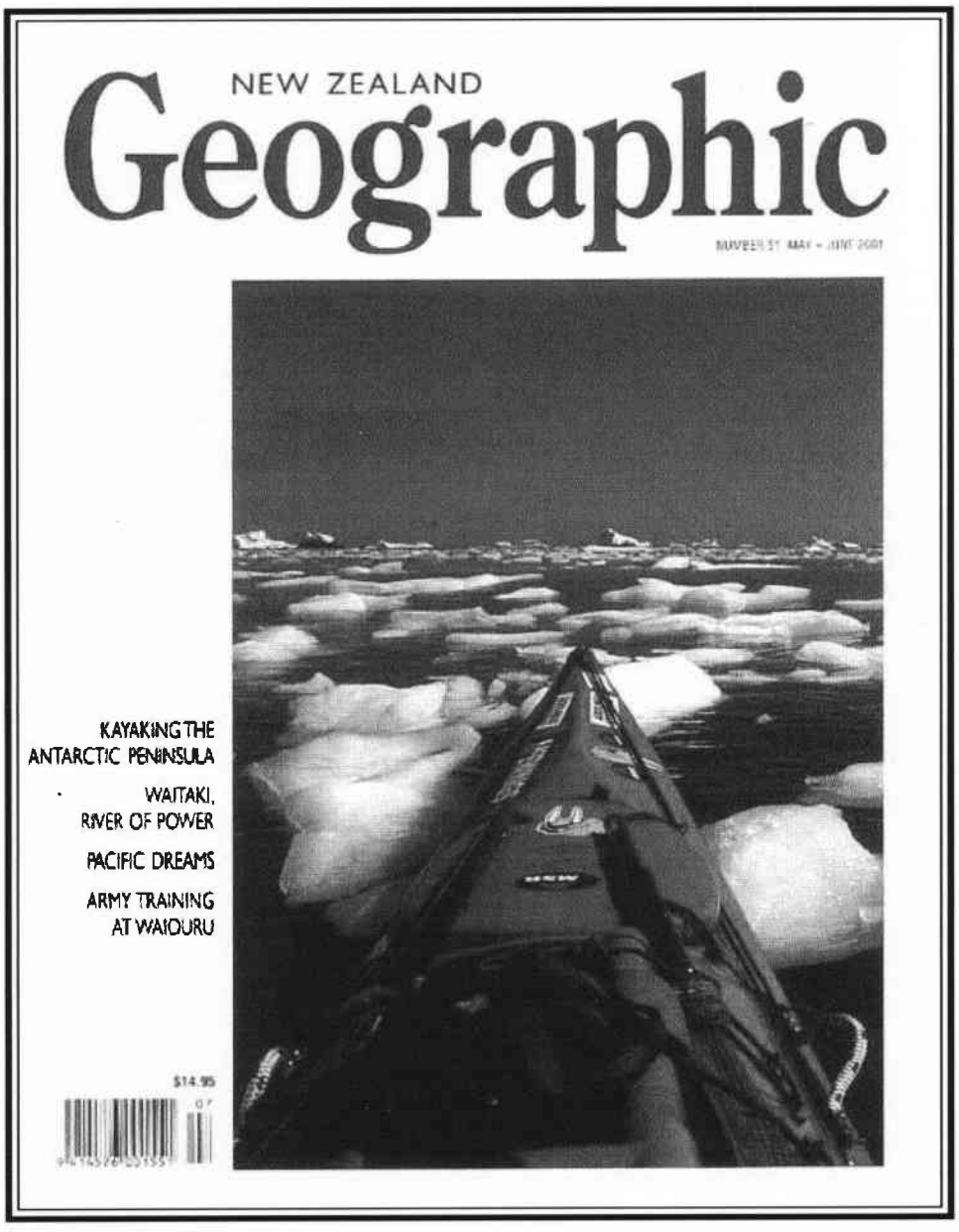
No. 93 June - July 2001

THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER



The Journal of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc. - KASK

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 newsletter.

The Sea Canoeist Newsletter is published bimonthly as the official newsletter of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc.

Articles, trips reports, book reviews, equipment reviews, new techniques, letter 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.

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KASK BADGES

Canterbury paddler Rod Banks produced a badge of a paddler and sea kayak from solid sterling silver, with KASK NZ engraved. The badge can be permanently or temporarily affixed to hats T shirts, ties, evening gowns or dress suits but not dry suits. And the badge is appealing to the eye. Size is 23mm long by 11mm high.

Price is $15 plus $1 P+P, and available from the KASK Treasurer, Max Grant.

LRB2 - KASK HANDBOOK

For a copy of this mother of all sea kayaking handbooks, contact KASK Treasurer:
Max Grant,
71 Salisbury St.
Ashhurst, 5451
Ph: (06) 326 8527 home
Fax: (06) 326 8472
email: Q-KAYAKS@xtra.co.nz
COST:
New members: gratis
Existing members: $10 + $1 p&p
Non-members: $18 + $1 p&p

Make cheques out to KASK (NZ)Inc
Trade enquiries also to Max Grant.

THE LRB2, or the Little Red Book 2nd. Edition, is a mammoth compilation on all aspects of sea kayaking in New Zealand, by many of the most experienced paddlers in the Universe. Following a brief introduction, the handbook is divided into six sections:
- Kayak, Paddle & Equipment
-Techniques & Equipment
- The Elements
- Trips and Expeditions
- Places to Go
- Resources

Each section contains up to nine separate chapters. The Resources section, for example has chapters on:
- guide to managing a sea kayak symposium
- Paddling Literature
- Author profiles
- Guides and Rental Operators
- Network Addresses
- Sea Kayaks in NZ listing

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THANKS

To the contributors, especially Rob Tipa for his sterling work on the marine farming issues, and to the newsletter production team of Max Grant, Maurice Kennedy and Russel Davidson.

EDITORIAL

Newsletter Cover

If you haven't seen the 'NZ Geographic,' magazine number 51 (May - June 2001), try and get hold of a copy. It contains beautiful photographs of the Antarctic Peninsula trip by Mark Jones and Graham Charles, and a good story by Mark Jones. The cover graphic of this newsletter is reproduced with permission of 'NZ Geographic.'

FORUMS

2002 is shaping up as a good year for sea kayaking forums. The KASK Forum will be held near Titahi Bay (Wellington) on the weekend 1 - 3 March and Coastbusters will be held at Orewa, north of Auckland, two weeks later, 15 - 17 March. Sea kayak forums are a great way to catch up with other paddlers, view and try out all sorts of kayaks from home built to the latest designs, and soak up instruction from some of the best paddlers in the world.

ALASKA

Joyce Singleton sent me down a clipping with a report from Clint Waghorn in Alaska. Clint's into his third northern summer on a trip from Prince Rupert (northern British Columbia) up to Skagway, down the Yukon River to its mouth then back via the southern coast of Alaska to the start point. In his second summer, Clint paddled south from the Chevak (south of the Yukon River mouth), crossing Bristol Bay, around the Alaskan Peninsula via False Pass to finish for the season at the salmon fishing village of Chignik. He flew from Anchorage to Chignik and set off paddling for Homer, some 1000kms to the northwest. Clint saw plenty of wildlife on the leg through to Cook Inlet, plenty of brown bears, rafts of sea otters, rookeries of sea lions and seals, and occasional pods of humpback whales. During an island hopping route of Cook Inlet to Homer, Clint struck the huge tide races that the inlet is noted for. During a planned 10km crossing to Kalgin Island, he was sucked out 5km in 30 minutes and with whitewater looming ahead, he battled fierce conditions for two hours to return to his starting point. For the next five days, he wondered if the trip was indeed worth the risk. A month out from Chignik, Clint reached road access again at Homer, and came close to abandoning the trip. After some serious self counselling, he decided to carry out with his second leg of this season to Cordova.

From the KASK Secretary Maurice Kennedy

Kask membership numbers have increased markedly over the last couple of months.There are now 348 members, up from 289 in June an increase of 59, and this has occurred during the winter not the time of greatest activity for seakayaking.

The membership database has recently been changed to identify membership by regions. Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Wellington, Canterbury and Nelson regions have between them 75% of the
membership, and nearly two thirds of the total membership is in the North Island.

The following table summarises KASK membership by region as at August 2001:

North Island	
Auckland	90
Bay of Plenty	34
East Coast	2
Hawkes Bay	8
Manawatu/Wanganui	15
Northland	9
Taranaki	4
Waikato	13
Wellington	45
Total North Island	220
South Island	
Canterbury	52
Marlborough	10
Nelson	30
Otago	13
Southland	8
West Coast	6
Total South Island	119
Overseas	
Overseas	9
Total Number of Members	**348**

N.Z. TRIP REPORTS

Kapiti - Queen's Birthday

Dan Hawthorn

Kapiti is a dark mass with the sun setting behind it. There is a cold onshore breeze rippling otherwise flat water and a line of tractors sits with empty trailers on the Paraparaumu beach. I sit in the van and look out and feel my aching shoulders relax.

It has been a 600km impulse, Jan had to visit New Plymouth, the surf web site was complaining about a flat calm west coast and I had always wanted to have a look at Kapiti. So we went down in the van with the kayak on top, dropped Jan off and I kept on going south. Paraparaumu beach at 9.30am was cold, pulling the kayak through the stream made my toes ache but the beach is flat, easy launching with a convenient carpark. I'd stayed with an old friend overnight and Dave had warned of currents that stopped yachts in their tracks. Certainly there is an almost unbelievable tide difference between Wellington and this part of the coast, Wellington had a high at 1.25pm and Foxton was high at 6.25pm, 5 hours apart and less than 200 km distant. So here I am heading off into flat calm with a flawless sky and a great high over the country and I have a small twinge of anxiety.

I am well wrapped up and the breeze is biting but I am soon down to a tee shirt. There are lines of birds working along the Kapiti shore, their white wings in the distance looking for all the world like washing flapping in the wind. There are fish jumping on either side of me. The water is smooth and the boat is travelling easily. I look back and as I get further from the coast I uncover range after range of foothills till finally I am paddling with the snow topped Tararuas as a backdrop behind me. The Kapiti shore changes from dark green to individual trees. I get half way across and see the small islets towards the south of Kapiti are moving sideways. There is a current but not more than 1 - 2 km/hr southwards. I had aimed for the middle of Kapiti to give me a large target and drifted down onto the islands nearer the south end. Here the tide stream doubled as it rose over the shallow water round the islands but even so there was no problem. (I would still like to know more about the tidal flows before I tried the trip in poor conditions.) I'm across in 50 minutes and my course is a long curve as I keep correcting for the tidal flow, I am delighted with myself and the world around me.

The land is steep hills and gullies covered in bush with some big tea trees, the shore is rough and rocky. I decide to go north close to the land hoping for a back eddy and then aiming to ride with the current down the outer coast where I may not be able to get as close in. There is a boulder bank and DoC buildings set back into the trees half way along Kapiti. There are rails and a winch for boat launching, the place is beautiful and peaceful. There's smoke coming from the chimney of the main house and I think of wetbacks and cooking on wood stoves. I am travelling over kelp beds in crystal clear water, swivelling as I paddle from the Kapiti bush and shore to the snow topped Tararuas. I am about 50 feet from the shore and find I have a fantail following me just as if I was on a bush track. The shore is a steep high slope of rounded light gray boulders and near the top there is a line of driftwood, mainly large pale tree trunks, long stripped of their bark. One still has it branches and on a skyward pointing branch near the top is a fat feathered lump, a wood pigeon sitting calmly watching. Te Rauparaha's ghost stalks it, pounces and gnaws hungrily on the empty wind.

I do not know if I have my back eddy but there is no obvious current and I go north easily. Back to rocky shores and bays then up to the boulder bank at the north end. Here there is another collection of DoC houses at the mouth of a valley, nestled around a small bright green lawn, another quietly smoking chimney and an air of wholly desirable peace. I would love to stay here for a few days, the small pale green houses around their lawn with the bush behind them and the boulder bank in front becomes one of my most vivid memories of the trip.

Off the northern boulder bank there is a black flipper describing circles and doing that lazy repetitive slap onto the water that fur seals seem to enjoy. I come in closer and sit quietly watching him for a minute or so then he spots me and sinks down into the water, comes over to inspect me and puffs at me before swimming off. He has obviously never heard of the appropriate viewing distance specified in the Marine Mammals Protection Act.

Landing is very, very tempting. If I do this again I definitely want a landing permit and a bit more time to explore. However I am thinking of the changing tide streams and I press on to the northern tip. The north coast is a dramatic change, the bush is gone, the hills are almost cliffs and mainly bare rock with odd patches of clinging, wind sculpted scrub and small plants. It is a totally different island. There are sets of wicked pinnacles, probably the remains of eroded ridges. A gentle swell breaks through them giving patches of white foaming water against the blues and browns. I round another set of pinnacles at the north west tip and am on the outer western coast. The coastline is far closer to a straight line, gone are the bays and points of the inner coast, here if you stick out, the storms from North, West and South will batter you, erode you and leave a few points of rock to mark where you have been. It is a fine day, I could land in the small rounded boulders at the base of the hillsides, but the whole coast says "Storms" and suggests I am a lucky and temporary visitor to a harsh place. There is little variation on the outer coast but I still find being out here exhilarating. The South Island stands out clearly, a mass of hills and islands with snow capped ranges in the background. It looks temptingly in reach.

I come to the south west tip and find the southern end is still a bleak bare coast. I paddle among sets of rocky teeth where at times the tidal flow is channelled to a strength I can notice but most of the time I have hardly known it was there. Around the south east tip and suddenly the bush and birds are back. Fantails flutter around a large shallow sea cave, perching

momentarily on the walls and swooping out for minute insects. I head back up the inner coast and then out to the small islands at Kapiti's southern end. On one of them there are three baches, tucked just above high tide, no one at home but what an idyllic spot. I land and stretch, sit on the driftwood and day dream and then back across the strait to the mainland. A small tidal set to the north now but with very little force.

Back to the beach, now crowded with boat trailers, its been 35km and I am glad to stop. As I clean up and put the kayak back on the roof rack the couple in the car next to me are impressed by the boat and by going round Kapiti. But then as I am sitting in the van and writing up trip notes I hear the man tell his wife, in tones of absolute disparagement, "Now he's writing a bloody book about it."

Sunday I went from Titahi Bay down the coast to Makara in a cold south easter gusting to 20 knots along another bleak and storm shaped coast. I had planned to go in at Makara and ride the current into Cook Strait, but on Saturday night my cousin Barb said "Hell no!" and pointed out the rip area on the Wellington side of Cape Tarawhiti as well as the route from Makara over the Wellington hills where Maori got out and walked across the peninsular to avoid the rip. Any overfall that persuaded tough, experienced men to leave their canoes and go clambering up and down across the Wellington hills and gullies has my sincere respect.

Sunday afternoon I drove back up to Stratford, slept overnight in the van on the plateau carpark high on the side of Mt Taranaki, woke in the night to see the mountain snow glowing in moonlight, then watched the sun at 7.20am touch the mountain top with pink and wash the whole snowcapped mass from pink to white over the next ten minutes. I spent Monday morning just above the snow line, tramping and simply sitting gazing. And back with Jan, refreshed, to Auckland.

PATEA SEA KAYAK TRIP by Max Grant

11 kayakers from the Ruahine Club, in two doubles and seven singles, arrived at the Tangahoe river, just south of Hawera, in preparation for our trip down the Taranaki coast to Patea.

It was a perfect day, with blue skies and a slight northwesterly breeze. Where we entered the Tangahoe River, it was tidal, and the flat paddle out to the river mouth was reassuring for some of the group, who had not done much sea kayaking before.

After a short paddle we arrived at the beach where there was a moderate surf break. While several of us enjoyed practising our surfing skills, others were happy to make it through the breakers, before setting off down the coast. The coastline was continuous cliffs with no places to land, so we kayaked just out from the breakers, with a few of us trying our luck at surfing on the larger waves to help pass the time.

After 1.5 hours the tower from the old Patea power station was clearly visible. The more adventurous kayakers paddled in for a closer look at the old building and spillway, and those who felt confident went to explore the caves. Although there were sizeable waves rolling in, 6 of the singles were able to kayak through the main cave. At one stage I paddled very close to the cliffs around a huge boulder, past the entrance to a very large cavern with waves breaking in it. On the way out I encountered a very large wave rolling in. Dave and Melz were just behind, and I spun around to see how they faired. Dave was next and just cleared the wave before it broke. Hoping Melz was still sheltering behind the boulder, I continued watching, only to see the bow of her kayak shoot up into the air as the wave struck her. Before being swept into the cavern, she somehow righted herself and gave a good display of her speed on the water as she cleared the next wave just before it broke. With a smile from ear to ear, she yelled, "beat that"!

Some of us were keen to show her a thing or two, but we couldn't help but notice that Sarah, who was in the double, was starting to look decidedly sea sick, so we had to move on!

Another 1.5 hours and we reached the Patea river entrance. There was some larger waves running over the river bar and we did some well executed manoeuvres to see both doubles safely enter the river. There was a good wave running along the northern breakwater, which some of us decided would be good for a bit more surfing.

Next came a loud thud, as Greg thumped into the concrete breakwater with his brand new fibreglass sea kayak. No sooner had we got him back into his kayak which had a reshaped bow, then Ken was over. We all watched in anticipation as he tried to roll - once and missed, twice and missed, third time was so close, spewing up the bread roll he had not long before eaten, and he was out.

Another deep-water rescue was well executed, and we continued to the shore.

Once ashore, we were able to observe that Greg's new kayak was not too badly damaged, and Ken cheered up when he found he had another bread roll in his vehicle. We all agreed that it was a great trip with plenty of action, even if some of it was not planned.

OVERSEAS TRIP REPORTS

Cruising down the River on a Sunday afternoon by Malcolm Geard

Getting a wee bit tired of dodging tsunamis in the South China seas are we? Feeling a bit narky about those pirates boarding your Arctic Raider in the Strait of Malacca? When the same darn thing happened last year! Wondering how many more of your extremities you can afford to feed the crocs as you paddle across the Gulf of Carpentaria?

Worry no more gentle reader. For your peace of mind and tranquillity of disposition you could hardly do better, I suggest, than a winter cruise down the spacious waters of Sydney's Hawkesbury River.

With its tributaries in the Blue mountains, the lower 160 or so kilometres of the Hawkesbury form a broad and sedate highway along which you can meander pretty much without a care in the world. It reaches the Pacific Ocean about 40 kms north of Sydney harbour so you can if you wish, paddle down the coastal strip, through the Heads near Manly then down the harbour to a Prime Ministerial reception that will almost certainly await you at Kirribilli House, just a spit from the bridge.

After hiring a double kayak at Avalon, one of the Pittwater settlements, Janet and I put in at the pretty, historic township of Windsor, inland and north of Sydney. Windsor is an excellent spot to collect your wits for the task ahead and also to pick up those couple of dozen bottles of Penfolds Grange you forgot to buy in Sydney. This done, we had about 130 kms to paddle to reach the sea, not counting any digressions into the various estuarine nooks and crannies of Broken Bay, so named by James Cook in 1770.

The river itself is tidal for the full length and more of our particular cruise. So, in the spirit of indolence underpinning this entire venture we studied the runes and chicken entrails and decided to paddle WITH the tide and stop paddling more or less when the tide turned. This worked out a treat as we drifted downstream dipping a languid paddle into the water if we thought anyone might be watching. True also to our motto of utter hedonism we carted every conceivable luxury we could stuff below and above deck with a fine indifference to technicalities like the centre of gravity. Great rounds of Tasmanian brie, pâté de foie gras, aged fillet steaks from hand-fed, personally-named cattle- reared indoors- served under the stars with baked celeriac, field mushrooms and Jamie Oliver's Pukka Tukka thyme and olive oil sauce. Those were the entrées if my memory serves. In addition, the weather gods could hardly have been kinder as it transpired. Fine, warm, calm days followed by mildly coolish evenings were the order of things. It also turned out to be an ideal Monday to Friday winter trip.

The weekends even in winter see a considerable amount of traffic on the river, notably water skiing which has been popular on the Hawkesbury for 50 or more years and now the dreaded jet skiing too. However, from Monday to Friday we had the river virtually to ourselves and the tranquillity was exceptional. In fact, if the occasional 2 hp dinghy puttered past every couple of hours we tended to spit the dummy. Quietly of course. Most of the time we just goggled at the scenery mirrored in the calm surfaces about us.

For the first couple of days of this trip the river runs roughly north, broadly parallel to the coast before switching back on itself at a place called Wiseman's Ferry and heading south east to the sea. It also meanders constantly with subtly changing vistas to greet you at every bend. The golden Hawkesbury sandstone cliffs age to attractive shades of grey with the blue/brown/grey gums populating every conceivable slope, however vertical. These pristine areas give way from time to time to river flats, some of which are park reserves like the Cattai near Windsor while others have been manicured in private ownership with little clusters of homes and occasional caravan parks and swankier accommodation. There are some examples of conspicuous ostentation but not enough to get on your nerves. More often than not the individual riverside homes are tucked away in the bush and cliff tops, impressively designed to harmonise with the natural environment.

The Cattai, in case anyone is wondering, were amongst the original inhabitants of the area who thoughtfully relocated when Lieutenant-Governor Major Grice's settlers arrived in 1794. Relocated, that is, in the time-honoured manner of an irresistible force meeting a movable object.

The first noticeable settlement we found on the river after Windsor is Wiseman's Ferry, so called because a vehicle ferry still plies back and forth all day on a steel hawser connecting travellers to the adjacent road ends. The original ferry was established in 1827 when a Solomon Wiseman set up the crossing to supply provisions to convicts building the Great Northern Road, parts of which still survive.

We'd planned to overnight at Wiseman's Ferry only to find that the campground on the map had been superseded by a non-camping golf course. We found a good spot a couple of kms downstream. South of Wiseman's the river banks are notable for mangroves, presumably because of increased salt concentration as river and sea begin to merge.

Day 3 found us at a welcome river village called Spencer, for lunch and a chance to replenish our fresh water supply. The notice board on the jetty welcomed us to: SPENCER "the Hub of the Universe". Aside from the jetty, there is a general store and a shop advertising Cooked Food, but that of course was closed on Tuesday, the day we happened to arrive. It's hardly their fault of course if we chose to arrive on a Tuesday. The general store , called The Hub, sells everything from fish bait to beer and wine and the

pub is a wooden table under a shade tree by the jetty with a notice suspended from a branch, reading Dunkirk Hotel. There we lunched on several pints of Toohey's Old Black in the company of a few distinctively rural characters in akubras and a slightly challenged young man who was firing up the barbie for the weekly Spencer social corroboree. I don't suppose you could call Spencer the outback but it certainly isn't the CBD either, thank heavens. If not the outback, maybe the laidback. We could easily have hung about there for a spell.

However, after drinking the Hub dry, we meandered more than usually on to a lovely estuary called Berowra Waters where we found our first saltwater beaches with charming camp sites, reminiscent of the Marlborough Sounds. In retrospect we ought to have explored this area thoroughly but pressed on next day into Broken Bay proper with the intention of exploring a larger estuary called Cowen Waters in the middle of the Kurangai-Chase Park. We had heard informally that camping was not encouraged in this park but hadn't realised this amounts to an $1,100.00 fine if you're caught camping. Pretty draconian by our standards.

On the other hand, landing and picnicking are approved and some pretty beaches were inundated with rubbish that boaties hadn't bothered to remove after visits. No long drops either so toilet waste was also evident. The upshot for us was that without permission to camp we couldn't really explore this particular waterway at our leisure, which was a pity. Instead we shortened our trip by a day and paddled to our destination, Pittwater. Meeting a gentle swell from the Pacific, we cruised towards the Heads. With Lion Island to our north and Barrenjoey Point to the east, we glided, rather magnificently we thought, into Pittwater Harbour and beached gently at Clareville Basin.

Thence to Sydney for a week of hardcore tourism. In my case this amounted to lying about all day drinking coffee and red wine, enjoying the nostalgic luxury of a daily paper, the Sydney Morning Herald, that still employs investigative journalists to pick up stones to see what lurks underneath, so to speak. After Wellington, NZ, I found this so unsettling I had to recover my equilibrium from time to time by feeding sunflower seeds to the rainbow lorikeets on my daughter's deck.

In view of the superb coastline, harbours, inlets and bays that surround Sydney it seems a little odd that commercial sea kayak operations appear to be well behind the New Zealand scene. My daughter kindly researched this trip for us and located the one commercial operator prepared to hire a kayak for multi-day freedom paddling. Chad proved to be most helpful with reasonable hire charges but I think we were a novelty and most of his business is taking paddlers on local day trips. Chad himself does quite a bit of coastal paddling I understand.

The double kayak we used was made nearby in Gosford and is called a Mirage. It is quite long and skinny; 24 feet long in fact, with a beam of perhaps 26/27 inches and with no central hatch so the paddlers are close together, requiring synchronised strokes, which was a novelty to us. Nonetheless it was no great hassle unless we were both idly gazing at opposite banks of the river in which case somebody got a thick ear. The boat felt stable and light and would probably be quickish at top speed, pushed hard by a couple of strong paddlers. At cruising speed pushed by us however, it didn't seem to have any edge that I noticed over our 20 foot, 30" beam double.

The Mirage also features one of those rudders where the lower section of the stern acts as the rudder by swivelling on a pin and the rudder doesn't descend below the hull line. Quite nice not to have to haul it up and down but I'm not sure I'd enjoy the arrangement in a good following sea. I'm used to my rudder staying in the water as a tracking device. Call me old-fashioned if you will. We took most of our own paddling gear including paddles and would have taken our own spray skirts too had we known how porous the neoprene skirts we used would turn out to be.

I'm sure this little jaunt would be an anathema to the more intrepid paddlers amongst us. It might, however, quite suit those who visit friends or family in Sydney from time to time and with whom you might already have visited the city sights, the Blue mountains, the Hunter Valley, the Bradman Museum at Bowral and so on. If you need to hire a kayak the enterprise is:

C. Leggs Kayak Tours
51 Marine Parade
Avalon NSW 2107.
Ph 02 99734203
Mobile 0412181053.
Email: c-leggs@zip.com.au.

The operator, Chad, will transport you cheerfully to any put-in and pick-up spot you nominate within the general area. I would also recommend the excellent Hawkesbury River and District Map if that is where you fetch up. It is available from Map World, Crows Nest, Sydney.

Perhaps I should also have mentioned that you could expect to paddle 30 or 40 kms each day in this idyllic setting, without really noticing it as an effort.

Malcolm Geard

INSTRUCTION

Water Safety NZ Funding and Safer Sea Kayaking

By Cathye Haddock

In the 2000/2001 financial year, KASK received a $2080.00 funding grant towards two projects to enhance sea kayak safety in NZ:
1. A National Sea Kayak Leadership Training Series.
2. A Sea Kayaker Basic Proficiency Training Series.
Networks were able to apply to KASK for Water Safety NZ funding to run courses in their regions. KASK also assisted with the funding of these courses to the tune of a one off $200 grant per region.

Water Safety NZ funding has been much appreciated as it has enabled the sea kayak leadership training, developed by Grant Rochfort and the Wellington Regional Sea Kayak Network, to be taken nation wide. The WRSKN courses were funded by the Hillary Commission Community Sports Grants with assistance by KASK and WRSKN fundraising efforts.

Six subsidised sea kayak leadership courses have now been run, as well as one sea kayak basic proficiency course, catering for beginners. The following listings show courses that have been run, and courses planned for this coming summer. Funding sources are also indicated for each course:

Sea Kayak Leadership Courses:

Region	Date	Funded By
Wellington	November 1999	Hillary Commission Community Sport Grants, WRSKN, KASK
Wellington	March 2000	Hillary Commission Community Sport Grants, WRSKN
Wellington	November 2000	Hillary Commission Community Sport Grants, WRSKN
Auckland	November 2000	Water Safety NZ, KASK, Coast Busters, Participants
Auckland	November 2000	Water Safety NZ, KASK, Coast Busters, Participants
Auckland	November 2000	Coast Busters, Participants
South Island (possibly Picton or Christchurch)	November 2001	Water Safety NZ, KASK, ??

Sea Kayaker Basic Proficiency Courses (beginners)

Region	Date	Funded By
Wellington	November 2000	Water Safety NZ, WRSKN
South Island (Picton or Christchurch)	November 2001	Water Safety NZ, ??
Auckland	November 2001	Water Safety NZ, ??

There have been 35 people trained in sea kayak leadership now, all active network members in their regions, whose confidence and skill in leading network trips has had a big boost. The standard of safety on subsequent trips has also had a lift as trip leadership has taken on a cooperative nature with plenty of leaders willing to lead and co-lead network trips as a result.

There were nine people on the first sea kayaker basic proficiency course. After having completed this training, these folk are more responsible for themselves on network trips in their region and no doubt have a safer and more enjoyable time on network and private trips alike.

In order to obtain Water Safety or KASK funding for a course in your region, your network must belong to KASK as must each course participant. Regional contact people can contact the KASK
Executive to discuss funding for a course in your region.

Initial Contact: Cathye Haddock
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Email: haddock.simpson@paradise.net.nz

CONSERVATION

Akaroa Harbour 'No go' Zone for Marine Farming

By KASK conservation officer Rob Tipa

After nearly a year of lobbying and a mountain of paper, the Canterbury Regional Council (CRC) has effectively declared Akaroa Harbour a 'no go' zone for further marine farm development.

Ngai Tahu Fisheries and Kuku Enterprises' applications for nine marine farm sites covering 64 hectares of Akaroa Harbour were all declined on the grounds that they were inconsistent with the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and part two of the Resource Management Act.

The commissioners appointed by CRC to hear the resource consent, Wellington environment lawyer Philip Milne and Sydney marine biologist/ecologist Professor Alistair Gilmour, announced their decision on July 6. The applicants now have 15 days to appeal the decision in the Environment Court.

From KASK's point of view, it's a great decision because it draws a clear line in the sand on marine farming for the whole of Banks Peninsula. Effectively, a coastal permit grants the applicant the right of occupancy over publicly owned coastline for 35 years.

In fact, the CRC was almost overwhelmed by a huge ground swell of public opinion against such development. As one objector put it: "Akaroa Harbour is to the people of Canterbury what Hagley Park is to the people of Christchurch. It is simply not for sale."

Nearly 500 written submissions opposed development while only 32 supported marine farming. Hearings were held in Christchurch and Akaroa in April and lasted six days. KASK and the Canterbury Sea Kayak Network (represented by Chrissie Williams) both made written submissions and were given over an hour to jointly present their case to the hearing.

Many submissions were highly critical of the Canterbury Regional Council for not having marine farming controls in place before this tidal wave of applications for coastal permits, the latest rash in Port Levy, Pigeon Bay and along the northern shores of Banks Peninsula.

The commissioners admitted that if they had allowed marine farming to proceed in Akaroa Harbour, it could affect public confidence in the integrity of the CRC's Proposed Regional Coastal Environment Plan (PRCEP), which is now well advanced. They eventually delayed their decision until the council released its verdict on its PRCEP on June 9.

'These controls are now in place and should be adhered to unless there is a very good reason to depart from them,' the commissioners said in their 78-page Akaroa judgment.

Hopefully, the overwhelming public response to the Akaroa applications may force the CRC to take a harder line on controlling marine farming on Banks Peninsula, which is still in its early stages of development.

'The resource is too important to be allocated on an ad hoc basis for 35 years,' the commissioners noted.

KASK and CSKN's main line of argument was that mussel rafts would clutter six kilometres of the western shore of Akaroa's outer harbour, obstructing sea kayakers' preferred navigation channel (within 200 metres of shore) and compromise their safety.

We were alarmed by the apparent indifference for the safety of small vessels by the 'official' marine watchdogs, the Maritime Safety Authority and Akaroa Harbour master. Both parties were requested to appear at the hearings but expressed no concerns about dangers to navigation, other than ensuring mussel rafts were adequately lit at night.

Thankfully, the commissioners heard the arguments of recreational boaties loud and clear and, in their words, 'gave considerable weight to the views of existing users of Akaroa Harbour, who spoke with passion, conviction and credibility.'

For the record and for some pointers on any future issues of coastal access for kayakers, it is worth recording their decisions relating to our submissions in full:

'We have had particular regard to the views of those people who boat on the harbour because these people represent the rights of free unimpeded passage across coastal water, which would have been impeded if consent had been granted.'

The commissioners took a 'precautionary approach' on the potential effects of the farms on an already vulnerable population of Hector's dolphins.

'We have also taken a precautionary approach in relation to evidence of navigation risk to sea kayakers and sailing vessels in a lee shore situation, which applies to all [western] sites,' they said.

"We have concluded that the proposal would interfere with public access along the coastal marine area. In particular, the [western] sites would interfere with access by sea kayakers when caught out in windy or swell conditions," they said. "Three sites exclude small vessels from places to shelter and others pose a navigation hazard for vessels trying to round a headland."

If all current applications for coastal permits were granted, any craft plying the western side of the outer harbour would be continuously exposed to marine farms for six of the nine-kilometre journey from Wainui to Timutimu Heads, they said.

"We are particularly mindful of the evidence given by those who do ply small craft in the area. For example, sea kayakers who do use the coast between Wainui and the heads 'gunk-

hole' along the coast as close as possible to the shoreline so as to appreciate the near shore environment. Sea kayakers and recreational fishers generally traverse the area between shore and marine farms.

"In our view any marine farms along that shore will significantly detract from the visual and wilderness amenity value of that part of the coast.

"Although the applicants' offer to shift their near-shore boundary out to 100 metres mitigates the impact, it certainly does not avoid it."

"This is an area where one can currently kayak, putter or sail with a near pristine shoreline close by on one side. Having marine farms on the other side of the craft would undoubtedly detract from the experience."

The commissioners also acknowledged significant differences between marine farming in Akaroa and the Marlborough Sounds.

KASK argued that the main navigation channel in and out of Pelorus Sound was unobstructed by mussel rafts, which were restricted to indented bays on either side of the main thoroughfare. The key difference at Akaroa was that the proposed farms would have further constricted a narrow navigation channel.

The commissioners accepted this point and also noted that the Marlborough Sounds was a much larger area more capable of absorbing marine farming.

'We also note that parts of the Marlborough Sounds have now been set aside as 'no go' areas for marine farming,' they said. 'That is what Canterbury Regional Council has now done in relation to Akaroa Harbour.'

'CRC's intention is that, generally, no new marine farms should be permitted in Akaroa Harbour except where the applicant can establish no more than minor adverse effects on the environment, habitat, water quality or enjoyment of the area by recreational users.'

In their conclusions on preservation of the natural environment, the commissioners said: "All of the proposed sites were in areas of moderate, high or significant natural character, which would not be preserved if new marine farms were allowed. Further farms would be inappropriate use and development of the outer harbour in particular, which has the highest natural character."

All in all, a sweet victory for democracy and a fascinating lesson on the expensive and time-consuming resource consents process. Let's just hope we don't have to do it all again for the benefit of the Environment Court or on a case by case basis for Port Levy, Pigeon Bay and the northern shores of Banks Peninsula that appear to be next on the marine farming "land grab" hit list.

Rob Tipa
(editor's note: unfortunately it appears that an appeal has been lodged).

IN THE PRESS

Rescued kayaker Ridiculed 30 July 2001 (received from Gavin White)

Police have ridiculed a Petone kayaker who could not swim, wore gumboots but no lifejacket and had to be rescued from Wellington Harbour at the weekend. Sergeant Tom Ireland, of police central communications, said the incident was one of two water callouts by police on Saturday.

Mr Ireland said the Petone man had kayaked out to check a fishing net off the Petone foreshore late in the morning. Because of the strong winds he was unable to paddle back and was pushed further into the harbour towards Eastbourne.

A watching family member became worried and went to a nearby restaurant to raise the alarm. The tired man was rescued by wharf police.

Mr Ireland said it was a ridiculous situation, with the man taking no safety precautions.

"Some people should stay in their bath rather than venture out into the water. It borders on lunacy and you really do have to question some people's intelligence."

Earlier on Saturday police began a search after they received a call from a man who had been told a four-metre aluminium dinghy with two men on board had not returned from a fishing trip off Eastbourne.

Mr Ireland said the details provided to police were vague and a search by wharf police failed to find any trace of the men. Police believed the men had returned home early.
DOMINION

CALENDAR

Coastbusters 2002 from Vincent Maire

The Coastbusters Sea Kayak Symposium will once again be held at Puriri Park in Orewa. The event will start on Friday evening 15th of March and run through to Sunday afternoon.

The successful format used in 2000 will again be repeated. There will be keynote speakers on Friday and Saturday evenings, Saturday will be devoted to workshops with a pool session in the afternoon. On Sunday participants will meet at Sullivans Bay in the Mahurangi Regional Park for a day on the water. Details of what is planned for Sunday are being kept under close wraps by the planning committee, however, delegates can be guaranteed at least three hours of fun and adventure on the water, a sausage sizzle and everyone will get wet!

The 2002 event will likely be the last time the name "Coastbusters" is associated with this highly successful symposium. The committee has decided

to merge Coastbusters Sea Kayak Association Inc. with the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers Inc.

KASK already holds a forum, which alternates between the lower North Island and the South Island each year. It is also strongly focussed on developing and promoting the sport of sea kayaking, it publishes a handbook, a bi-monthly newsletter and has a web site under development. KASK now has a national membership base of over 300 of which more than a quarter are in Auckland.

In the future, Coastbusters will adopt the name of the Auckland KASK Forum, or similar. It is also hoped that in the in-between years, when the forum is not held in Auckland, a KASK forum will be organised in the Waikato / Bay of Plenty. The current Coastbusters committee sees this as one of the key goals of the merger.

Other benefits of the merger include a sharing of resources, accessing funding for events and activities on a national basis, promoting activities such as the highly successful sea kayak leader's course, promoting the upper North Island forums on the KASK web site and providing a platform for KASK to take a national role in the promotion and development of sea kayaking.

The 2002 Coastbusters committee consists of Margaret Thwaites (chairman), Ryan Whittle (treasurer), Vincent Maire (secretary) plus Ray Clarke, Rob Gardner, Rebecca Heap, Gerry Maire, Nicole Moorhouse and Natasha van Gysen.

More information concerning the event and the merger with KASK will be published in the weeks ahead.

BOOK REVIEW

'Dances with Waves Author: Brian Wilson Reviewed by: Craig Hornblow.

A year ago I retired early to my tent, too wet for a fire and at the end of a long drive and our first day of paddling being wet and miserable the sleeping bag was an appealing thought. Why had I flown 10 hours and driven and ferried for 2 days to be here?. I settled into my bag and pulled a new book *Dance with waves by* Brian Wilson. Within a few pages I was reminded why I love this kind of travel.

...to be by the shore is to be near some of the richest concentrations of wildlife, the most generous sources of free food- and driftwood on which to cook it – and the most practical travel options which this planet has to offer..... My idea of luxury is a driftwood fire on a sheltered beach, and to paddle a kayak along an unfamiliar coastline, exploring, spacing out the days, beaching in the brine, is as compulsive an activity as I ever came across.....
...The Irish coast seemed to have an uncanny way to blur the distinction between reality and myth...

Solo kayaking though sometimes necessary (because everyone has other commitments or maybe I'm just bad company), doesn't have much appeal to me anymore, to me paddling now is as much about the long evenings by a warming fire and company to debate global events, astrology and with the right company the all black team. I wonder why you'd want to paddle for 10 weeks in the Northern Atlantic on your own battling headwinds and cold currents. The coast of Ireland is described in the book as a coastline as rich in physical characters as in the characters who live in, on or near the coast. Never far were 2 fisherman rowing their currach or a pub to hear the local yarns and share a Guinness. It reads as quite a social trip for a solo paddle.

We all have stories of people coming up to us in their boats concerned about our safety wanting to know if we know what we were doing, oblivious to the fact that they're in a flat bottom boat, with an aging motor, no life jacket in site and a forecast of rising off shore winds, it happens in Ireland as well just with a little humour.

..Don't you worry about strong offshore winds driving you out to sea? I asked
Oh, you need never have any fear of going as far west as the wind will take you ... because sooner or later surely a westerly will spring up and take you back home again.....
"This is a bad stretch just here for the boats swamping, now."
"Are currachmen drowned here that often then?"
"Just the once - each!" he finished with a smile
It strikes me that those big boots and jerseys would sink you straight to the bottom" I teased.
"Aye, maybe so' he returned "but only for a few days. After a week or so, you see, the body bloats full of gases and floats back to the surface again."

Maybe paddling solo there's those special moments you make the effort and find a place probably no one else has found.

For a days excursion Brian paddled offshore battling tide and wind to an island inhabited by 23,000 pairs of gannets.

....All around me guano bombs began to splatter the seas surface. Several near misses were followed by a large green splat which covered 30 square miles of Kerry - on my deck map...
....I emerged from the gannet cloud thoroughly caked in a rapidly hardening whitewash, looking I supposed like a scale replica of the island itself....

....I slumped forward in the seat and laid my weary guanoed head and arms on the deck, a sodden, hungry, frustrated shit caked gannet- smelling wreck.

You've been to the islands? guessed a curious child on the beach did you see any gannets there?"

Luckily I hadn't the strength left to catch and throttle her

Solo paddlers may be nuts or just have more nerve than most, so paddle alone. Malin head was a huge obstacle with a little Irish encouragement Brian set off.

'and where would you be heading now ?'
'back to Larne' I pointed eastward with my paddle, while his puzzled gaze anticipated my route past the race at Malin Head.
'through that!' he barked ', shaking his head 'I hope you're fucking well insured!'
Hardly reassured by the brief exchange, I began to feel the nerves that always gripped my stomach before a major obstacle.....
....as the race relaxed its grip I felt all the relief of a hedgehog which has just crossed a six lane motorway at rush hour. The battle was over and the retreat from the Atlantic had begun.....

Dances with waves had it all, pirates, humour, fair maidens, ghosts, myths and of course Guinness. Reading it was a great way to pass the time waiting for the wind and rain to ease enough to get out myself.

MEDICAL

Surfer's Ear?
by Doug Rankin
(from NZ Canoeing)

I recently spent a night in hospital after a small operation to remove bone growths known as exostoses (plural) from my left ear. I have not been paddling for the last two months too while the ear heals. Bummer! I've got some in my right ear too which might need attention; they only operate on one side at a time.

You might wonder why anyone would want to write about such an issue. Well the condition is preventable, and for some of you who are not too long in the tooth or have only started paddling, or conversely are now immersing your head in cold water more than normal, you might want to take some affirmative action to prevent getting the same condition and having the same operation in the future. I started paddling in 1971 in the days of canvas boats, but always specialized in staying upright. I have only really started spending more time upside down in cold water over the last ten years of paddling, as I have got into more river playing and the like.

'Surfer's ear' arises from exposure of the ears to cold water and often affects surfers and divers in New Zealand. It does not affect such sports people in warm water environments. What happens is that constant exposure of the ear canal to cold water stimulates growth of bone tissue on the sides of the ear canal close to the eardrum. As these lumps of bone grow into the ear canal they start to reduce the size of the ear canal and impair hearing. These growths can eventually seal off the eardrum resulting in a complete loss of hearing in that ear. This is possibly the body's natural response to protect the eardrum from constant cold-water exposure. In my case I had three such lumps of bone protruding into the left ear canal. With a gap of only 0.5mm between them, rather than the normal 5-8 mm diameter ear canal, my hearing was impaired! I have yet to find out how bad the right ear is.

The solution to the problem is a re-bore, although the medics call it an exostectomy. They cut the skin back off the bone, drill away the growths with a small high-speed water cooled drill and then put the skin back down on the bone so that it can grow over the bone. All fine and dandy but you hope the surgeon doesn't slip and that he/she's in a good mood!

The waiting and no paddling comes in while you let everything heal properly. Any water getting in could assist an infection and really play havoc with your ear. You become an expert showering with a cup over your ear too, and at deflecting smart comments questioning your activities and sanity.

So what can you do to prevent such a condition developing? No paddling/surfing/diving in cold water environments. Probably not an option if you're a really keen paddler. Have the odd reaming when required. Maybe okay but it clutters up hospitals and causes some discomfort and inability to paddle for a few months if you take things seriously. There is another alternative, namely wearing earplugs!

Earplugs are the best solution if you want to ensure protection and there are clinics around offering custom made ones. However, solid ones can impair hearing and balance for some people, so naturally some people don't like them.

I have recently heard of plugs fitted with a small hole down their center, which is good enough to allow you to hear but small enough to keep the water out. These sound like an ideal compromise and I am sourcing some now to try. I'll report on their utility and user friendliness in a future issue once I have used them for a while.

I think it's time for this message to be spread more actively to all paddlers, so people can make informed choices about how they can look after themselves and paddle without developing such conditions. I will be back to surfing that front wave and river trips as soon as I can, but probably with plugs in my ears and a little older and wiser. See you on a river sometime soon.

OBITUARY

Reprinted from the Christchurch Press. 26 July 2001

Ray Forsyth

'Long serving Department of Conservation officer Ray Forsyth, who died in Christchurch last month, loved the outdoors. Born in Portsmouth, UK, on May 28 1930, Mr Forsyth had his passage to New Zealand paid for when he agreed to travel with a shipment of Dalgety's cattle in his 20s.

He spent time in the Waikato as a herd tester on a dairy farm where he took up hunting and specialized in deer culling.

After gaining employment with the forestry service, he moved to Hokitika. In 1971 he arrived in Christchurch to take up the position of senior Department of Conservation officer for the Waimakariri district. Ray worked for DoC for 17 years before retiring at the age of 58.

His wife Gillian, said Mr Forsyth spent his retirement tramping, duck shooting and kayaking in the Marlborough Sounds, Stewart Island and Alaska. He was known as a hard worker at introducing beginners to the sport of sea kayking. "He loved doing anything that was out of doors," she said.

Mr Forsyth died in Christchurch on June 29 at the age of 71 after a long illness. He is survived by Gillian, their sons Andrew, Stuart and David.'

Editor's Note: On behalf of KASK members, I would like to extend our sympathy to Ray's family. Ray was involved with KASK from its outset and wrote of his Marlborough Sounds and Alaskan paddling trips for the newsletter. It was a suggestion of Rays that led to the conception of the Canterbury sea kayaking network. He was always ready to help, from his beginners trips to leading Christmas and other long weekend trips, and programmes at the network's monthly meetings.

HUMOUR

Received from 'esteamed' curry muncher Malcolm Gunn

INEXPERIENCED CURRY TASTER

Notes From an Inexperienced Curry Taster Named FRANK, who was visiting Phoenix, Durban

"Recently I was honoured to be selected as a judge at a curry cook- off. The original person called in sick at the last moment and I happened to be standing there at the judge's table asking directions to the beer wagon when the call came. I was assured by the other two judges (couple of local Indians) that the curry wouldn't be all that spicy, and besides, they told me I could have free beer during the tasting, so I accepted."

Here are the scorecards from the event:

Curry # 1: Manoj's Maniac Mobster Monster Curry
JUDGE ONE: A little too heavy on tomato. Amusing kick.

JUDGE TWO: Nice, smooth tomato flavour. Very mild.

FRANK: Holy shit, what the hell is this stuff? You could remove dried paint from your driveway. Took me two beers to put the flames out. I hope that's the worst one. These charo's are crazy.

Curry # 2: Applesamy's Afterburner Curry
JUDGE ONE: Smoky, with a hint of pork. Slight Jalapeno tang.

JUDGE TWO: Exciting BBQ flavour, needs more peppers to be taken seriously.

FRANK: Keep this out of reach of children! I'm not sure what I am supposed to taste besides pain. I had to wave off two people who wanted to give me the Heimlich manoeuvre. They had to rush in more beer when they saw the look on my face.

Curry # 3: Farouk's Famous Burn Down the Barn curry
JUDGE ONE: Excellent firehouse curry! Great kick. Needs more beans.

JUDGE TWO: A beanless curry, a bit salty, good use of red peppers.

FRANK: Call Colesburg, I've located a uranium spill. My nose feels like I have been snorting Drano. Everyone knows the routine by now, get me more beer before I ignite. Barmaid pounded me on the back; now my backbone is in the front part of my chest. I'm getting shit-faced from all the beer.

Curry # 4: Barbu's Black Magic
JUDGE ONE: Black bean curry with almost no spice. Disappointing.

JUDGE TWO: Hint of lime in the black beans. Good side dish for fish or other mild foods, not much of a curry.

FRANK: I felt something scraping across my tongue, but was unable to taste it. Is it possible to burnout taste buds? Savathree, the barmaid, was standing behind me with fresh refills; that 300 lb. bitch is starting to look HOT, just like this nuclear waste I'm eating. Is curry an aphrodisiac?

Curry # 5: Laveshnee's Legal Lip Remover
JUDGE ONE: Meaty, strong curry. Cayenne peppers freshly ground, adding considerable kick. Very impressive.

JUDGE TWO: Curry using shredded beef; could use more tomato. Must admit the cayenne peppers make a strong statement.

FRANK: My ears are ringing, sweat is pouring off my forehead and I can no longer focus my eyes. I farted and four people behind me needed paramedics. The contestant seemed offended when I told her that her curry had given me brain damage. Savathree saved my tongue from bleeding by pouring beer directly on it from a pitcher. I wonder if I'm burning my lips off? It really pisses me off that the other judges asked me to stop screaming. Screw those charo's!

Curry # 6: Vera's Very Vegetarian Variety
JUDGE ONE: Thin yet bold vegetarian variety curry. Good balance of spice and peppers.

JUDGE TWO: The best yet. Aggressive use of peppers, onions, and garlic. Superb.

FRANK: My intestines are now a straight pipe filled with gaseous, sulphuric flames. I shit myself when I farted and I'm worried it will eat through the chair. No one seems inclined to stand behind me except that slut Savathree. She must be kinkier than I thought. Can't feel my lips anymore. I need to wipe my ass with a snow cone!

Curry # 7: Sugash's Screaming Sensation Curry
JUDGE ONE: A mediocre curry with too much reliance on canned peppers.

JUDGE TWO: Ho Hum, tastes as if the chef literally threw in a can of curry peppers at the last moment. I should note that I am worried about Judge Number 3. He appears to be in a bit of distress as he is cursing uncontrollably.

FRANK: You could put a grenade in my mouth, pull the pin, and I wouldn't a feel damn thing. I've lost the sight in one eye, and the world sounds like it is made of rushing water. My shirt is covered with curry which slid unnoticed out of my mouth. My pants are full of lava-like shit to match my damn shirt. At least during the autopsy they'll know what killed me. I've decided to stop breathing, it's too painful. Screw it, I'm not getting any oxygen anyway. If I need air, I'll just suck it in through the 4 inch hole in my stomach.

Curry # 8: Hansraj's Mount Saint Curry
JUDGE ONE: A perfect ending, this is a nice blend curry, safe for all, not too bold but spicy enough to declare its existence.

JUDGE TWO: This final entry is a good, balanced curry, neither mild nor hot. Sorry to see that most of it was lost when Judge Number 3 passed out, fell over and pulled the curry pot down on top of himself. Not sure if he's going to make it. Poor Yank, wonder how he'd have reacted to a really hot curry?

FRANK: ——————(editor's note: Judge #3 was unable to report)

HISTORY

The Audacious Alaskan Adventures of Kayak Dundee*
*alias Paul Caffyn
(continued from n/l No.92)

The Diabolical Delta Country

With a relatively smooth 50 mile crossing of Bristol Bay astern, I thought I was home and hosed with no major trauma before Nome. But my pre-trip research left me totally unprepared for the most diabolical of torments known to a sea kayaker, the vast sprawling mud flats of the Kuskokwim- Yukon delta. I had expected tidal flats but not extending up to 10 miles offshore. I found the mental stress of dealing with shallow filthy water off the Yukon and Kuskokwim river deltas far worse than the violence of open surf landings in the Gulf of Alaska. My pet mild derogatory phrase coined to describe the problems I encountered was "the diabolical deltas."

One lady I met who'd worked at a village school in the delta country sympathized with me over problems with drying mud flats, mosquitoes and soggy, spongy tundra. She politely called this delta country the "armpit of Alaska." I suggested that anatomically wise, it would be better termed the arsehole of Alaska. Embarrassed to relate how I'd spent two nights camped out on the mud flats when left stranded by an ebbing tide, I was relieved to hear her say, "Oh everyone round here has spent at least one night out on the mud flats."

No wonder the fishermen I met off the delta front were always in a hurry. They always stopped to look at the long yellow kayak but I never had a chance to ask more than one question about what lay ahead before they would say, "I'm in a hurry to catch the tide." The fisherman all wore ski goggles to keep spray out of their eyes as they planed their aluminium skiffs over the short dirty seas off the delta front.

My main problem was that the deltas are subject to diurnal tides, that is only one big flood tide per 24 hour tidal cycle. The more common cycle is a semidiurnal cycle, with two 6 hour flood and two six hour ebb cycles per twenty four hour period. In Etolin Strait, my map showed tidal flats drying out 10 miles off the coast. When I tried to sneak through Etolin Strait with an overnight paddle on a big flood tide, the ebb tide sucked out at 2.45am leaving me stranded high and dry on the mud flats.

Using the blade of my spare paddle, I scooped up a platform of damp sand some three inches high above the flats, spread out the aluminium space blanket, Thermarest mattress and holofill sleeping bag. Then I tried to catch a few hours sleep before the flood tide scampered back across the flats. In daylight next morning, I could see neither sea nor coast, I was so far offshore.

Needless to say my relief to reach gravel beaches and rocky shores again at Stebbins was immense. For many nights afterwards, I experienced nightmares of waking on the mud flats with the sea inundating my sleeping bag.

Old Skin Boats

Part of the reason why I chose to paddle around Alaska, was that it was the first area I had visited where kayaks were utilized for centuries as the main method of transportation. Several various types of sealskin covered kayaks evolved which were largely dependent on the vagaries of local sea and weather conditions. I was keen to photograph any surviving skin boats and talk to the Eskimo folk about their traditional hunting and paddling tech-

niques. In the light of my trip, I hoped to evolve ideas and theories as to why specific design features developed in different areas.

I was disappointed to find that aluminium skiffs and powerful outboard motors have totally superseded the old skin boats of coastal Alaska. I did see three beautifully crafted wooden frames of the Bering Sea kayaks at the Yupik villages of Tununak and Hooper Bay but these relics of a past era are not being given the tender loving care and attention that they are due. Covered for the last time with canvas, a more durable skin than seal skin, the rotting cloth now hangs in tatters. It was obvious the boats had not been near salt water for years.

However I was tickled by the response of the Eskimo kids to my kayak. When I surfed into the beach at Hooper Bay, I was quickly surrounded by a mob of excited kids who helped carry the boat clear of the surf. Boys and girls alike all wanted to try out the cockpit and feel the weight of the paddle. I can only hope my trip has stimulated a resurgence of interest in the old skin boats.

Steam Baths

I felt privileged at Hooper Bay to be invited by a Yupik family for a meqiq or steam bath. Since there is no running water in the smaller Eskimo villages, cleansing of the whole family is carried out in a steam bath. I was told that each village has an elder whose tolerance to heat is greater than anyone else. There was talk also of an invisible belt that is tightened as the temperature and humidity rise and how the elder, as he tips another pitcher of water over the hot rocks, emits a low throaty chuckle while lesser mortals hug the floor where the humid heat is not as bad.

Each house at Hooper Bay seemed to have its own meqiq out the back. They looked not much bigger than a kid's playhouse with a small entrance door at one end and a chimney at the other end. The small door led into a tiny cubicle where I stripped off my clothes. Before entering the steam room, I was given a bowl of cold water and a tube of sticks wrapped in cloth. Instructed to soak the tube in the bowl of water and then breathe though it, I was starting to wonder what I had let myself in for. I was told it was to stop the hot air burning my throat and lungs. In the steam room, a 44 gallon drum with an outside fire box had a steel mesh on top which supported a layer of volcanic rocks. The wooden walls were scorching hot to my buttocks and back but worse was to come when Frankie poured a can of water over the rocks.

A wall of steaming heat hit me and I lasted only 90 seconds before exiting into the wee cubicle. The others followed me and after cooling off we made several more forays into the steaming heat. The men boasted of the marvellous medicinal and recuperative powers of steam baths. The benefits for me were twofold. I slept like a log for the rest of the night and all the mud and silt that my body had absorbed in the Kuskokwim delta was cleared from my skin pores.

Last Days to Nome

Whether it was this relief or a marked improvement in the weather, I knocked back the last 180 miles from Unalakleet to Nome in only four days averaging a creditable 45 miles per day. And the last day into Nome was a veritable hummer. The wind at last swung onto my stern quarter allowing me to indulge in some early morning surfing.

As the sun rose, the wind eased and the day warmed up. I ended up stripped down to just capilene long johns, hat and polaroids. When the sea went off, I was able to take off the sprayskirt. I was jogging along, conditioning my brain that this was indeed the very last day of the 1990 trip and trying to prepare for the post-trip depression when I passed an aluminium skiff grounded on the beach. An elderly Inupiaq couple from Nome had been out berry picking and we chatted about time and tide. The conversation went something like:

"Where did you come from?"

"I started this year at Juneau."

The chap shook his head slowly in disbelief.

"Where are you heading for?"

"I'm finishing this year's trip at Nome today."

"Well, where do you hope to get to?"

"Next year I want to follow the ice pack north to Barrow and then along to Inuvik in the Mackenzie delta."

There was a lengthy pause here as the chap began to comprehend the full length of the task I had set myself. He then looked me squarely in the eyes and said slowly, "Well, you better put some clothes on then."

It really broke me up, and we laughed for ages.

At 8pm that evening, I entered the turning basin at Nome and landed on a scrap of sandy beach, bringing to an end 89 days and 2,760 miles of paddling. No one was expecting me, but I asked an elderly Eskimo chap if he would take my photograph by the Nordkapp. I didn't experience an overwhelming feeling of elation of relief, instead the weather was so good on that last day, I felt I didn't want to stop.

Sumary of Statistics for 1990 Trip

Total Distance Covered	:	2760 miles
Elfin Cove to Nome		
Start to Finish time	:	89 days
Rest & Recuperation days:		8
Weather-bound days	:	2
All up average	:	31 m.p.d.
Paddling day average	:	35 m.p.d.

1991 Nome to Inuvik

In the northern summer of 1991 I planned to paddle from Nome through Bering Strait into the Chukchi Sea, then round Point Barrow into the Beaufort Sea and along the coast to the Canadian town of Inuvik in the Mackenzie River delta. A distance of only some 1500 miles, I expected the trip to take a maximum of 50 days. This was based on my all-up average of 29 miles per day for the 1990 trip. However the 1991 trip ended up taking a total of 73 days. This was due solely to ice conditions. What commenced in May as being one of the best years for ice, turned out by August to be one of the worst years on record for difficult ice conditions.

The False Start from Nome

On June 1 1991, I flew from Anchorage to Nome via the Eskimo village of Kotzebue. I had heard that the ice had broken up early at Nome on May 6 so I was shocked and stunned to see, as the aircraft banked over Kotzebue Sound, a solid sheet of ice filling the sound from shore to shore. Not a single lead or glimmer of sea was visible. I could not believe my eyes. I had hoped to cross Kotzebue Sound on day 10 after leaving Nome.

However as the aircraft descended to land at Nome, the sea was ice free with only a few remnant winter snowbanks scattered around the town. My kayak had been in safe storage at Nome for the winter. All I had to do was check my equipment and purchase fresh food for the first 200 mile leg to Shishmaref. One week previously I had posted out all my food dumps from Anchorage with the dehydrated meals from New Zealand.

Only two days out of Nome I reached the southern limits of the ice pack. Progress slowed and on June 5, I followed a narrow shore lead for only three miles before reaching impenetrable ice. To reach terra firma from the lead, I had to drag my kayak over 200 yards of shorefast ice. For the next four days, while I waited for the ice to either melt or move offshore, the weather was perfect. Overnight, ice would form on my tent and the sea would freeze but the days were sunny and calm. It was so frustrating to wait on shore while the weather was so perfect.

Not that I was content just to sit on the beach and wait. I walked six miles along the coast to see if there was a shore lead, which there wasn't, and tried paddling out to sea around the ice pack. Pressure ridges up to 15 feet high, where the floes had been grinding together, allowed me a commanding view across the ice pack. When I began losing sight of shore, and there was still no way on through the ice, I decided to retrace my tracks back to my campsite.

Since this was my first experience with sea ice, I was learning new techniques each day. Landing on the ice floes had worried me immensely since some of the best kayakers have been lost during or after landing on ice floes. In 1932 Gino Watkins disappeared without trace while seal hunting in the ice floes on the East Coast of Greenland. His trousers and sprayskirt were found on a floe, his kayak found floating but of Gino, who had learnt the art of kayaking and rolling from the Eskimos, no trace was ever found.

I did have a marked advantage over the old skin boat paddlers in that the hull of my kayak was built from two layers of kevlar. Combined with the swept up Nordkapp bow, I found I could paddle the kayak on to low ice floes with ease. All I had to do was find a low section of floe that was not more than six inches above sea level and was also reasonably flat. At full paddling speed the kayak would slide easily onto the ice where I could step out of the cockpit with dry feet. I learnt quickly to have a rope from the decklines handy to secure the kayak. This was vital particularly if a wind was blowing since the ice is so slippery. Launching was also very easy. Sitting in the cockpit, I simply pushed off from the ice and the kayak slid into the water sternfirst.

Following four days of watching and waiting for the ice to melt, the novelty of being surrounded by ice had worn off. I realized that sunny days with warm temperatures were not moving the ice - strong winds, big seas and strong currents were required to break up the ice. It was now day eight since I had left Nome. I had halved my daily food ration, and since continuing fine weather was forecast on the radio, I felt there was no alternative but to paddle back to Nome and stock up on more food.

Crossing the Arctic Circle

Back safely in Nome, a spell of bad weather finally arrived. Rain, sleet and snow were accompanied by a strong southerly wind. With a report of favourable ice conditions up to Bering Strait, I started out again on June 16 and reached the small Eskimo village of Wales by the 18th. The winter had been harsh. The ice had only moved offshore in the past few days. The village main street was still buried under six foot deep snow drifts. The town is only small with a population of some 160 people. Apart from the houses, there is a school, store and a white geodesic dome structure which contains the Post Office and town council office.

I was fortunate to see and photograph two walrus skin covered umiaks which in 1990 had been used to make a crossing from Siberia across Bering Strait to Wales. Umiaks are a large wooden boat, built with a driftwood or sawn timber frame lashed together with walrus skin cord and covered with walrus skins. They vary in length from 15 to 40 feet and in ancient times were propelled by paddles. Although some are now set up with mast and sail, it is more common for modern umiaks to have a well near the stern for an outboard motor. From Wales to Barrow umiaks are still used to hunt and harpoon bowhead whales.

From a hill above Wales I had a commanding view across Bering Strait to Big and Little Diomede islands and beyond them, 50 miles away, the snow clad hills of Siberia stood clear above the ice pack. I was looking out across the migration route for the American Indian population when they moved eastwards from Asia across the Bering Land Bridge. Thousands of years later, the Eskimos and Aleuts migrated across the land bridge into Alaska and then the sea level rose, slowly submerging and cutting off this migration route. South of the strait lay the Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea while to the north lay the Arctic Ocean and the Chukchi Sea.

To the north, the ice pack's southern fringe lay only a few miles away. Only 18 miles along the coast from Wales towards my first food dump at Shishmaref, I hit impenetrable ice. I was held up for another two days before crossing the Arctic Circle on June 25. There was no marker or stake behind the sand beach to mark this latitude of 66 degrees and 33 minutes. My very first time in the land of 24 hours daylight. To celebrate this auspicious occasion all I could do was

hold up the map and snap a self portrait. As I paddled northwards towards Barrow, I would not see a sunset again until late summer when hopefully I would be nearing the end of my trip.

Sandy beach backed by a low dune ridge formed this long section of sweeping shore to Kotzebue Sound. Further inland, low bare tundra flats extended as far as the eye could see. The ice pack was always close against the beach, sometimes with a narrow continuous shore lead where I could paddle in a straight line, but at other times small floes were packed in tight against the beach. The tightly packed floes required zig-zaging, backtracking and even bashing the kayak bow against small floes so I could open a passage just wide enough for the kayak. When the ice formed an impassable barrier, I would land and wait patiently for the ice to move. I could have dragged the kayak across the ice, but I was determined to paddle every inch of the way around Alaska.

Kotzebue Sound

At Espenberg, the site of an old fish camp and now a summer home for a reindeer farmer, I landed to climb onto a dune and look across Kotzebue Sound. The outlook for a quick crossing of the sound looked bleak - beyond a narrow shore lead, a continuous sheet of ice stretched as far as the eye could see.

I met Freddie Goodhope, the Eskimo reindeer farmer, and his wife Janie. Although it was 2pm, Freddie was just getting out of bed when I arrived. He and his family had been out all night seal hunting from a skiff in the ice. Freddie invited me to join him checking set nets up river. The catch of five whitefish and trout was boiled up for breakfast at 4 o'clock in the afternoon!.

Freddie farms a herd of 288 reindeer which are corralled twice a year, once for dehorning and again at freeze-up to give the animals their shots to ward off disease and parasites. When selected animals are slaughtered, the meat is either flown to Shishmaref or taken by skidoo and sled across the snow.

Kotzebue Sound at its narrowest point is 35 miles wide. Because of the ice pack, I could not take this direct course and was forced to follow the shore lead eastwards when I launched at 7.30am on the 26th of June. One promising lead headed northwards but after four miles it came to an absolute dead end in solid, unbroken first year ice. I had no option but to backtrack to the shore lead. I tried several more leads but they always came to a dead end. Hovering above the ice was a mirage or band of white, but I kept seeing a short section of blue mirage above the ice to the north which I felt certain lay above open water. No matter how I tried, I could find a lead which headed in the right direction.

Several times I landed on the ice and climbed onto pressure ridges to search for a lead. At 12.30pm, I was feeling demoralized and tempted to turn back to Espenberg. One last time I landed and climbed on top of a floe. Half a mile away, there appeared to be a lead and I could hear the sound of chop working in the lead. Normally in the densely packed ice floes there was virtually no sound, just the gentle dripping of melt water into the sea and lapping and surging under the floes. When I heard the sound of chop, I knew there was an area of open water. It had taken me five hours to find this lead.

Once into the lead I knew it would head to open water as a low westerly chop was tossing. Hour by hour as I paddled, the lead went on and on and the wind kept lifting. The lead would close down to a narrow gap then open up into a broad open area. Mid-afternoon, I landed in the lee of a large floe and pulled the kayak onto the ice. The chop was beginning to break over the kayak decks.

This was one great advantage of paddling in ice - I could stop in the middle of Kotzebue Sound and pull on my survival suit. Twelve hours after launching, I broke clear of the ice onto open water and two hours later, ground the kayak bow onto a gravel beach on the north side of Kotzebue Sound. The ice had turned a 35 mile open water crossing into a 50 mile ice dodge. I was immensely relieved to be ashore again after 14 hours on the water as this was the largest crossing I had to complete for the 1991 trip.

Brown Bears

By the time I reached Cape Beaufort on July 6, I was considering myself fortunate. I had not seen a single brown bear. But paddling past a gravel beach, backed by gentle rolling tundra slopes, working my way through loose pack ice, I saw a movement on shore. Two bulky shapes, moving across the tundra towards the beach, were too solid for caribou - they were big coastal brown bears! Standing on hind legs, they sparred and pawed at each other as they neared the beach. I lost sight of them behind a stranded ice floe and pulled out my two cameras. Then I put on speed and glided out from behind the floe towards where the two bears were scrapping on the beach. I kept my arm movements very slow as I drifted in close to the beach. The bears glanced in my direction but otherwise took absolutely no notice of me.

Clouds of mosquitoes hovered thickly around the bears. They were magnificent specimens with black patches of fur around their eyes. When they walked into the sea, directly towards the kayak bow, my heart began to pound, but I realized they were simply trying to get rid of the annoying clouds of insects. One bear came so close, with just his head out of the water, he could have touched the kayak with his paw. I felt no threat from the bears and it was obvious the bears felt no threat from me. It was a magic moment, almost an unbearable one and a great hightlight of the Alaska trip.

Barrow - the Northern Tip of Alaska

Late afternoon on July 17, I was struggling to reach the town of Barrow. Swirls of thick cold, clammy fog limited visibility to 200 yards. An onshore wind had forced the ice pack hard against the beach, leaving only short stretches of shore lead where I could paddle in a straight line. The kayak took a hammering as I used the bow as a battering ram to force a way through the floes. I nearly capsized

while skating at speed over a low tongue of ice. I had not seen a projecting knob of ice, and at speed, it nearly flipped me over. Only a desperate slap support stroke kept me from a dunking in the icy water.

The fog was so thick, I could not estimate the distance remaining to Barrow. I could hear the sounds of vehicles and machinery so knew it was close. The ice was really bad, packed hard against the beach, forcing a snail's pace. Through the murk I noticed an old Eskimo chap strolling along the gravel beach.

"How far to Barrow?" I called out to the Eskimo.

"Keep paddling for half a mile and land by some skiffs parked on the beach," he replied.

"Where have you come from?", the Eskimo asked.

"I started this year from Nome and camped last night at Skull Cliffs."

The Eskimo chap looked at the fog and the ice packed hard against the beach and said, "You've just come from around the corner, haven't you?"

For the next three days I stayed with Geoff and Marie Carroll which fortunately coincided with a spell of bad weather, snow, sleet, rain and strong winds. Geoff works as a ranger for the Fish and Game Department, keeping track of the numbers of caribou, bears and bowhead whales. Marie, his Eskimo wife, is a representative for the North Slope Borough on the International Whaling Commission. Hunting of bowhead whales is still carried out from Barrow in late Spring.

When the first lead forms offshore, umiaks are towed on sledges behind skidoos to the open water where the hunters wait until a whale is spotted. The umiaks are launched and the whale is killed by harpoon and darting gun. After a kill, many of the Barrow townsfolk help to winch the whale onto the ice where it is cut into small pieces. The blubber and meat is shared out amongst all the villagers. Bowhead whales grow up to 60 feet long and weigh as much as 60 tons. The umiak men have to be highly skilled to avoid being capsized by a harpooned bowhead.

Geoff Carroll was a member of the 1986 Steger International Polar Expedition which reached the North Pole by dog team and sled. Ever since Geoff has been fond of Greenland huskies and keeps a team of 12 dogs tethered at the back of his house. Geoff asked me if I would like to join him exercising the dogs. Although it was supposedly summer, with no snow on the ground, sleet and snow were falling as we harnessed the excited dogs. Normally in summer, the dogs remain tethered with little of no exercise so the dogs were overjoyed for the chance of a romp over the tundra. Clinging to a big freight sled with clouds of steam from the dog's breath and bouncing over the tundra on the sled was a magic experience.

Barrow, with a population of over 3,000, is one of the largest Eskimo settlements and is the centre of local government for the North Slope Borough, the world's largest municipal government. At the modern supermarket I was able to stock up on fresh food, meat and milk for the next 360 mile leg to Kaktovik. When the sun rises on May 10 in Barrow each year, it does not set again until August 2 - no wonder this country is called the 'land of the midnight sun.'

Reaching the Border

On July 21, I farewelled Geoff at Point Barrow, the northernmost tip of Alaska, and paddled from the Chukchi Sea onto the Beaufort Sea. By this date in a normal year the icepack has broken up and moved offshore, however 1991 was turning into a bad year for ice. No freight barges or vessels had been able to get near Barrow let alone the producing oilfields at Kuparuk and Prudhoe Bay.

For the next 15 days I dodged through the ice, mostly under cloudy skies and often through thick fog until I closed on the goal of my Alaska trip, the border between Alaska and Canada. On a cloudy evening on August 4, I slowly manoeuvred my way through tightly packed floes alongside a gravel beach until abeam of a navigation tower near the border. I landed, climbed up a 20 foot high mud bank and walked across a broad tundra terrace to a low bronze plinth. On the east side, was Canada and on the west, Alaska. For four years of planning and three years of paddling, I had been struggling to reach this solitary bronze monument. There was no one to take a photo or to say, "Well done, old chap," so I had to settle for a self portrait of the paddler hugging the border monument. Since there was not a decent campsite near, I climbed back into the kayak and paddled into Canadian waters. Although I had completed my trip around the coastline of Alaska, it was by no means the end of the 1991 trip - another 240 miles lay ahead to reach the road end at Inuvik.

Northwest Passage

Ever since leaving Barrow, I was paddling through waters and ice where some of the great names in Arctic exploration had attempted to find the elusive Northwest Passage. Starting with John Cabot in 1497 the British made a concerted effort to blaze a trail through the passage, culminating in the 1845 Franklin Expedition which virtually disappeared without trace with the loss of two ships and 129 men. In the following years, search parties on both ice and sea made the final connection for the Northwest Passage, however it wasn't until 1906 that the first complete sea traverse of the Northwest Passage was completed.

In August of that year, Roald Amundsen passed through Bering Strait in the 47 ton herring sloop Gjoa. With a crew of six, he set off from Norway in 1903 and spent two winters at Gjoa Haven, carrying out scientific observations and exploring by dog team. In the summer of 1906, Amundsen's goal was Bering Strait but poor ice conditions forced him to winter over for a third year at King Point.

Snow was piling up on the sleeves of my survival suit as I neared King Point. An Arctic front had passed through only hours before with gale force winds and freezing temperatures. When seas began breaking over my shoulder, I landed through surf on a very exposed beach. With no shelter

and chilling temperatures, I was almost an exposure case within minutes. Fortunately, as it was only 50 miles from the Mackenzie River delta, driftwood was piled thickly at the head of the beach. I used an Eskimo trick to quickly build a solid wall of driftlogs behind which I could shelter from the biting wind. Using slivers of the resin rich timber I had a fire going in minutes and was able to warm up with a hot brew of tea.

When the wind and sea eased I paddled along to King Point and landed to see where Amundsen and his men had spent 10 long months waiting for the ice to break up. It is a desolate place, a long gravel spit backed by a small lagoon with rolling tundra slopes inland. I would have liked to have spent more time there, but as it was so cold, sleet was still falling, I decided it was warmer paddling in the kayak.

The Mackenzie River Delta

On August 11, I finally left the icepack astern and entered the swift flowing, muddy waters of the Mackenzie River delta. For another two days, I plugged upstream against the current for 80 miles, heading for Inuvik and trailing a cloud of mosquitoes and steam as I sweated in warmer temperatures. At 7.15pm, on August 13, I ran the kayak bow onto a mud bank at the Inuvik barge dock. The Alaska trip was finally complete.

Summary of Statistics for 1991 Trip

Total distance covered: 1511 miles
Nome to Inuvik
Start to finish time : 73 days
Rest & Recuperation days: 1
Icebound days : 8
Weatherbound days : 12
Total paddling days : 52
Total non-paddling days : 21
All up average : 20.7 m.p.d.
Paddling day average : 29.1 m.p.d.

Update on Abel Tasman National Park

(from the SKOANZ n/l No.17)

The Abel Tasman continues to grow as a sea-kayaking powerhouse.

All sea kayak operators I spoke to said they had a bumper season. While the top of the country was having a wet old summer we were enjoying a 50 (some reports said 100) year drought with endless hot sunny days. Last summer it was estimated that the number of commercial kayak seats increased to 400, via 12 companies.

The last couple of years have seen only one new kayak company, Kahu Kayaks, who remains a small (boutique) operator. The growth has come from the expansion of some small operators. I estimate that Kiwi Kayaks and The Sea Kayak Company have both increased their fleets three fold in the last two years. The two big operators, Abel Tasman Kayaks and Ocean River, have maintained fleets of 90 – 100 seats each for several years now. During peak season there were usually up to 200 kayakers leaving Marahau beach each morning.

Last summer was the first time the district council began enforcing the 200m/ 5 knot water regulation via a harbour master. They also created several water ski lanes. The lanes naturally are in places popular with kayakers who were required to wait when ski boats were operating. There were numerous incidents of kayakers being verbally abused by water skiers when they paddled through lanes not in use. Obviously the water skiers resented the fact that they could no longer ski wherever they pleased. We recorded fewer near misses between kayakers and water skiers last summer. The council is now evaluating the response to last summer's enforcement. Naturally the water skiers want more ski lanes and everyone else wants less water skiers.

The interesting point here is that the growth in visitor number to the Abel Tasman has been in the passive enjoyment group, mainly walkers and kayakers. Several operators have commented that the number of water skiers and private powerboats decreased this summer.

I want to see future management of the area reflect this trend, however, there are others arguing that resources should be allocated by historic use which would favour the powerboaties. An Advisory Group has been looking at the management issues in the area during last summer and is due to report to the Minister of Conservation in a few months.

The other issue taxing locals is the proposal by Wakatu Incorporation to build a 160 room resort on the Marahau beach front. Both Marahau and the park are attracting large numbers of visitors already without the introduction of mass tourism. Our current domestic and FIT visitor market may well be put-off by the effects of this development. It is proving very difficult to hold back the tide of mass tourism and development.

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