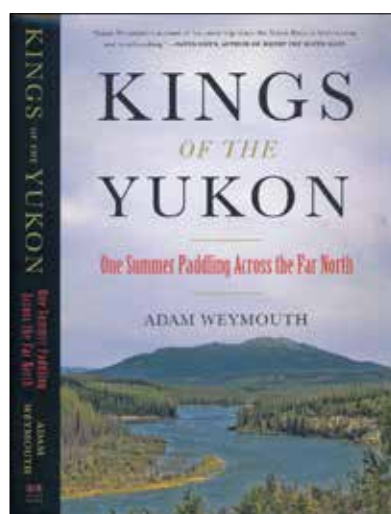
With fear and trepidation, he picked up the phone and called her.

First, he explained that he couldn't remember as well as he used to. Then he reviewed the past evening. As he gained a little more courage, he then inquired of her, "When I asked if you would marry me, did you say 'Yes' or did you say 'No'?"

Why, you silly man," she replied, "I said Yes. Yes, I will! And I meant it with all my heart!"

The widower was delighted. He felt his heart skip a beat.

Then she continued. "And I'm so glad you called. I couldn't remember who asked me!"



The sub-title for his book by Adam Weymouth, 'One Summer Paddling Across the Far North' led me to think it was just a canoeing trip, but in fact the Kings of Yukon are really big salmon. The paddling is a

mix of an early rafting stage on the upper Yukon River, and then night on four months paddling a Canadian canoe to the river's mouth. As catching salmon from the river in summer was such a pivotal part of survival for the native tribes living on the river banks, that historical catch has been so affected by commercial catches, with conflict between those in Alaska who take too many fish and not allowing enough of the breeding fish back into their home breeding grounds in Canada. A lovely hard-back book with much about the life cycle of King salmon, sadly let down by an abysmal lack of illustrations, a difficult to read small scale map and just a mugshot of the author on the inside of the rear cover. A story in the Christchurch Press 3 July at least includes a paddling photo.

## KASK

**KASK, the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc., a network of New Zealand sea kayakers, has the objectives of:**

1. promoting and encouraging the sport of sea kayaking
2. promoting safety standards
3. developing techniques & equipment
4. dealing with issues of coastal access and protection
5. organizing an annual sea kayak forum
6. publishing a bimonthly magazine.

**New Zealand Sea Kayaker is published bimonthly as the official magazine of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (NZ) Inc.**

Articles, trip reports, book reviews, equipment reviews, new techniques, letters to the editor, and moments when the word 'Bugger!' was said singularly or often (referred to by some as incidents) are sought to enliven the pages of the newsletter.

Send to:

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KASK Administrator  
PO Box 23, Runanga 7841  
West Coast  
or email Karen at:  
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## 4th Ed. KASK HANDBOOK OUT OF PRINT

A 5th edition of the KASK Handbook is planned. It is a mammoth compilation on all aspects of sea kayaking in New Zealand, by many of the most experienced paddlers in the Universe.

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*Both photos on opposite page:  
by Jess Gibbs  
Top: Leaving Urupukapuka Bay*

*Bottom: Heading around Cape  
Brett with the lighthouse visible  
above the bow of Chris's kayak*

*See Jess's story on page 4*







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*BASK group heading south from Whangamata harbour on the east coast of the North Island.  
Photo: John Penman*

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Current membership fees are:

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- if a membership renewal is not received by 30 September, membership lapses
- new members who join between 1 June and 31 July automatically get their membership credited to the following year, thus receiving a 14 month membership

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