# Coastbusters

**The Cross Currents Newsletter for Mid-Atlantic Paddlers**

**May 2024**

## Newfoundland: The Easternmost Coast!

***Joe Berkovitz***

*The rugged coast Photo: Janet Lorang.*

If you drive southwest from New England on Interstate 95 and keep going down the East Coast, the weather gets warmer along the way, as does the ocean. The trees get bigger. About 1,200 miles later, you reach the state of Florida, where you might order a cool refreshment from the beach bar.

A very different option, however, takes you 1,200 miles in the opposite direction: northeast. After two days of driving, an overnight ferry, and one more day's drive, you will find yourself on the wild Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, just south of Labrador. There, on some of the easternmost and least inhabited coastlines in North America, cool refreshments take the form of icebergs. There are few beach bars, few beaches, and few people. The closest thing to spring break is marked not by spring breakers, but by the breakup of ice in the frozen harbors—in mid-June.

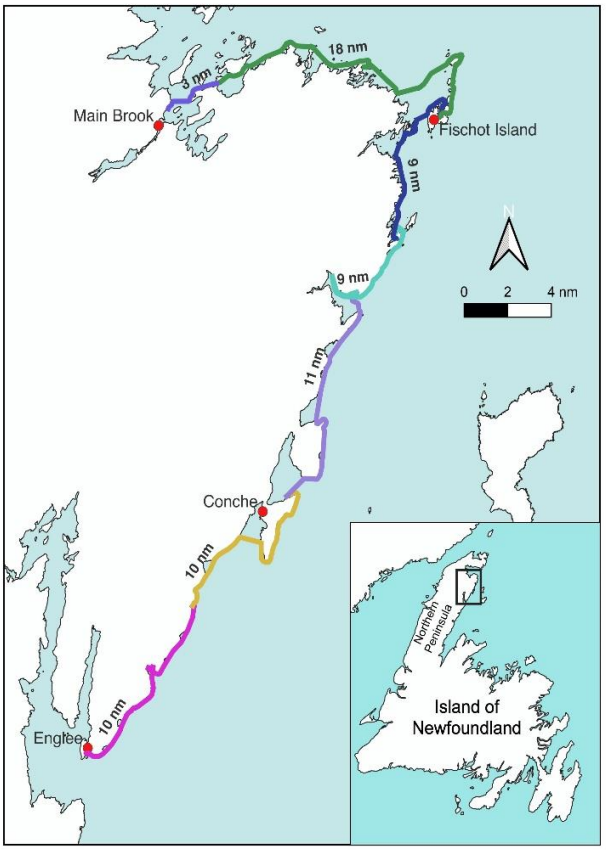
In late June of 2023, four fellow kayakers and I took the latter, less-traveled route. We were aiming for an encounter with a raw and unshaped coastline, one with only the lightest touch of human presence but a trace of history. We would find what we were looking for.

**Party of Five, Your Iceberg Is Ready**

Newfoundland is nicknamed "The Rock" by many of its residents, and the name is well-deserved. On arrival, one is immediately struck by the island's air of severity and its sheer rockiness. Outside the few populated centers, people are sparse and the lifestyle spare and unsparing. The local dialect of English is often hard to follow. There are few opportunities for a soft landing on its coastline, especially in the area where we would be paddling. Although we were an experienced pod and three of our group had been to other parts of Newfoundland before, we were all excited and a bit wary at our initial launch.

Our anticipation was running high. In the tiny fishing village of Englee, we caught a glimpse of our first iceberg as we drove down the steep hill into town. Once at our put-in, we could see two more icebergs floating offshore: the first of many to come. We got the kayaks onto the beach and began to load up our gear, while waiting for our shuttle drivers to come and pick up the vehicles. The drivers were local Newfoundlanders working for the hunting lodge where we would arrive at the end of our trip, a week-plus of paddling from Englee. We wondered if they would think we were weird, crazy Americans who should know better. We also wondered if, in fact, we were just such people.

The mood brightened immediately when our drivers turned up and put us at ease. They were incredibly warm and friendly, an experience we were to have over and over in Newfoundland. Throughout the journey, the warmth and generosity of local people was exceptional—we all felt it, and remarked on how welcome it made us feel. Not only did they act as if we were not crazy, but they seemed genuinely supportive of what we were doing. They were happy to share their local knowledge of our route



*The put-in at Englee. Photo: Joe Berkovitz*

and the local weather and waters, and they suggested good places to stop safely along the way. We handed them the car keys, and off they went. We were on our own and finally ready to start our journey.

**From Imagination to Reality**

As we took off, it was hard to believe we were actually in the place we'd been imagining for months. We began to take in our surroundings bit by bit, adjusting our mental pace to a slower beat.

As we paddled, we saw whales playing offshore. The forecast was for southwest winds of 10-20 knots—a running-joke-to-be, as we had the same (sometimes wrong) forecast every day of the trip. But today there was only a light breeze, some small wind waves and blue skies. Uninterrupted rocks and cliffs were to our left, deep water under us, distant icebergs to our right. No boats or houses were visible in any direction.

Despite the gentleness of the environment, the commitment we had undertaken was becoming clear. As we'd expected, the coastline was austere, with no break in the rock faces dropping straight into the ocean. But the natural beauty and the untouched character of our surroundings felt perfect to us.

Our next place to get safely off the water was a tiny roadless cove with a cabin about 6 miles distant, which would serve as a lunch stop and water resupply. While landing somewhere in between was technically possible, it would be difficult and maybe hazardous, and every day of our trip would feature long stretches of committed paddling like this.

The ocean was somewhere in the neighborhood of 42-45 F as we paddled past an SUV-sized "bergy bit". We were in the domain of the Labrador Current that flows down from the Arctic; not only was this water very cold (it hurt to trail my hand in it), but it was incredibly transparent and had an intense greenish blue jewel-like hue. It was less salty than the New England ocean and smelled different. These nutrient-rich waters originally nourished the cod that has now disappeared from these shores.

Offshore from us, we saw a lobster boat motoring against the backdrop of the Grey Islands a dozen miles offshore. At least, we thought it was a lobster boat… until proximity revealed it to be an ingenious ice sculpture imitation of a boat. This "ice boat" was to follow us for several days, visible from different perspectives, each of which revealed a new aspect.

*Crystal clear blue-green water; cold! Photo: Joe Berkovitz*

*The ice boat. Photo: Joe Berkovitz*

**Planning Outside the Box**

As we paddled through reality, I reflected on the long process of planning and imagination that had preceded the trip. Newfoundland is the fourth largest island in Canada, with about the same area as Tennessee. There is a huge variety of areas to paddle in. But our shared desire for icebergs suggested the eastern side of the Northern Peninsula, the long projection that sticks up from the lumpy core of the island. On this coast, bergs travel south from Greenland on the cold Labrador Current, hugging the coast before veering east into open ocean.

We settled on a 70-mile stretch of coast known as the French Shore, between Englee and Main Brook, NL. The interior road network could support a shuttle, and the comfortable Tuckamore Lodge was available for accommodations in Main Brook. There were several roads, serving a single village and some deserted outports that could serve as bailouts. There was no coastal road: most of the area was boreal spruce forest with the occasional meadow or river. We would need to take care of ourselves. (Besides our shared experience on wild ocean paddles, our number included a nurse practitioner and a firefighter/EMT.)

**Wind and Tide**

In the summer, high pressure hovers to the east of Newfoundland and the winds are generally from the southwest. So our paddling direction would be from south to north, with high land mostly to our west. Wind over the land backs to the left so we expected that southwesterlies would yield “divergence”: a band of calm next to the coast where wind directions diverge. On the other hand, northerly winds could converge next to the coast, yielding “run and hide” conditions, we were warned. The Grey Islands offshore would shelter most of our route from swell and shorten the eastern wind fetch.

The tidal range in this area is tiny by comparison with New England: somewhere between three and five feet. Big enough to make a difference in landing or launching mechanics, but tidal currents were usually not much of an issue here. The Labrador Current does have a pronounced effect though, always running southward between 0.5 and 1 knots. While the sun and the moon have nothing to do with it, the locals refer to this oceanic current as "tide" saying, “The tide always runs south here.”

**A 19th Century French Guide to Kayak Camping**

Determining campsites and water sources was going to be a challenge, although Newfoundland has a large built-in advantage for campers. Upwards of 90% of the province is designated as “Crown Land”: a free resource for public use, including camping. In general, unless you are in a village, or next to someone’s house (neither easy to find on the Northern Peninsula), no one will get upset with your campsite. For those of us from the property-rights obsessed USA, this freedom can take some getting used to.

Printed guides and marine charts were not much help in finding places to stay. Sailing directions were geared to, well, sailors. The only paddling guide we could find was long out of print, and a bit thin on key details. We would need those details, as our target area was mostly rocky ledges and cliffs.

punctuated by all-too-rare coves and islands. We had to plan independently, with advice from people who lived there or who had paddled there. We looked at charts, pored over satellite images to find beaches and streams, and took our best crack at a plan. We called the hunting lodge where we were staying, who referred us to the owner of a tiny museum, who referred us to a local fisherman, who had plenty of useful advice.

One of our key sources for campsites was truly unexpected. Our teammate David stumbled on a photo archive of archaeological digs. Despite Newfoundland being a British Crown possession, the French had legally fished cod in this area from the early 1500s until the late 1800s (hence, the French Shore). They used a system of "fishing rooms"—not rooms, so much as open unforested areas—for processing and drying their catch. These were built near safe landing zones and reliable sources of water. Cross-checking these sites with the locals we'd contacted, it was clear that nearly all of them corresponded to usable beaches, coves, streams, and so on. What David had found was, in effect, a kayak camping guide to the area, courtesy of 19th century French fishermen!

**Our First Night**

After an hour, in search of a pee break, one of our party turned into a small cove that seemed to promise either a sketchy landing or none at all. As our topo maps indicated, we had seen only rock ledge to our left for miles. But here, surprisingly, was an unexpected little pocket beach, just wide enough for 2 kayaks. Above it was a grassy, inviting meadow and an open, slightly spongy plateau: our first campsite.

As we pulled food and supplies out of our hatches, the sky shifted back and forth between blue and gray. It was breezy and cool. No sign of humans could be seen in any direction. The feared bugs were turning out to be not bad at all, at least in this season. We had been forewarned that their timing and quantity varies a lot from one year to the next.

*Camp 1. Photo: Joe Berkovitz*

We ate our dinner together by the boats, hiked on the rocks and game trails, hung up our gear on boulders, and I stayed up to watch the offshore whale-and-iceberg show in the golden light. It was a lonely and atmospheric spot. True darkness was around 11:30 NDT (1.5 hours later than EDT). Way before it got dark, we hit our tents to sleep through our first night in the wild.

**From Big-Box Berg to Drinking Elephant**

The next day we visited an enormous tabular berg near Conche Harbor, a rectangular monster the size of multiple city blocks with vertical faces of 50 feet or more. The scale was hard to grasp without approaching closely, something most of us wisely declined to do. Whales were playing nearby, with some humpbacks displaying their tails against the backdrop of the ice face.

Off to one side of the berg was a field of smaller ice chunks, which had no doubt fallen off from the main berg. One of us noticed that they were audibly fizzing as they released tiny air bubbles, frozen into the glacial ice tens of thousands of years ago under immense pressure.

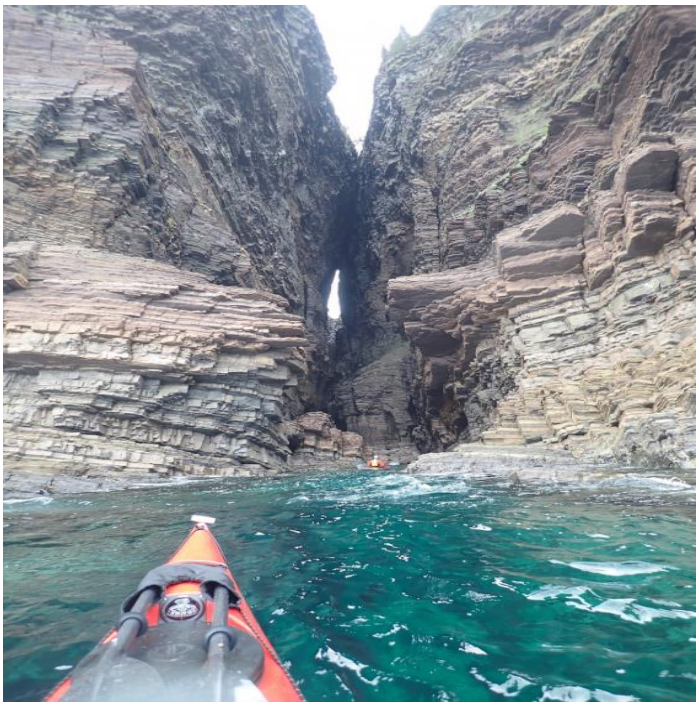
After lunch, we entered the fantastic world of the Conche Peninsula, made from younger, reddish sedimentary rocks from the Carboniferous era, their layers canted at a strange angle and eroded into many fantastic high headlands, caves and dramatic

*The big box berg. Photo: Joe Berkovitz*

pocket beaches. This landscape is totally unlike the much older gray Precambrian rocks on most of Newfoundland, which seem to be much more resistant to erosion. These red rocks are apparently related to those of Appalachia; indeed, there are coal seams and oil seeps in them, and the nearby Long Range Mountains are essentially an extension of the Appalachian Range.

This area was a visual and paddling feast. Some of us went into one of the most spectacular sea caves to check it out. It was calm and protected inside, with aquamarine jewel-water around us and a clear view of the bottom. Psychedelic buttresses and towers loomed nearby. One (see photo below) had a skylight-type feature at the rear of the cave which on the headland appears as an opening in the ground, locally referred to as a "glass hole" because one can see the ocean through it from above. To us, it was a window into the sky above.

Towards the end of this day's paddle, we turned into a French fishing site marked on our charts which looked like the best bio break available for miles. On the way, we briefly explored another amazing sea cave, this one notable for its showers of dripping fresh water and an enormous trunk-like pillar dropping into the sea from a narrow arch of land. Later, we heard that local people refer to this feature as "The Drinking Elephant".



*The skylight. Photo: Joe Berkovitz*

*The drinking elephant. Photo: Joe Berkovitz*

**Fischot: An Inside-Out Island**

Towards the end of our trip, as we approached Fischot Island, we saw a 30-something-foot boat motoring towards us. It was captained by Justin Boyd, a local owner of a boat touring company and also the son of the owners of the hunting lodge where we'd be staying next. His passengers included several young women engaged in wildlife research. (We had spoken to Justin months ago as one of our sources of local information; in fact he had suggested he would probably see us on the water, which at the time seemed doubtful, but here he was!)

The passengers were very excited to see other people out there in the middle of nowhere, in what must have seemed like a chance encounter. We were too. At one point, one of the women said to us: "You're real mariners!" True or false, this was quite thrilling. This could be the only time I will ever hear that particular compliment, so I intend to cherish it.

We proceeded to paddle on and worked our way to the interior of Fischot Island. We entered an otherworldly landscape for which one of us coined the phrase, "the inside-out island". Fischot is indeed turned inside-out. Together with its sisters Northeast and Frommy Islands, its calm and wide harbor is circled by heather-covered hills on all sides. Only three narrow channels lead to the ocean outside; inside, you enter a protected and slightly spooky world. In some spots, abandoned buildings from a former fishing settlement lean and loom in gothic fashion. Fortunately, the weather wasn't gloomy; it was warm and sunny. Gravel beaches lined most of the harbor, which has various sinuous arms going here and there. We found our way to the middle of one of these arms, next to a narrow strip of land that seemed ideal for a row of tents while letting us walk to the rest of the island.

Nearby was the skeleton of a caribou, its antlers entangled in a large pile of fishing gear. The basic storyline seemed obvious, and sad. When we told some local fishermen about it later, they confirmed that the gear seemed likely to be the reason for the animal's demise.

After pitching camp, we walked to the nearby eastern exit from the harbor, our most likely egress. There was a huge iceberg visible just outside and to the north of this channel. Many caribou wandered freely, a number of them hanging out near the sole freshwater pond. The panoramic views of the entire area (see photo, p. 1) and the sounds of the surf were stunning.

*Caribou. Photo; Joe Berkovitz*

**Unstable Icebergs**

At some point, we heard a series of very loud booming sounds as a nearby iceberg broke up violently. We hoped not to be involved in such an event. Opinions in our group at first differed on the danger of unstable icebergs. Some felt it was possible to tell by looking whether the iceberg was top-heavy and liable to roll. I had my doubts about this. On one occasion, before I could voice these doubts, an iceberg addressed itself directly to the group. With a roar, a mansion-size volume of ice cracked off one end of the berg and plunged into the water, immediately disintegrating into living-room and grand-piano sized chunks plus many smaller pieces. It seemed as if nature had wanted to get a point in; it was duly taken.

**Threatening Weather and A Change of Plans**

As we readied ourselves to leave Fischot, a weather change seemed to be pending for our final day. This change would bring a low-pressure system, strong northerly winds, an air temperature drop into the 40s, and heavy rain. The northerly wind would bring cold, blustery weather and rough water to the Atlantic coast. Inside Hare Bay where our last (and very exposed) campsite lay, we could expect wind waves with a substantial fetch to the north.

With this information in hand, we decided to cut our trip short by one day. Even with the day off we had kept to a fast schedule and had some distance in the bank. We could end the trip a day early, without sacrificing any major goals or missing any coastline. So we all agreed that we should finish the trip one day early and try to find a more protected campsite than the exposed one we had planned on.

A full final day of paddling awaited us. We decided to take an excursion north along the island chain to visit a puffin colony at the mouth of Hare Bay. This would mean an 18 nm day but would allow us to reach a distant protected campsite that would not be exposed to the next morning's expected north wind and potentially rough conditions. We then set off on what was to become one of the spectacles of the whole trip.

**Puffin City**

We made our way past Northeast, Little Verdon, Great Verdon, and Pigeon Islands to reach the cliffy heights of the puffin colony on Great Cormorandier Island. As we approached, puffins became visible, flitting through the air around us. On the cliffs facing out to Pigeon was a large pile of collapsed boulders. This was one of the puffin colonies; puffins roosted on it everywhere and were flying in clouds over us with their stubby little bat-like wings, flying in their crazy, irregular aerobatic spurts.

Having had our fill of puffin viewing, we continued to round the east side of the island. Guillemots darted out from the towering cliffs, along with terns, gulls and additional bunches of puffins. The scenery was huge, accentuated by the occasional substantial swell rolling in now that we had left the protection of the offshore Grey Islands.

An hour's paddle returned us to Tortoise Hill on the Newfoundland mainland. What had been somewhat rough waters on the outside and in Fischot Channel, transitioned to calm. We could see the whole island chain from a distance, fog tendrils threading through it, one of them lit up blue by a towering berg. Occasional crashes and booms came from that direction.

**Confusing Place Names**

In a typically confusing place-name maneuver, locals referred to Great Cormorandier Island as "North Island", a name not found on our charts. Newfoundlanders often have several place names for many locations, one of French origin, and another one or two of English origin. The names on charts derive from early French explorers and navigators and tend to the French; the names that local people actually employ tend to be English. Then there is the matter of pronunciation. For example, "Grandois" is pronounced "grand-ZWAH": it was originally spelled as "Grands Oises" or Big Geese. "Quirpon" is pronounced "kar-POON".)

**Paddlers, Recivilized**

We paddled along the stretch of waterfront leading to the village of Main Brook, on our way to Justin Boyd's dock. A woman opened her front door, waved at us all, and said, "Hello!" in a friendly way. Perhaps our fame had preceded us, and we were now local kayaking celebrities. But more likely this was yet another expression of the warmth and generosity of people in Newfoundland.

From here, there was a lengthy unpacking and changing episode. Thanks to Justin's boat tourism business, the dock actually featured hot water and a shower! Finally we were ready to drive down the road to our next place of residence: Tuckamore Lodge. They had been able to fit us in a day early with a game of musical rooms.

We did expect the basic comforts of civilization, but Tuckamore Lodge turned out to be so much more than that. Perhaps a little of it was the contrast with our rough living of the previous week, but it seemed to all of us like a fantasy of a plush hunting lodge: a huge log building, enormous kitchen and common room with cathedral ceilings and taxidermy everywhere, a heated drying room (!), and a very friendly and attentive staff. We couldn't possibly have asked for more. Warm and dry at last!

In the end, I can't say enough good things about Newfoundland, and I think my companions feel the same. I have paddled further north in the High Arctic. While The Rock lacks the extremity of the polar environment, it is a perfect balance between pristine and accessible, empty and (very lightly) inhabited. When you choose to be away from people in Newfoundland you'll find a challenging wilderness in which you are on your own, but you are not a world away from civilization—and there, you will meet some of the nicest and most generous people on the planet.

## *In This Issue*

# Belize: Adventure Paradise Found!

***Rick Wiebush***

Five days on a sandy, palm tree-studded, frigate and red-footed booby-hosting coral atoll 30 miles offshore in the Caribbean, followed by four days exploring the jungles, rivers and highlands of interior Belize. And Mayan ruins in Guatemala. And huge markets in – and extensive caves near - the regional capital of San Ignacio.

This was a Cross Currents trip this past March that saw 14 people kayaking, snorkeling, kayak sailing, eating, hammock surfing, glamping, Blue Hole exploring, Iguana conservationing, laughing, cave paddling, airbnbing at a former lumbering plantation and just generally having a great time. The following photo essay attempts to capture some of it.

*Lighthouse Reef, 30 miles offshore. Photo; Greg Hollingsworth*

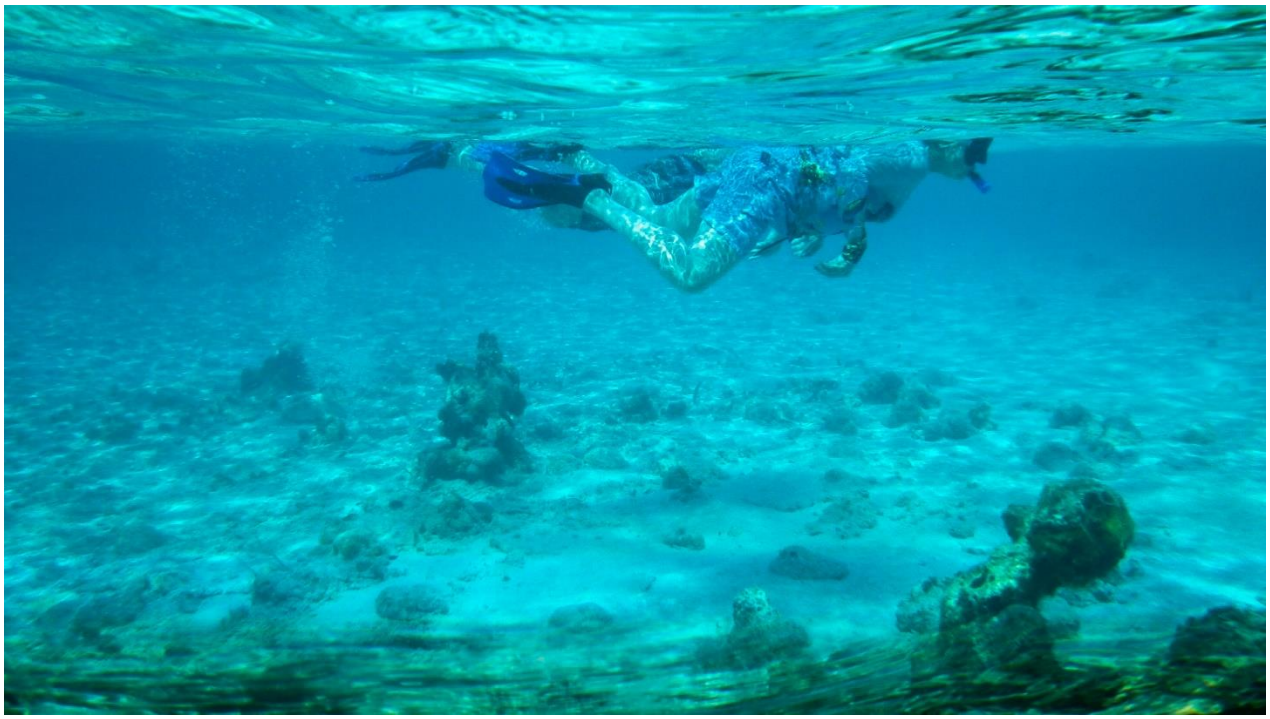
*The basecamp at sunset on Lighthouse. Photo: Denise Parisi. Glamping tents, separate dining area with local food; pit toilets; knowledgeable guides; coffee available at 5:59 AM every day*

*Base Camp. Photo: Beth Emery*

*Kayak sailing in doubles. Eight miles in two hours, no effort. Photo; Denise Parisi*

*Incredibly clear blue-green water. Photo: Beth Emery*

*Need to stay protected from the sun. Photo: Lisa Giguere*



*Everyone snorkeled at least three or four times. Fabulous underwater world. Photo: Beth Emery*

*Photo: Denise Parisi*

*Photo: Beth Emery*

*Fan coral. Photo; Denise Parisi*

*Photo; Denise Parisi*


*Red Footed Boobie. Photo: Julio Perez*


*Hummingbird. Photo: Julio Perez*

*The Red-Footed Boobies and Frigate birds have a symbiotic relationship. Their nests are intermingled with each other and, in a totally disgusting fashion, the frigates occasionally rely on boobies for some sustenance. The boobies go out to sea to catch fish. The frigates harass them until the boobies throw up. Then the frigates dive and eat the vomit before it hits the water. The male has a scarlet throat pouch which it inflates during breeding season to attract a mate. The male's wingspan can reach 7.5 feet.*


*Male Frigate. Photo: Julio Perez*

*Inland activities included kayak caving, regular caving, swimming below a 200-foot waterfall, seeing howler monkeys, a visit to an iguana sanctuary and shopping at the colorful San Ignacio market.*

*Kayak caving. Photo; Bridget White*

*Iguana Conservation Project. Photo: Beth Emery*


*Rio Frio cave. Photo: Julio Perez*

*Photo : Beth Emery*

*Howler monkey. Photo: Denise Parisi*

*San Ignacio market covered several city blocks. Photo: Lisa Giguere*

*Photo: one of the guides.*

*The group: Linda Horton and George Boos (NY); Carl Parris (NY), Beth Emery (CT); Bridget White (NJ) Kerry Kirk Pflugh (NJ), Holly Abbott (CO); Greg and Luci Hollingsworth; Julio Perez and Lisa Giguere, Denise Parisi Laurie Collins; Rick Wiebush (all MD)*

*Meeting at the Airbnb. Photo: Lisa Giguere*

# Tales From the Boat Landing

***Ashley Brown***

I pulled my trailer into a spot beside an old-style SUV with a tire on the back and a tire cover that said, “Take it out and play with it.” Ha - I snapped a picture and showed it to Bev; we giggled and then met the students and prepared for class.

It was a beautiful, bright, glassy water day. We paddled up the Folly River, tucked into some creeks, spent some time teaching strokes and maneuvers, then headed back to the boat landing. I was first off the water so I could get the trailer, Bev herding the students.

At the boat ramp on the other side was a huge boat named “Gutter Slut”. I laughed out loud and pointed it out to my students; I was intrigued. I started to walk over to my truck, while the owner of the ribald tire cover and the licentious boat was walking from his boat to his truck.

He had the competent strut of someone who knew exactly what they were doing; a scruffy beard, longish hair, and a cigarette held between his thumb and forefinger. Do I need to say he was white? He was white. He got in his driver's seat and fired up his Ford SUV. It had the distinct wubba wubba sound of a vehicle that works, but maybe barely.

Sometimes, in situations like this, the vehicle needs a sustained GO until it removes boats like the huge, heavy “Gutter Slut” from the water. It needs to not stop until it’s all the way up the incline. I did not want to walk in front of the vehicle if that was the case. And to be perfectly honest, I was checking out this narrow-hipped, Marlboro-smoking man who was so suggestive about his prowess.

Our eyes met. He indicated “May I help you?” with the familiar head-back tilt with accompanying eyebrow lift. I indicated “No thank you, I’m happy to wait for you to pass” with a quick nod and head directional to indicate that he should go ahead. He sat. I walked over. He said something like “all good?” I said, “I just didn’t want to get in the way if you needed to get out of the water.” He said, “No problem, this old Ford engine’s got it.” He took a drag, forefinger meeting thumb. He said, “Beautiful day, did you have fun?” I nodded. I said, “I like your boat!” He said, “Thank you, ma’am.”

He called me ma’am.
Sad face… he called me Ma’am.

Later that day I was recalling my attempt to flirt with this man to my 17-year-old daughter. She held her finger to her thumb and pantomimed taking a drag. She said, “Was he cute?” I said, “You know how necky boys can be cute?” (Necky is short for redneck, but not in the derogatory way; rather, the country, truck-boy type of redneck, a label that is sort of sweet in that southern judgey way.) She said “You mean the ones that can do anything, and are strong as shit? Yea, I get how that is cute.”

*Stock photo*

# Sun Coast, Fun Coast

***Rick Wiebush***

**Sheesh!**

We got hammered. Twice. Pelted by a slanting, slashing rain that stung when it hit our skin and squinting eyes. The kind of rain that pounds the water surface, creating eruptions of droplets that bounce two inches back up toward the sky. And freezing. The temperature had dropped about 15 degrees between the time we had snaked our way through a mile-long mangrove tunnel on Caladesi Island and started across the bay that led back to the put-in on the causeway. Adding to the two-mile slog was a 15-knot headwind and visibility of about 50 yards. It took about 50 minutes but – perhaps due to the incessant chattering of teeth - felt like it was taking forever.

Our relief at finishing the crossing was short-lived. Five minutes after we landed and started putting the boats back on the cars all hell broke loose. The next phase of the storm made what we experienced during the final crossing look like chump change. The winds hit a sustained 30 knots. The rain came in completely horizontally. It took several people to hold on to each boat as we tried to tie them down. Straps flailed, swinging wildly. Hats, sprayskirts and unsecured paddles went skidding across the sandy beach. Wind-whipped grains of sand stung eyes and provided free microdermabrasion treatments.

But. That experience just added another dimension to an already fabulous day of Florida paddling that included surfing and playing in three-foot breakers at Hurricane Pass, paddling south through playful Gulf swells, a surf landing for some less experienced paddlers, a 30-yard portage across the south end of Caladesi, and the really tight mangrove tunnel before getting stormed.

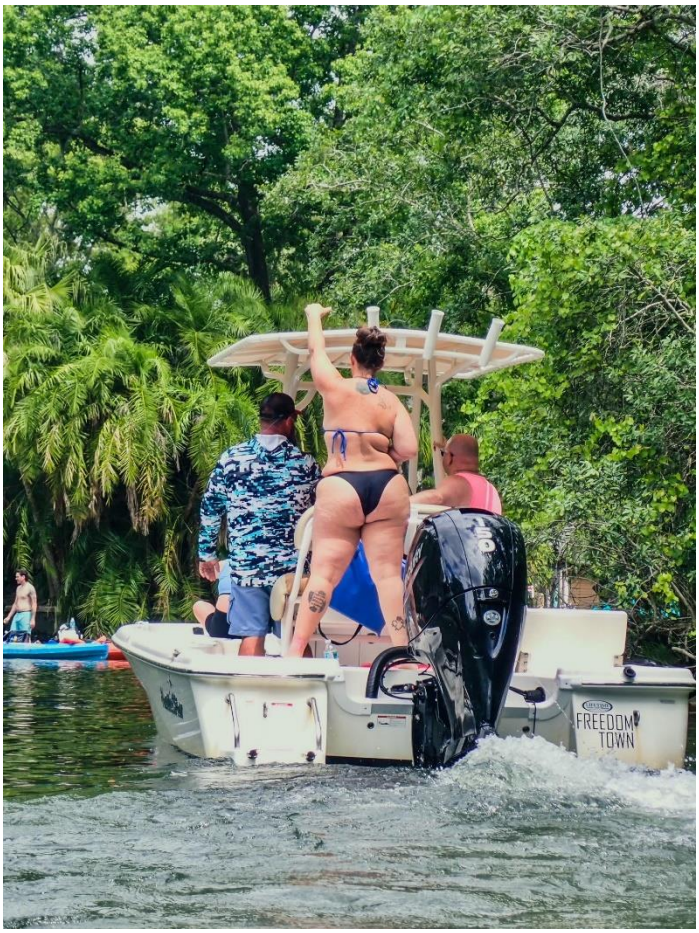
*Hurricane Pass and Caladesi Island (on right) Source: Pinterest*

This was a six-day, house-based Cross Currents trip that was designed to explore the coastal areas near Tampa and St. Pete. Jeff Atkins and I led the trip along with help from Anthony Sousa, a local guide and friend of Jeff's (who's now a friend of everyone in the group!) High winds throughout most of the week meant several changes in plans, but the alternate locations – like Weedon Preserve, Shell Key, The Chaz and the Hillsborough River – were fantastic. What follows are a few highlights.

**Cruising Cormorants**

Shell Key has white sand beaches and clear, shallow water with almost no power boats. But the real attraction is the playful, inquisitive cormorants that accompany paddlers. They followed us almost the whole time we were on the inside of Shell Key. You first notice shadows darting through the water under your boat. Then they pop up to the surface three feet from your boat, shake their heads, look around and dive again. Wings tucked tight against sleek bodies, necks extended, invisible-to-us webbed feet paddling like crazy, they absolutely rocket alongside the boat, flash underneath and then back to the other side, surface, shake, look, dive. And this isn't just one cormorant; there are dozens. Between the boats (there were 10 of us) and the multitude of cormorants, we were like a flotilla heading from one location to another. A few played a game of chicken, popping up right in front of your bow and waiting until they were about to be run over before diving again.

*Photo: Jennifer Joseph*




*The scenic Weeki Wachee River. Photo; Ricardo Stewart*

**Wacky Weeki**

I didn't want to do it because I know how ridiculously crowded the Weeki Wachee can get, but I felt like we didn't have a lot of options for this Sunday. The first clue that we were in trouble came when we pulled into the usually uncrowded Rogers Park at the South end of the river and found a madhouse parking lot overflowing with cars and people looking to park. Some quick Googling led us to the nearby Mary's Fish Camp, where we put in and headed up to the Weeki Wachee.

The Weeki is always a little nuts, but this day was like the Weeki on steroids. The 20-yard-wide river was mobbed with every variety of vessel imaginable: six-, eight-, 10- and 12-foot long sit-in boats and sit-on-tops, both types in a rainbow of colors, canoes of varying lengths, an airboat, several SUPs, round floating platforms with chairs on them

(this was a first!), a couple power boats slowly bogarting their way through the assembled masses and us, the only people in actual sea kayaks. I should also note that the variety of people manning those vessels was as great the boats themselves: rednecks, college kids, emaciated druggies, persons "of size" with their bodies spilling over the sides of their craft; babies, grandmothers with cigarettes dangling – you get the idea.

Yes, a river can have traffic jams – we encountered them. There were a few places along the river where someone could walk from one side of the river to the other just stepping on boats and never getting their feet wet.

Toward the end of the day, at one point I imagined myself telling this story and saying something like "it was incredibly crowded". But that's so generic, unspecific. So I decided to start counting the number of people on the water. On Sunday, March 24, 2024 in a section of the Weeki Wachee River just above Rogers Park - in just a three-quarter mile stretch of the river – there were 434 people paddling one thing or another. I am not making that number up.

**Who Knew?**

The surprise of the trip was paddling the Upper Hillsborough River. We needed yet another alternative due to the on-going pattern of high winds, and this one popped up as a possibility after frantically searching the Florida Paddling Trails website (www.floridapaddlingtrails.com). I really didn't know what to expect, but it: 1) was protected 2) had an 11-mile section that could be done with a shuttle; and 3) was fairly close to our house.

Boy did that long shot pay off. Within three minutes of launching we saw a couple of gators and they dotted the shorelines for the length of the trip. Similarly, shortly after putting in we started spotting all kinds of birds including herons, Anhingas and Roseate Spoonbills. Groups of turtles slid silently off logs as we approached.

In addition to the wildlife there was a surprising sense of isolation and wilderness along most of the river although it is only 20 minutes from downtown Tampa. Finally, there was this mysterious, sort of tropical quality to the surroundings that reminded me at times of Vietnam. This will be a mainstay for future Florida trips!

*Upper Hillsborough River: Photo: Brown Photography*

# Photos of the Month

## Shell Key, Florida Sun Coast

*Photo: Ricardo Stewart*

# Photos of the Month

## Pacific Baja

*Photo: Bill Vonnegut*

# Photos of the Month

## Belizean Hermit Crab

*Photo: Lisa Giguere*

# Upcoming Events

| Dates | Event | Location | Website |
|---|---|---|---|
| July 17 - 21 | Great Lakes Symposium | Grand Marais, MI | greatlakesseakayaksymposium.net |
| July 25 -26<br>July 27 - 28 | Ginni Callahan Surf Camps | Cape Charles, VA | crosscurrentsseakayaking.com |
| Aug. 30-Sept.2 | Oceans 24 | Seabrook Is. SC | chrisrezac.wixsite.com/kayakoceans |
| Sept. 18 - 19 | Intermediate and Advanced Surf Camps | Cape Charles, VA | crosscurrentsseakayaking.com |
| Sept 20-22 | Kiptopeke Symposium | Cape Charles, VA | crosscurrentsseakayaking.com |
| Oct 11 - 13 | Delmarva Paddlers Retreat | Lewes, DE | delmarvapaddlersretreat.org/ |
| Oct. 24 - 26 | Sea Kayak Georgia Symposium | Tybee Island, GA | seakayakgeorgia.com |
| Nov. 1 – 3 | Autumn Gales Symposium | Stonington, CT | autumngales.com |
| Nov. 2 - 8 | Explore The Georgia Barrier Islands | Savannah, GA | crosscurrentsseakayaking.com |

# Paddling Dominica's Waitukubuli Sea Trail

***Whitney Sanford***

Explore Dominica by kayak? Try the Waitukubuli Sea Kayak Trail, a 40-ish mile paddle trail down Dominica's stunning western coastline. For years, Dominica's rugged landscape and range of outdoor activities had intrigued me, and when Michael Gray of Uncommon Adventures organized this trip, I jumped in. Finally March 2024 arrived, and we were on our way.

We arrived at the Soufriere Outdoor Centre. Wes Moses started the Centre and, with his Dominican colleagues, established the Waitukubuli Sea Trail which parallels the Waitukubuli Trail through the mountains. After meeting Wes at a Sea Kayak Georgia symposium, I had been following the progress of the guesthouse and trail. Up until now, relatively few have paddled the Waitukubuki Sea Trail, but recent coverage in Travel and Leisure and YouTube should change that. That afternoon, we chose boats and outfitted them for the week. Wes had a wide selection of NDKs (Nigel Dennis Kayaks), and I was fortunate to get a Pilgrim Expedition, a boat I have paddled extensively.

Monday—finally on the water. Michael and Dominican guide Kerry Alleyne led to the southern tip of Dominica, where the Caribbean meets the Atlantic. Michael had warned us about winds whipping through the mountains, but none of us were prepared for the abrupt transition from Caribbean paradise to boat-stopping gusts and back, all in under a minute. The winds dropped as the week went on, but it kept us on our toes.


*Courtesy worldmap1.com*

Tuesday morning, we crammed three days worth of gear and clothing into our boats and headed north, passing Champagne Beach, a bubbly snorkeling spot. Our destination: Anchorage Hotel in Rousseau, Dominica's capitol. Despite the heat, the trip we took that afternoon to some hot springs felt wonderful, as we tested out the different levels of heat in the pools.

*The hottest of the hot springs*

The thermal springs prepped us for our longest day, a 15-ish mile trek from the Anchorage Hotel to Sunset Bay's Lobster Palace. A slight tailwind and following seas made the trip surprisingly fast and easy. We passed several busy ports along the way, and that was the only time we had to watch for boat traffic during the trip. In Layou, just south of St. Joseph, we experienced what I consider to be the culinary delight of the week: Boyd's Bakes, fry bread stuffed with a curry-infused smoked fish. Boyds Bakes, in itself, is worth a return visit.

Thursday night, we reached Cabrits National Park and Fort Shirley, a UNESCO Heritage site and our home for the next three nights. "Fort Shirley is part of the Cabrits National Park in the north of Dominica and can be considered Dominica's most important historic site and was the scene of the famous revolt of the 8th West India Regiment in 1802 when African slave soldiers took over the garrison for three days in protest over conditions there and the fear of being sent to work in the cane fields. Their action resulted in all slave soldiers in the British Empire being made free in 1807."

Unfortunately the fort historian, Dr. Lenox Honeychurch, was unavailable that day. I am often struck at the somber histories of areas of great beauty where I paddle and enjoy nature.

After a layover day – when we hiked to a stunning waterfall – we completed Segment 14. The End! The Witches Hat marks the northern terminus of the trail where the Caribbean once again meets with the Atlantic. We had completed the Waitkubuli Sea Trail, and it was time to unload our boats and send them back to Wes in Soufriere.

The next morning, the group split, making our way back to the airport. Kevin, Michael, Lisa and I spent the night at the lovely Sea Cliff Eco-Cottages, which also have a gin distillery. Another site worth a return. En route, we saw some promising waves—a surf trip up next?

Our amazing time in Dominica had come to an end, and I felt like I had only scratched the surface. So much to do, and so much to learn. Our guide Kerry and our driver Kish had explained so much to us about Dominica, and that left me eager to return. As they say about Kubuli: Why Two? Because one is not enough. And so with Dominica—one week is not enough.

*Exploring the Witch's Hat. Photo: Margaret Arneth*

*The Witch's Hat, Trail terminus. Photo: Whitney Sanford*

# Celtic Four-Piece Paddles: The Choice for Traveling

***Jeff Atkins***

If only my paddles could collect air miles! My Celtic four-piece paddles have been all over the US, Canada, Bahamas, Greece, and the UK. I have been using these four-piece paddles for around 5 years. The Kinetic 700, Reef, and Omega have been my choice of blades to use through the years. Originally, I started with just the Kinetic. As I began doing more intense surfing and rock-gardening, I added the Reef. Finally, two years ago, I was introduced to the Omega series. Each has their pros and cons in my opinion, so it is worth exploring the type of paddling you intend to do and try these blades out when possible.

**Kinetic**

The Kinetic is a spoon shaped blade that promotes efficiency. It grabs the water and helps you maintain a fast pace with its flow through the water. It is a challenge when you first get exposed to it for blade finesse strokes such as sideslips or hanging draws. I find that I have to over emphasize the leading edge opening more than blades with more pronounced dihedral. It is obtainable with practice and becomes second nature. It works great for rolling because it has such a strong grab on the water when you are performing a sweep or C to C roll. I personally use the 700 blade with a standard shaft and standard carbon construction. This paddle feels heavier, but also very powerful. (*See photo, next page.)*

**Omega**

The Omega has more dihedral. It is great for blade finesse. I find that this type of blade is great for coaching students when they are learning rudders, draws, sculling, in-water recovery strokes, etc. Both edges slice through the water with ease and I can easily manipulate leading edges without fear of it choosing to go another direction if I have not opened the blade enough. I use the Omega 650 with the Carbon Light layup. This works for me for all types of paddling. I am more careful with it in the surf because of its lighter layup. As long as I focus on good boat control and less power, I have been able to surf with it. I just don't push on it as hard as the standard layup. It is great for distance paddling and isn't as tiring to use over time. *(See photo, next page.)*

**Reef**

The Reef serves a very specific function for me. It is a surf and rough water paddle only. I use it when I want instant power and heavy bracing. It grabs lots of water, so it will help me perform a roll when I haven't used the best form. However, with all of that grabbing power, I notice it in my shoulders much more. I use it for short sessions to prevent overall exhaustion. I'm sure I could train more with it and improve my endurance, but I find the Kinetic and Omega to be my go to paddles.

I encourage everyone to try these paddles out if you get an opportunity. Whether it is finesse or power, there are options available. The four-piece is excellent for traveling in a standard checked bag. Also, with the four-piece, you can change out blades. So you just pay for the two-piece shaft, then purchase the blades you want to interchange. I like having options! See you on the water!


*Kinetic in three sizes:600, 650, 700. Photo: Celtic Paddles*


*The Omega. Photo Courtesy of Celtic Paddles*


*The Reef. Photo: Celtic Paddles*

# UMBLES and SHRIMP: Basic Assessment and Treatment of Hypothermia

*Rick Wiebush*

*Note: This article originally appeared in the May 2020 Coastbusters. It's being reprinted now because this is a dangerous time of year in the mid-Atlantic, with high air temps and cold water.*

It was 85 degrees and sunny as our group of 12 paddled along the coast of Cayo Costa is Florida's Gulf of Mexico. Everyone was happily paddling and chatting their way along the wide, white sandy beaches studded with palm trees. It couldn't get any better, especially when everyone else from up north was freezing their butts off.

But it could get worse. And it did. Quickly.

Traveling along the north end of the island, threatening black skies quickly rolled up on us from behind, seemingly out of nowhere. Then it started: thunder rumbling and lightning flashing in the distance. Reacting quickly, we pulled up on a small beach and got out. But within five minutes the skies

winds kicked up to about 15 knots, and the temperature dropped 15 – 20 degrees.

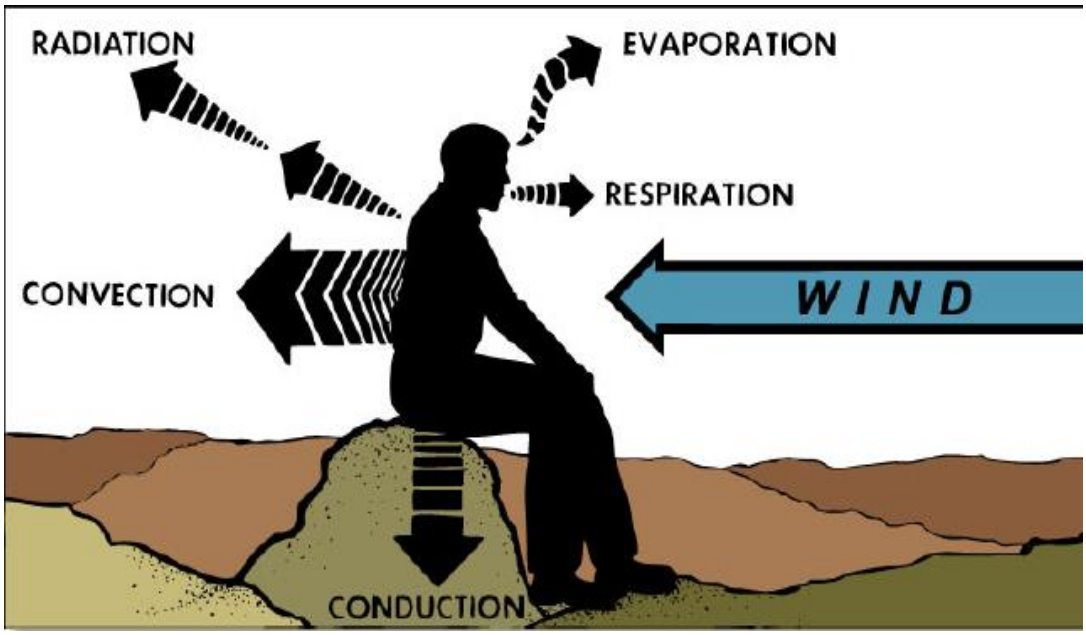
Everyone was soaked to the skin, chilled. The wind exacerbated the situation as it whipped across our shorts-and polypro – top wearing selves and sucked the heat right out of us. Picking our way through the scrub and getting under a bunch of palm trees did little good. Within 10 minutes, everyone was shivering and within 20 most were shivering uncontrollably. We huddled closely together and that helped somewhat. But one guy was particularly affected, and was basically mumbling when he tried to speak. We huddled around him and gave him the two ponchos that were available, but it clearly was an extremely problematic situation. Fortunately, the whole thing lasted for only about a half hour, followed by the return of the sun, the stilling of the wind, and dramatically rising temperature. We lucked out. Only one of us was undoubtedly hypothermic, but the rest were right on the verge if not actually into it. Thankfully - due to the brevity of the heat-sucking conditions – the situation did not have time to develop into something much more serious for the entire group.

**How It Happens**

Simply put, hypothermia is the lowering of the body's core temperature to the point that it interferes with functioning. In most definitions that point is reached when our core temperature drops below 96 degrees. That's when blood starts rushing from our extremities to our core in order to warm and protect vital organs. As a result, we start to (among other things) shiver, lose dexterity, stumble, get confused, and make poor decisions. If we get even colder, these symptoms can progress to the extent that we may actually stop shivering, make irrational decisions, have decreased levels of consciousness, go into a stupor, and even die.[1]

As paddlers, we tend to think of hypothermia as resulting primarily from immersion in cold water. We are careful when we know the water temps are

[1] In the decade between 2003 and 2013, there were 13,400 deaths in the U.S. due to hypothermia, an average of about 1,300 per year.




below 65 or 70 and dress accordingly with wet suits or dry suits with multiple layers underneath. We know that when immersed in colder water, even the early symptoms of hypothermia – such as loss of dexterity – can be deadly: we can't hold on to our paddle; we can't grab the coaming or deck lines to effect a self-rescue; we can't operate our VHF to call for help. Absent assistance from others (and sometimes even *with* the assistance of others), we spend even more time in the cold water, and our ability to help ourselves deteriorates even further.

Given that we are paddlers, immersion in cold water is a major consideration. But the body loses heat - and hypothermia can occur - in multiple ways including:

- Conduction: loss of heat due to direct contact with cold water OR from sitting or lying on cold ground or metal
- Convection: wind sweeps away the layer of warm air from the skin
- Radiation: loss of heat due to exposure of the skin to colder air
- Evaporation: heat loss due to sweating OR having on wet clothing
- Respiration: with every breath out, warm air is sent out of the body

The multiple ways the body can lose heat leads to a couple of important points:

1) environmental conditions don't need to be extreme to result in significant heat loss. The air temperature doesn't need to be freezing, the water doesn't have to be below 50, and the wind doesn't have to be blowing 20 knots to have a big impact. You've probably heard the story that the state with the largest number of hypothermia cases is Florida. While not true, it does illustrate the point that if you are in 75-degree water, that water is still below the average body temperature of 98.6 degrees, is still drawing heat from the body and, if you stayed in it long enough, would still produce symptoms of hypothermia.

2) A corollary to the above is that a *combination* of relatively mild heat-loss conditions can produce big problems. That is, if you are a little bit wet (e.g., from sweat or spray from waves) and there is a little bit of wind (e.g., 10 knots) and the air temperature is on the cooler side (e.g. 65 – 75 degrees), these factors have a cumulative impact and the stage for hypothermia is set.

These are the conditions under which I've become hypothermic and under which I have seen other people become – or be close to - hypothermic. It is almost exactly what happened to the group in the Florida situation described at the beginning of this article.

**Severity Classification**

Most hypothermia assessment schema reflect multiple stages of hypothermia, from least to most serious. How the different stages of hypothermia are measured vary from model to model. For example, some models use three classification levels (e.g. mild, moderate, severe hypothermia); others use four levels (e.g., mild, moderate, severe, profound), while still others use six levels.

Most classification systems use core temperature "cut-off" points to define severity. While there is variation across systems in how "Mild", "Moderate" or Severe" is defined, there seems to be a general consensus that is in line with the definition provided by the Wilderness Medical Society[2] as shown in Table 1:

**Table 1**
**Hypothermia Levels of Severity**

| Level | Celsius | Fahrenheit |
|---|---|---|
| Mild | 32-35 | 90 - 95 |
| Moderate | 28-32 | 82 - 90 |
| Severe | 24 - 28 | 75- 82 |
| Profound | < 24 | < 75 |

**Assessment: Pay Attention to the "Umbles"**

The problem with using core temperature as the basis for diagnosing and ultimately treating hypothermic people is that most of us don't carry the instruments that would accurately measure core temperature. The regular thermometers that we might carry in a first aid kit are not reliable for measuring core temperature and cannot capture temperatures that are below 93F. The most reliable instruments for measuring core temperature are: 1) a rectal thermometer or 2) an esophageal probe. Neither is realistically going to be used in an outdoor adventure environment, whether that is the Alaska wilderness or the beach at Metompkin inlet. That means that the assessment must rely primarily on observation of the person's behavior.

An initial step in the assessment process is to determine whether the person – even if they are shivering – can take care of themselves and is functioning well. If so, they are not likely hypothermic. Getting them hydrated, fueled up with food, covered with a cag, and moving vigorously should be sufficient.

**Mild Hypothermia**

How do you know if someone is shivering and is *not* functioning so well, thus indicating possible hypothermia? The quickest and simplest way to assess how well someone is functioning is to pay attention to the extent to which they demonstrate the "Umbles". This is shorthand for symptoms of changes in level of consciousness and motor functioning. It is extremely useful in assessing hypothermia because it's easy to remember and it's easy to spot the following symptoms:

- Fumbles – loss of dexterity due to restricted blood flow to the extremities; the person may have difficulty with zippers, or holding

[2] Here is a link to a detailed, outstanding article on hypothermia donebythe Wilderness Medical Society: https://www.wemjournal.org/article/S1080-6032(19)30173-5/pdf

a water bottle, or may repeatedly drop things, like a pump.

- Stumbles – lack of coordination; on land, the person has some trouble walking, or may trip frequently. In paddling, the lack of coordination may manifest as irregular strokes or trouble controlling the boat.
- Mumbles – when the brain slows down it will affect speech, so people may slur their words or mumble.
- Grumbles – signs of irritability or hostility, including complaining about having difficulty controlling the boat, the distance they still have to go, or getting pissed off that you are asking so many questions trying to determine if they are hypothermic.

If these symptoms are present, checking the person's pulse and breathing will be helpful diagnostically (both will be speeded up in the initial stages of hypothermia). Checking the extent to which the person is alert and oriented may provide additional information since mental confusion is also a symptom. If they are alert and oriented to some, but not all four domains (who, where, when, what), that is another possible indicator of hypothermia.

**Moderate Hypothermia**

Should the person's degree of hypothermia fall into the moderate range (82–90 degrees core temperature), the extent of the umbles increases and the person will likely be stumbling, have difficulty holding anything, have difficulty speaking, appear dazed and confused, and display more irrational behavior. The degree to which they are alert and oriented is reduced. In this stage, they may start off shivering violently but the colder they get, the shivering may stop and muscular rigidity may start. In addition, although their pulse and respiration speeds up in the initial stages, now it slows dramatically.

**Severe Hypothermia**

Knowing the umbles isn't a big help in determining if someone is severely hypothermic – they are beyond those symptoms. Instead, shivering has stopped and, since brain activity has slowed due to lack of blood, the person may be in a stupor, responsive only to verbal or physical stimuli (or not at all responsive). The pulse may be weak and irregular, while breathing is likely very shallow. Finally, the person may display extremely irrational behavior. That includes a phenomenon, referred to a "paradoxical undressing", in which a severely hypothermic person will remove some or all of their clothes in an attempt to get warm.

Treating Mild Hypothermia: Remember "SHRIMP"

The following applies ONLY to treatment of mild hypothermia. Some of the treatment strategies discussed here apply as well to moderate hypothermia (e.g., insulate, apply heat), but others should not be used in treating moderate hypothermia (e.g., give food, drink), and there are other interventions that apply to moderate hypothermia but not to mild hypothermia (e.g., use warm intravenous fluid; evacuation).

The acronym SHRIMP is one way to remember the types of interventions necessary and appropriate for addressing mild hypothermia:

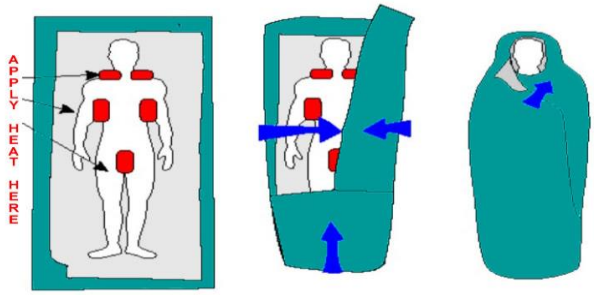
**S** = Shelter
**H** = Heat
**R** = Remove wet clothing
**I** = Insulate
**M** = Monitor pulse and respiration
**P** = Provide high calorie food/warm drink

**S** = **Shelter**. Get the person out of the conditions (e.g., rain, wind, cold) that caused and will exacerbate the loss of bodily heat. For paddlers, the ideal solution would be a small group shelter, but jury-rigging a shelter made of paddles plus a tarp/ponchos/cags also would work. If on a multi-day trip, use one of the tents. An added benefit to sheltering is that the person would have to sit or lie

*Some form of shelter*

down. Keeping the person stationary is important to keep cold blood in the extremities from re-circulating through the heart.[3]

**S H = Heat**. Apply heat to selected areas of the torso, including neck, armpits, chest, and groin. Then if possible, get the person into a sleeping bag. Use the inexpensive chemical hand/body/foot warmers that many paddlers carry. An alternative could be to use heated (warm) water in a Nalgene bottle or camelback. If no sleeping bag is available, a bivvy sack with extra clothing packed around the person would work.




**SH R = Remove wet clothing.** Re-warming won't work well if the person is allowed to stay in damp or wet clothing which, in the case of paddlers, is highly likely. Get that stuff off and replace it with any other available clothing. Obviously, this step would need to take place before the application of heat.

**SHR I = Insulate.** In cold environments or rocky areas, the ground will suck the heat out of the person, even if they have on dry clothes and are in a sleeping bag. There needs to be some kind of insulation between them and the ground. If you don't have a Thermarest or something similar, use a tarp, a tent's ground cover, and/or a cag.

**SHRI M = Monitor pulse and breathing**. The purpose of this is to see if the person's condition is improving or deteriorating. In mild hypothermia both pulse and respiration will have speeded up. An improved condition will be reflected in a return of pulse and breathing to "normal" levels (i.e. average pulse is 60-80 beats per minute; average breaths are 12 – 20 per minute). However, should those two measures slow dramatically, that could be a sign of deterioration and movement into a more serious level of hypothermia. Keeping track of these two vital signs is critical.

**SHRIM P = Provide** high calorie food and warm drink. The body needs additional fuel to help it warm. High calorie foods that paddlers are likely to have with them include nuts and seeds, dried fruit, cheese, salami, chocolate, and granola bars. Drinks – like hot chocolate or even tea – should be warm, not hot.

**Conclusion**

The intent of this article is to give people an easy way to remember how to identify someone that is hypothermic (Umbles), and an acronym that will remind people how to respond appropriately in cases of mild hypothermia (SHRIMP). We want to stress that last bit: neither Umbles nor SHRIMP are to be used exclusively to identify or treat moderate or severe cases of hypothermia. But to the extent that Umbles and SHRIMP are useful to paddlers in identifying and responding to hypothermia near the onset, the incidence of more serious cases may be reduced.

[3] Afterdrop is a term used to describe continued cooling of the core after rescue from cold water or removal from some other cold environment. Excessive movement of - or by - the victim causes the cold blood in the extremities to return to the heart, which in turn can lead to fibrillation and heart attacks. It is a serious potential issue that applies primarily to moderate and severe hypothermia.

## Contributors

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***Joe Berkovitz*** **– is based in Marblehead, MA. He is a British Canoeing Sea Leader and a frequent visitor to the wilder parts of the Maine Coast. He is also the creator of the free coastal trip planning website *floatingtrails.com*.**

***Ashley Brown*** **- is one of the few women in the US to hold the prestigious Level 5 ACA Advanced Open Water Coastal Kayaking certification. She is also an L4 IT. Ashley now serves as an Adjunct Professor in the Health Education and Human Performance Dept. at the College of Charleston, where she has been instrumental in the development of the curriculum in Kayaking and Expedition Kayaking. She runs Wavepaddler with Jeff Atkins.**

***Whitney Sanford*** **- is a Professor in the Department of Religion at the University of Florida, specializing in Religion and Nature and Religions of Asia. She is an avid sea kayaker and SUPer and was previously an L4 coastal kayak instructor.**

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***Coastbusters*** **welcomes submissions of trip reports, incident descriptions and analyses, skills and "how-to" articles, boat and gear reviews, book and video reviews, and sea kayaking-related photographs.**

**We are interested in receiving submissions from all paddlers. It just so happens that some of this month's contributors are instructors. That is not a requirement.**

**Articles should be limited to about 1,500 – 2,000 words and submitted in Word. Photos should be submitted in .jpg format. Please send your submissions to Rick Wiebush at rwiebush@gmail.com.**