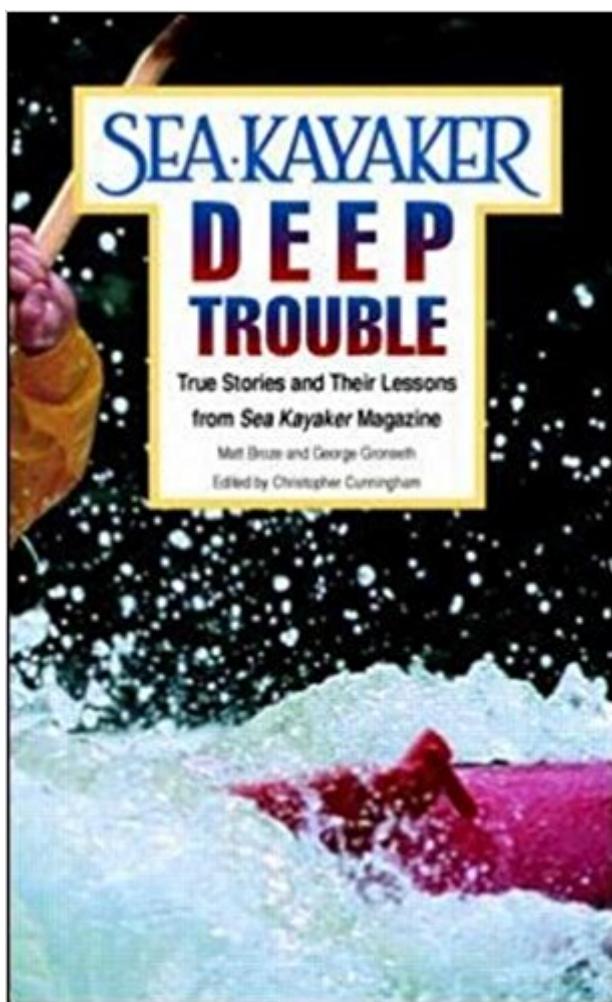


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# Sea Kayaker's Deep Trouble: True Stories And Their Lessons From Sea Kayaker Magazine



## Synopsis

This riveting book offers 20 harrowing, real-life tales of sea kayaking accidents that will not only keep readers on the edge of their seats, but also instruct them with potentially life-saving lessons.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"For many of us a kayak is the means by which we can take in the full measure of the rich coastal environment. But the environment where air, water, and land meet is notoriously variable, and the intimate connection a kayak provides with that environment leaves us exposed and vulnerable to forces that can easily overpower us. . . . Paddlers who invest time and effort and fully engage their senses not only have a greater degree of safety--they discover more of the subtle textures of the waterways they travel."--from the Preface by Christopher Cunningham Sea Kayaker's Deep Trouble offers more than twenty harrowing, real-life accounts of sea kayaking accidents that will both keep you on the edge of your seat and instruct you with potentially life-saving lessons. These tales, drawn from Sea Kayaker magazine, are the result of interviews with accident survivors, witnesses, and rescuers. From capsizes and hypothermia to brushes with sharks and entrapment in sea caves, the situations are described in chilling detail and then subjected to expert analysis. Sea Kayaker's Deep Trouble is rounded out by a comprehensive introduction to sea kayaking safety and three dozen sidebars offering tips on equipment, techniques, and improving your skills. Sea Kayaker magazine reports on accidents and near accidents so its readers might learn from the experience of others

rather than having to learn the hard way. *Sea Kayaker's Deep Trouble* gathers more than twenty of the most compelling and instructive of these reports, outlining the circumstances of each accident and providing detailed analyses: What did the paddlers do wrong? What did they do right? Most importantly, how might the accident have been prevented? With a comprehensive introduction to kayaking safety and three dozen sidebars on gear, skills, and techniques, this book is a must for any sea kayaker who wants to paddle safely.

**About the Authors** In 1972, Matt Broze wrote *Freestyle Skiing*, the first book on the subject. Co-owners of Mariner Kayaks since 1980, he and his brother Cam have designed ten sea kayaks. Matt developed and promoted the now-common paddle-float rescues in 1981. His writing on sea kayak safety and rescues and experience in extreme conditions led to his becoming *Sea Kayaker* magazine's safety columnist in 1984. He's still a regular contributor on safety, paddling skills, recreational racing, and equipment. Matt has paddled over 400 sea kayak designs. George Gronseth earned a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering and moved to the Northwest, where he took up kayaking and worked for the Boeing Company analyzing the strength and safety of airplanes. Before long he was teaching kayaking and leading trips for clubs and friends. He succeeded Matt Broze as safety columnist for *Sea Kayaker* magazine. George has published numerous articles on technique as well as safety and has given many presentations for kayaks clubs and symposia. In 1991, he founded the Seattle-based Kayak Academy in order to devote all his time to teaching and writing about kayaking. Christopher Cunningham is the editor of *Sea Kayaker* magazine. His travels in small sailing, rowing, and paddling craft have covered over 7,000 miles of North American waterways. His longest cruise was a 2,500-mile paddle from Quebec to Cedar Key, Florida. He has been building kayaks and other small craft since 1979. He has published accounts of his small boat travels and articles on boatbuilding in *Sea Kayaker*, *Nor'westing*, and *Small Boat Journal* as well as two anthologies: *Oyo* and *Seekers of the Horizon*. Christopher occasionally teaches traditional kayak construction at The WoodenBoat School in Brooklin, Maine, and is a frequent lecturer at sea kayak symposia. **About the Contributors** Chris Amato (page 143) is a wildlife biologist who lives in New York City. Alison Armstrong (page 94) lives in New York City and has kayaked extensively along the coast of Maine. Deb Davis (page 22) is an author and former associate editor of *Sea Kayaker* magazine; she lives in Indianola, Washington. Ken Kelton (page 100) is a building contractor living in San Francisco. He still goes surfing and kayaking on the California coast. Tom Watson (page 173) is a kayak instructor in Kodiak, Alaska, and a member of Kodiak Island Search and Rescue.

This book should be considered a must-read for any safety conscious kayaker. The way it's laid out is it takes real world kayaking incidents, tells the story of what happened, then outlines what went wrong and why, and what could have been done to avoid the incident. I find when I'm out kayaking, and a minor thing goes wrong, I think about what I've read in this book and realize that ignoring minor things can add up to "Deep Trouble!" I kayak mainly in the Pacific Ocean, with small groups of varying experience, on mild to moderate days; I don't kayak in severe weather conditions, but even on a calm day, unexpected things can go wrong and it's nice to have the additional knowledge to analyze the situation and make better decisions.

I am not sure the words "enjoyed this book" would be the correct way to phrase things, but I found the information very interesting indeed. The reports have prompted some very constructive talks between our group of kayakers and some rethinking of usual routines and boat/equipment packing. The problems faced by some are easy to relate to, and very easy to see how even a "well organized trip" can go awry so very quickly. Personally I found the book layout annoying, whilst I think it works on the page size of a magazine I found that cramming in the sidebars on such a small page size distracting, and made the continuity of reading confusing, hard to relate to a sidebar when you have not read the full account. With this layout the book requires the reader to go back and forth over several pages to read everything, not the way I like to read a book. In a magazine layout you could easily read through the account and glance over to the appropriate sidebar without having to search or reread each sidebar, whereas the book required more page turning and searching, not a huge obstacle or task in itself but none the less annoying. The information in this book is extremely useful and is worthy of a second or third read more reference than story which I think makes the layout so much more important.

I recently took several ACA courses in kayaking in the Gulf of Mexico. My instructor (Hank Baltar in Gulfport, MS - I HIGHLY recommend him!) spoke about a handful of books, this being one of them. I bought it and once I started reading it, I found it hard to put down. The real life accounts of harrowing kayak rescues / disasters were very eye opening for me. This book does a great job showing how naive novices can be, as well as how a seasoned kayaker can underestimate their conditions. The general theme of the book is; BE PREPARED! Thanks to Hank, and in part to this book, I consider myself much more safety conscious when on the water.

I learned a lot from this book. Vignettes on sea kayaking mishaps that I was able to learn from. I was surprised at how many of the accidents involved kayakers not wearing a PFD or dry-suit. The discussions on currents, tides, and winds was useful to me, although even more in this area would be appreciated. Hindsight is always clearer, however reading through the accidents showed me how group dynamics in the outdoors comes into play in different ways, and how quickly things can go wrong. I started to highlight the words "did not wear a PFD", "had a PFD stored in the boat", "no flotation", "no wetsuit or drysuit", etc. quite a bit. That was a common theme. However, seeing how these unfortunate kayakers sometimes survived from that point on was useful to me.

I would consider myself a beginner-intermediate kayaker despite having kayaked for the last 25 years. While the majority of my kayaking experience does not overlap with the Pacific Northwest case studies the book, I found the book both a captivating read and convicting. While I'm generally perceive myself (and probably perceived by many as) conservative with regards to kayaking locations, kayaking conditions and kayaking safety equipment, the book allowed me to recognize a much too cavalier attitude in my kayaking to small incremental safety measures I could take (more thorough understanding of waters and weather at any given time and incremental safety measures) . Truth be told, I recall a number of situations in my limited sea kayaking where I got in over my head "suddenly" by paddling solo and only came through unscathed by the grace of God (if a tad unnerved). It always starts innocently enough and usually ends innocently enough, but it only makes sense to venture as far as one is able to extricate oneself from "bad" scenarios. Given the jolt this book has given me, I'm highly confident this book will save me from some grief in the future. I suspect other readers like me (maybe not the already super diligent and expert kayaker community) will also be saved from unnecessary pain and suffering by reading and acting on the lessons herein. Rather read about instead of being read about.

Lots of really good information and advice hidden in the stories about kayakers who either got into conditions beyond their capabilities or rescued someone who was in trouble. I would highly recommend that if you're thinking about getting into Kayaking, especially long distance "sea" or touring style kayaking, and even for white water or river kayaking, you should read this first. A common theme will develop as you read the stories and it will make you a better paddler if you take the warning the common theme gives you as well as adapting proper safety and emergency mindset, this book will show that even experienced, and highly experienced kayakers could get in over their head or into "deep trouble!"

I learned many lessons from this book and the subsequent title ("More Deep Trouble"), but the one that absolutely sticks in my mind is: If you don't have it on you, you don't have it. Wonderful books, but frustrating in a way because I cannot understand why any paddler would NOT wear a PFD. Some paid with their lives for that error in judgment. I'll re-read the "Deep Trouble" books because the writing is excellent, as are the lessons - as sad as some make me.

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