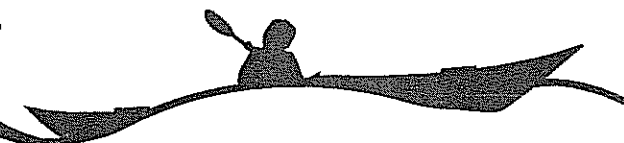


CONNERYAK



CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

March 1997

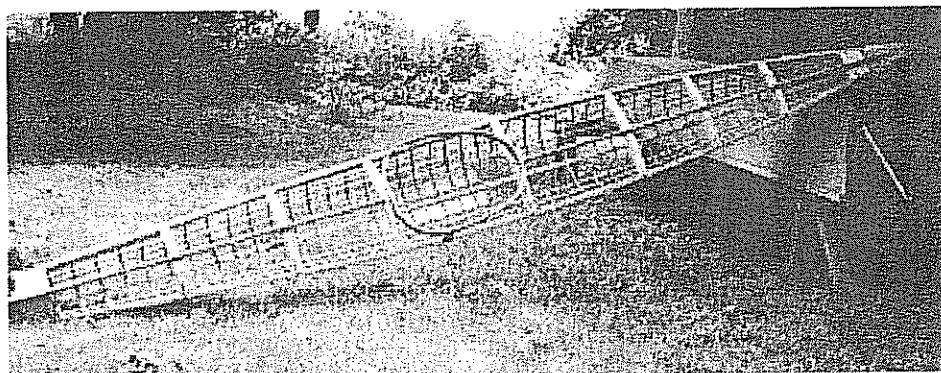
KEN'S

BAIDARKA

Like many people who want to get on the water without unlimited funds, Ken Borst built boats. Having built 2 and modified three, (oar, motor & sail) his skills gave him the impetus to take on the baidarka project.

Ken has been canoeing for some time. The idea of independence as well as portability led toward a kayak. Years back, he visited a museum in Toronto where he was fascinated with the collection of skin kayaks. Intrigued by the simple primitive building methods as well as the opportunity to build a re-creation of an artifact, Ken was motivated into action.

Responding to an ad in Wooden Boat Magazine, Ken sent to the Boucher Kayak Co. which specializes in traditional skin kayaks - Aleut and West Greenland. They sell kits which supply some (but not all) of the wood pieces and a bent coaming along with one of several books which they sell. The kit also provided the needed canvas, sewing items as well some speciality tools. Ken



In his book, Woolfgang uses willow branches which he collects in the woods and bends for the ribs. Ken opted to use steam bent cedar and oak rather than the willow. This is more in keeping with

the West Greenland type of construction. Building a box like tunnel, Ken used a tea pot to pump steam into the chamber to soften the cedar and oak enough to make the bends required for the hull ribs.

There are over 40 bent ribs on the

kayak. This was the slowest and most frustrating task during the construction. Using his previous boatbuilding experience, Ken went beyond the instructions and built bending forms to ease the process.

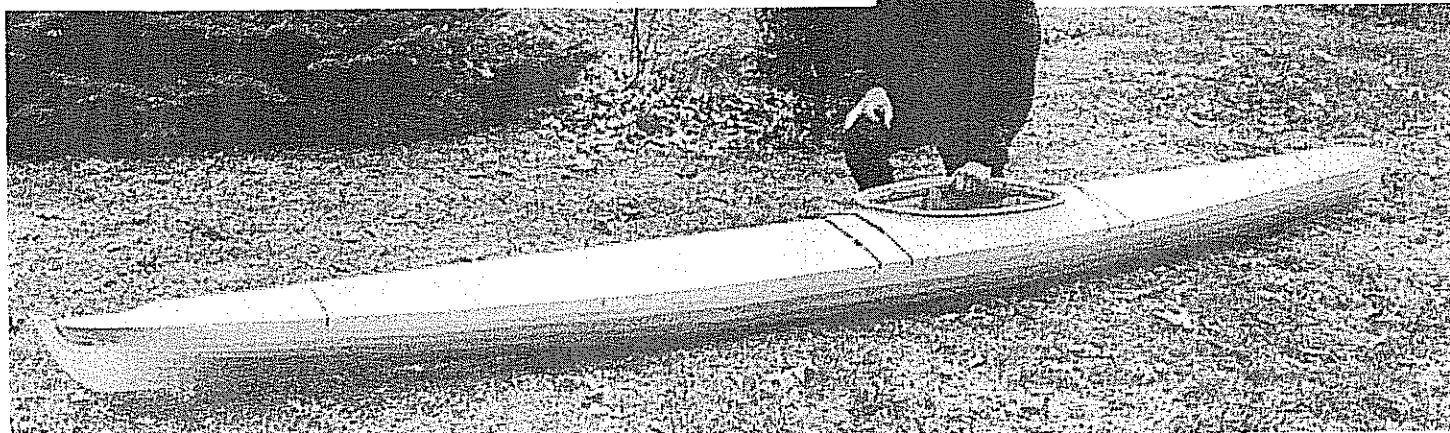
The long lengths (wales) are made of cedar which was purchased locally. The entire kayak is lashed with a special flat, waxed twine which is unbelievably strong. Adhering to the original building methods, no screws or glue were used. Wooden dowels are used on the ends of the deck beams to pin them to the frame. Once the frame was complete, it was coated

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"About one out of every five ribs broke during my bending process"

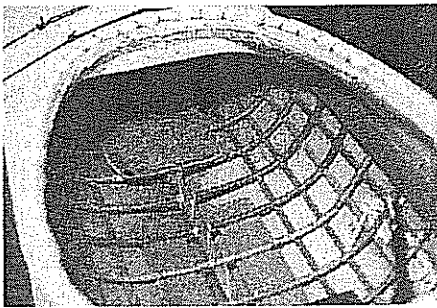
selected the Aleut kayak because of it's rarity. He worked primarily from the Book "The Aleutian Kayak" by Woolfgang Brink.

"Baidarka" is the Russian name for this style kayak which actually originated from the Aleutian Islands. There's evidence that this style kayak was made in the Arctic for at least 2000 years.



with a boiled linseed oil mixture which penetrates the wood and acts as a preservative.

Skinning the boat didn't bother Ken as much as expected. You do an initial stretching of the canvas by hanging boulders in the stretched out piece of cloth. Once stretched, you watch the weather report, and sew it up when the humidity is low (if possible). Here, Ken's previous sail repairing skills came in. He opted to use some of these sewing tools rather than the ones provided in his kit. He estimates he spent about 30 hours in the sewing



process. "It's not hard ...just laborious"

Once the boat was finally skinned, Ken coated it with a primer coat of Airplane dope that he purchased from a hobby shop. It's a urethane based product which was deeply absorbed into the heavy canvas. After a light sanding, he gave it two more coats of a urethane paint. Urethanes provide a stubborn surface along with flexibility.

After four months of dedication, the baidarka was completed. Not being an experienced kyaker, Ken found the initial stability a bit intimidating. Ken has been attending classes and pool sessions and now knows that in a little time he'll be very comfortable in it. If he had to do it again, he might make it a little wider. At 6', 190 lbs., he finds it a squeeze upon entering. This is further accentuated by the fact that the coaming is flat ...not on an angle which makes it a little more of a chore upon entering.

Ken's baidarka is equipped with air bags and he found during practice sessions that it drains very easily due to the spaces between the ribs and stringers. He's looking forward to the '97' padding season when he can fully acquaint himself with his boat.

-Jay Babina

OSPREYS



Once freezing February has melted into windy March, the Osprey (*pandion haliaetus*) will return from as far south as Argentina to nest along Connecticut's rivers and salty shores.

A relative of eagles and hawks ospreys are loyal mates, dedicated parents and superb hunters with a wing span of nearly 6 feet. From over 100 feet in the sky it can spot a target swimming beneath the surface of the water. It dives (stoop) straight down plunging feet first up to the wing tips and can lift a 4lb struggling fish in it's powerful talons. They are magnificent aquatic birds of prey that live worldwide, and we almost drove them into extinction.

The cause was the 1946 introduction of the pesticide DDT as well as the destruction of habitat from shorefront development, shooting and nest robbing. The insecticide was sprayed on crops. It washed out of the fields and into the rivers contaminating the plankton and insect larvae. The fish ate the bugs and the osprey ate the fish (so did we). The chemical concentrated in the fatty tissues of the bird building up 1 million times the amount in the water and 100 times the amount in the fish. It caused malformations in the bird's eggs. The shells were too thin and cracked during incubation. As a result 95% of the more than 200

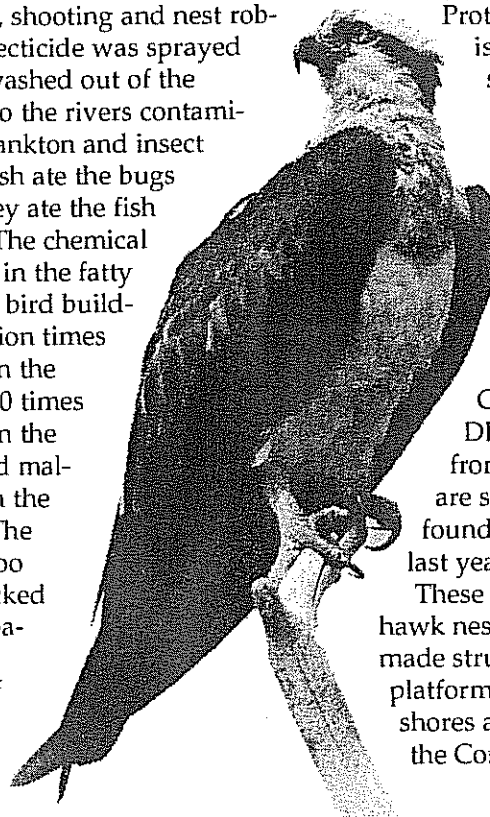


nesting pairs in Connecticut were wiped out. In 1972, use of DDT was finally banned in the United States and eventually laws were passed to protect the birds. The DDT ban was key! By the mid 1970's the population began to stabilize. There were regular nesters around Old Lyme in 1980 and 53 active nests by 1990. Since then, progress has been slow but steady, reaching 106 active nests with breeding pairs and 143 fledged chicks in 1996.

Contamination of our waters still threatens this beautiful bird. The

Department of Environmental Protection wildlife division is responsible for the state's osprey recovery program. They test the eggs that fail to hatch for 28 target chemicals. Studies show that contaminated eggs tend not to hatch and this reduces this species' rate of reproduction. The pesticides: Alpha-Chlordane, DDD, DDE, DDT, and PCP (chemicals from insulation materials), are some of the poisons found in the eggs collected just last year!

These days this wonderful fish-hawk nests exclusively on man-made structures, mostly on the platforms that dot Connecticut's shores and channel markers in the Connecticut river. There are

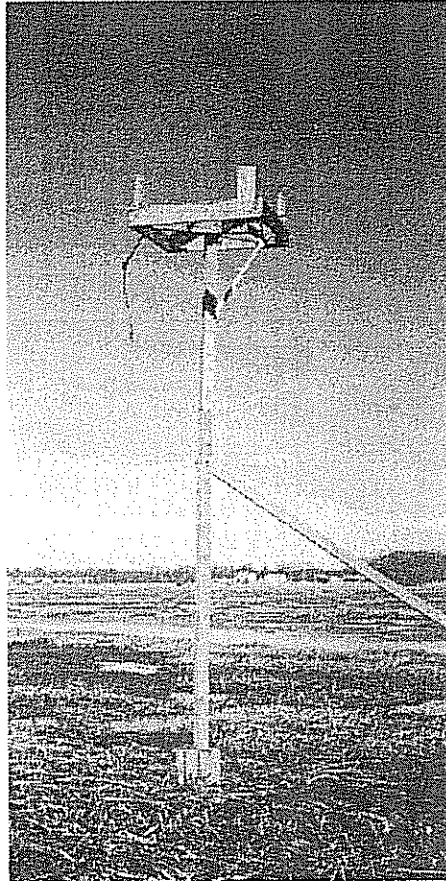


no nests on trees in the state. Built from simple 2x4 lumber about 12 feet high with a flat "hat" about 3 or 4 feet square, these structures are the second key to the osprey's recovery.

There are still some problems however. Recreational use of rivers and shore areas regularly disturb the birds during breeding when understandably they need some peace and quiet. There are terrible stories of fisher folk spending long days with their backs leaning against the base of a platform pole and the female osprey screaming above trying to get back to her nest. The eggs and chicks are exposed to great risk. Every time the female is flushed from the nest thin egg shells may crack on landing. The young are exposed to the elements and predators and the mother wastes calories flying back and forth. This increases the pressure on the male who must hunt for the 6 lbs of fish a day to feed his family. If human interference forces him to hunt longer he will lose weight and may not survive the next migration himself. Boat traffic, human hikers, explorers, picnickers and pets all place a strain on the reproduction success of this already challenged species. Between April and August, summer enthusiasts can help by staying clear and reducing the noise and activity when they are within sight of an osprey nest.

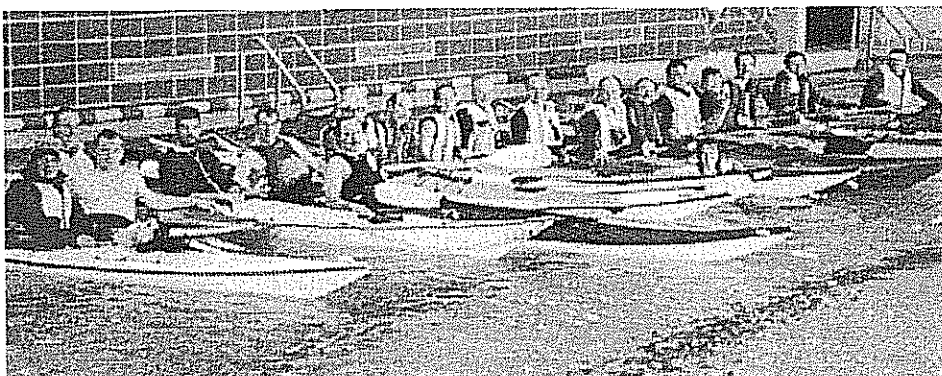
My friends, watch for the ospreys. They are returning home to Connecticut shores. Tenacious soldiers from a species that has survived our worst treatment - they still come back to grace our skies with their strength and beauty.

- Pat Watson



There are 191 nesting platforms in Connecticut which are responsible for 100% of the Osprey nesting population. Ospreys build their nests on these platforms using sticks up to 36" long and 1" wide. The platforms have been built mostly by the Dept. of Environmental Protection.

If you are interested to learn more about ospreys you can contact :
Pat Watson at 203-934-8505
Volunteer Monitor/D.E.P. Osprey Recovery Program
inquire about - "The Osprey C.H.A.I.N."
(an information clearing house newsletter that will soon be available)



Many paddlers enjoyed the luxury of the winter pool sessions held in January and February.

1997 TRIPS SCHEDULE

April

6th - Barn Island - marshes
12th - Bluff Point - Groton

May

17, 18 - Lake George - NY (camping)

June

7th - Connecticut River (Moving Water)
19 - 24th - Cobscook Bay, Maine
11th - Clinton Beach paddle meeting
? - Norwalk Islands
20th - Moonlight paddle-Great Island, Lyme

July

27th - Antique Boat Parade - Mystic
? - Rocky Neck

August

3rd - Milford Harbor / Charles Island
Bluff Point - Groton
Barn Island - Marshes - Stonington

September

Rhode Island Paddling
Faulkners Island - Madison

October

15th - Bluff Point - Groton

CT River in stages - Doug Murry

May 3rd - Kings Island - Enfield
May 31 - Wethersfield Cove - Harbor Park
June 7th - Middletown - Gелlette Castle
Sept 6th - Gillette Castle - East Shore

(many more trips and activities penciled in
Final dates to be decided)

All trip information will be fully covered in the newsletter proceeding the trip dates.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Derek Hutchinson

Lecture - Friday May 2 - Essex
Workshops - May 3, 4 in CT

Negel Foster

Lecture - Friday June 27 - Essex
Workshops - June 28, 29 in CT
Contact Terry Harlow for
workshops - (860) 659-1223

CANOE & KAYAK EXPO

SAT. & SUN. MARCH 8 & 9
NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY,
NORWALK, CT ADM. \$5

Call Small Boat Shop for details:
(203) 854-5223

DUES ARE DUE

ConnYak annual \$30 membership fees are due. Members are automatically joined into the membership of the ACA which entitles you to full insurance coverage on trips as well a full subscription to PADDLER Magazine. (a \$15 subscription)

Members receive a club newsletter each month plus various events.

Send checks to:

Jim Gass, 64 St. Francis Woods
Madison, CT 06443

Send newsletter articles and photos to:

Jay Babina
c/o Jason Design Associates
230 East Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

NEXT CONNYAK MEETING

WED. MARCH 19 - 7:30 PM
NEW PARK OFFICE CENTER
151 NEW PARK AVE. HARTFORD

From (Hartford, Manchester etc.)

I-84 Westbound, Exit 44 - Prospect Ave.
Right at exit signal light on to Kane St.
continue 2 blocks to end. Turn left on to
New Park Ave. Building is on the left.

From (Farmington, New Britain etc.)

I-84 Eastbound, Exit 44 - Prospect Ave.
Left at exit signal light on to Prospect St.
At 1st light go right on to Kane St. continue
2 blocks to end. Turn left on to New
Park Ave. Building is on the left.

(Building is opposite Stop and Shop)

TO JOIN CONNYAK...

ConnYak is a non profit club that is open to all paddlers interested in sea kayaking from any location.

Meetings are usually on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Yearly dues are \$30. Direct membership inquiries to: Stan Kegeles
P.O. Box 2006 Branford, CT 06405

CLASSIFIED

Necky Tornak, lightly used for 3 mos. Kevlar, Red & White \$1600.
203-426-8286

P & H Sirius, low volume
Yellow/White - \$1460. 860-659-1223.

Powermaster paddle - 216 cm. \$50.
860-767-0610 Fax 860-767-0617

Betsey Bay Recluse - white/white
\$1200. P & H Sirius, low volume
Yellow/White w/skeg 5 mo old.-
\$1800. 860-721-1593

VCP greenland-style Anas Acuta.
Yellow/white, Silva compass, day
hatch, retractable skeg, Werner 2-pc
camino paddle. \$1750. 860-529-4612

Necky Arluk III- Kevlar, Teal/white,
Werner 2-pc camino paddle. \$1200.
203-457-1731

ConnYak classified ads are free.



ConnYak

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

c/o Stan Kegeles
P.O. Box 2006
Branford, CT 06405