

Title: *South Solo*

Subtitle: *Kayaking to save the albatross*

Author: Hayley Shephard

Published: 2011

Publisher: Bayeux Arts, Inc, Calgary, Canada

Website: www.bayeux.com

Contents: 144pp, colour photos, maps

Cover: softcover

Size: 224 x 152 mm

Price: CAN\$19.95

Availability: Amazon

Review: Kerry-Jayne Wilson

South Georgia is one of the most spectacular, most beautiful and most forbidding places on the planet. This huge mountainous island lies south of the Antarctic Convergence in some of the world's stormiest seas; to circumnavigate it by kayak is a challenge indeed. Hayley Shephard is one of a select few courageous enough to accept this challenge and the only person to attempt it alone. She is a New Zealander, now resident in Canada who works as a kayak and adventure guide in the colder parts of the world. Having visited South Georgia on a number of occasions as a guide on tour ships she attempted this circumnavigation in part to raise awareness of the plight of albatrosses.

Readers who attended the KASK forum at Wainui and heard her powerful, passionate and inspirational presentation will know the story. For those who were not so fortunate, Hayley was thwarted in her circumnavigation attempt at every turn. An accident to a crewman on route to South Georgia, delays in the Falkland Islands searching for replacement crew, finally arriving to find her kayak damaged and an unusually stormy summer meant that Hayley was able to paddle along just a third of the island's coast.

South Georgia, albatrosses, extreme kayaking, this book promises an adventure story laced with stunning photos but does it deliver? Her kayaking adventures in South Georgia occupy just over a third of the book, the bulk of it an account of her previous expeditions, her life in British Columbia and of course the adventures actually getting to South Georgia. These chapters give interesting insights into Hayley as a person and the passion for adventure, wilderness and wildlife that drives her to undertake extreme expeditions alone. There are three blocks of colour photos. The photos are sharp, nicely composed and well-chosen, but lack the drama of the same photos shown in her Wainui talk, a problem with the printing, not the photographer. The maps which appear on the last page of the last block of colour would have benefited from earlier placement and greater detail. Given that an objective of her expedition was to raise awareness of the dire threats faced by albatrosses, I would have expected to see more detailed information on both albatrosses and their plight. Appropriate information appears on her website, <http://www.kayakingtosavealbatross.com/albaaction.asp?p=3>. She could easily have pasted this into the book as an appendix. Albatrosses, and many other seabirds for that matter, need all the help they can get and it is a pity that Hayley did not make the most of the opportunity her book presents to spread the word.

This book is a good easy read, detailing the life and adventures of this remarkable, passionate and inspiring woman. Expedition paddlers will find the planning and Hayley's mental approach to the challenges experienced interesting, day paddlers such as me will be inspired to try something a little more adventurous. Hayley's adventures paddling and camping on the so called sheltered north-eastern coast of South Georgia will not induce many other kayakers to follow in her paddle-strokes. Visit her website www.kayakingtosavealbatross.com it has some beautiful photos from South Georgia as well as her previous expeditions, and much more information on Hayley, albatrosses and the places she paddles.

