

Topic:

Sea Kayak Selection

QC-0507

Resource:

[Kayak Stability](#)

Basics: Selecting your kayak is a highly personal task. The needs and goals of the beginner are likely to be quite different from the experienced paddler. Paddlers that are on a steep learning curve may benefit from deferring a purchase while their skills improve. There are many specialty kayaks designed for specific activities, but in this lesson we intend to deal only with sea kayaks.

Question: *What factors are important in selecting a sea kayak?*

Answer Perhaps the most important factor is the skill level of the paddler. There is generally a strong tradeoff between boat stability and boat performance. Faster boats are generally more comfortable to experienced paddlers that have a good toolbox of paddle strokes to propel, maneuver and stabilize the boat. Other factors are size and capacity and weight of the boat, it's height above the water, shape of the bottom, ease of entry and maneuverability.

Question: *How do I choose the right type of boat for me?*

Answer: The key is to know or discover what you want to do with the boat. Then honestly assess your skill level and seek as much training as possible for the activities you want to pursue. Learn the features of boat design that affect stability, speed, maneuverability, durability, weight and price. Try to paddle a variety of boats with different features and see which provide the best results and comfort.

Advanced Concepts: You may want to get more information on the following:

- What is secondary stability?
- What is chine? ...freeboard? ...weather-cocking?
- How does width/length ratio determine maximum speed?
- What are the pro's and con's of a Rec-boat ... sit-on-top?

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