

Title: *Sea Kayaker's More Deep Trouble*

Subtitle: *More True Stories and Their Lessons from Sea Kayaker Magazine*

Author: Chris Cunningham Editor

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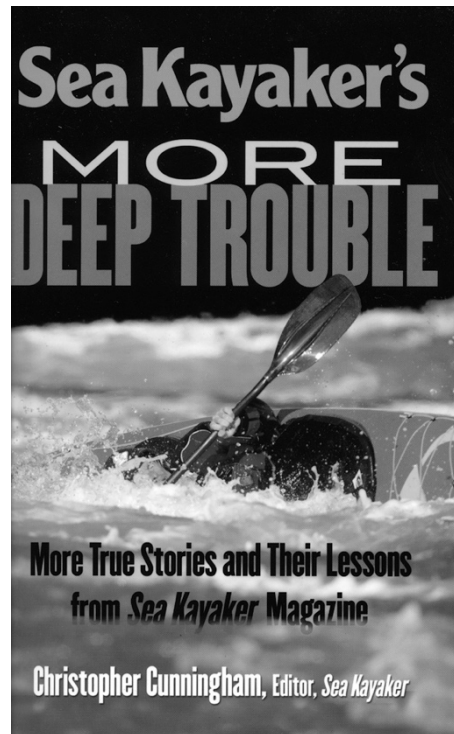
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Review: Paul Hayward



Executive summary: Good book – worth your time.

The *original Deep Trouble* (1997) was a compilation of kayaking misadventures ('Bugger!' files) from the pages of *Sea Kayaker* magazine. No other single resource has done more to keep me alive as I have stretched my own kayaking boundaries.

This new volume follows the same format. There are 29 case studies that nail your attention with a life or death scenario and then give a real-world discussion of the good, the bad and the ugly.

As a way to learn the most important safety lesson about kayaking – that we can easily kill ourselves if we don't get the risk-assessment right – it is a brilliantly effective, and enthralling read.

This isn't another simplistic safety article – telling you to buy the latest style of paddle-float, or to keep your first-aid kit up-to-date, or to spend more time working on your roll in the pool. It's a look at the real reasons why a lot of novice, intermediate and expert kayakers got it horribly wrong.

Chris Cunningham (past editor of *Sea Kayaker Magazine*) has applied his very considerable skills to editing this book – with his own insights layered on top of the author of each chapter. The knowledge level is extremely high and the writing is equally a pleasure to read.

Chapter authors are uniformly knowledgeable – and from a wide range of kayaking backgrounds (and countries). Any one would be a valuable resource – so, to have so many is delightful. I could list a few of their names and accomplishments – but trust me, these are not wanna-bes.

Take chapter 11: it tells the tale of the novice course that caused the BCU (British Canoe Union) to rewrite its basic wet-exit training. A novice died, trapped by a tight spray deck. No relevance to us perhaps? But add the discussion of spray-deck fitment, the rescue process that nearly saved him, and even a sensible four-page programme for training and enhancing your own breath-holding and panic-suppression skills (examples of deep-diver techniques) and this simple disaster becomes the basis for a thought-provoking re-examination of one of kayaking's simplest accomplishments – the wet-exit.

When my partner Natasha read *Deep Trouble*, a decade ago, it scared her out of paddling for a fortnight. I wouldn't have believed that possible. She recovered, but it underscored the

power of the presentation. Usually we have to live those scares ourselves to 'get the message' with such force. Learning from the experiences of others can be a lot wiser.

Quotes:

'Kayaking safely requires looking ahead in both time and space. We're looking for dangers that might lie ahead but, more importantly, also for the points at which we still have an opportunity to avoid them.'

'Discomfort consumes energy... just as your blood is shunted away from your extremities when your warmth dissipates into cold, the sphere of your awareness shrinks around discomfort.'

David had flares, but they were stored in the forward compartment.

As most paddlers' skills and knowledge increase, they typically attempt a corresponding increase in the difficulty of terrain and sea conditions. With this progression comes a need and even a responsibility to continue to educate themselves with more in-depth aspects of safety issues.

Coming out of a lee (an area protected from the wind) can be marked by dramatic increases in wind velocity and wave height.... Being able to predict how landforms will affect waves and wind by looking at a chart is an important skill.

This book is one of those rare 'no-brainer' value propositions. From Amazon (\$12) or Fishpond (\$19) it's worth ten times its price – or how much more if it keeps you alive?