



Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

"The Paddling Post"

February 2021

Be sure to check the website for information on when courses and activities are scheduled !!!

President's Message



Despite the continuing restrictions here in British Columbia we have lots on the go here at VCKC. We're excited to announce that we are gearing up for our virtual Peninsula Paddle for the Kids. It's our 40th anniversary of this fundraiser so we're looking to go big! More details to follow on the website and the club calendar.

Since we can't get together in person we're starting our General Meetings again via Zoom. A few upcoming topics will be the 2021 Herring Watch - Gorge Herring project. We have a couple of very knowledgeable people coming to give us the details on herring returning to the Gorge. They are hoping that our paddlers can keep their eyes on the water and help find the locations where the spawning is

taking place so the herring can be protected and helped along. Also, on tap will be Canoe Director Louise's paddling trip in the Yukon. The pictures are amazing so we can't wait to hear the stories that go along with them! You won't want to miss these chances to see everyone so check the club calendar for dates.

We're also looking through the many guidelines that have been in place for years. We've had some time to look through them and we'll be making some major updates and reorganization of the information over the next couple of months. For now, just a reminder that club equipment must be used during daylight hours on the Upper Gorge only, unless you have received permission from the appropriate Program Director to do otherwise. And also, be sure to reserve your club boat rather than take any available one when you arrive at the club. We've had a few members find that their reserved boats have already left VCKC when they come to take them out!

Finally, although we are experiencing an extreme cold snap (for us on the island anyway) we are very much planning for spring. We're getting courses planned, hoping to re-start the open paddles when things ease up, and just generally looking forward to getting back to life on the water.

Stay healthy and stay safe, my friends!

~ Kim Capson, President

COVID Orientation Sessions

There are still a number of members who have not as yet completed this session. If you are interested contact the Susan at secretary@vckc.ca. Moving forward sessions will only be scheduled when sufficient interest is shown.

40th Anniversary of PFTK



Yes, we're still Paddling for the Kids this year to raise money for Easter Seals!. This year is the 40th Anniversary, and COVID won't stop us. Please watch your emails for information about how this event will be going ahead in a COVID- safe format. Virtual Kick-off event details to follow.

You can register to take part [Here](#)

~ Jana Savage Cain, Event Lead

Canoe Update

While Nova Scotia's Shubenacadie Sam and Quebec's Fred la Marmotte both predicted an early spring, here on Vancouver Island, the 'official' prediction from our very own Vancouver Island Marmot is for six more weeks of winter. Our current glimpse of a real Canadian winter, with a windchill of -6 and piles of snow, is thankfully, a brief interlude in our normal balmy island winter. No doubt we will be back paddling on the water in no time.



December and January Covid restrictions from Saanich have resulted in a ban on tandem canoeing at the club if pairs were from outside a single household; this restriction remains in place for the near future. With spring in sight and vaccines on the way, the hope is that this restriction will be lifted soon!

A popular perk for membership to VCKC is the ability to borrow canoes, kayaks, OC1s and SUPS without charge. This requires each program director to stay vigilant in monitoring emails each day. But with more than 100 bookings in the last 6 months of 2020 for the canoe program alone, it is time to revisit the club equipment booking system. The hope is to simplify the process to allow members who meet the minimum qualifications to book on-line without needing the program directors as intermediary. We don't yet know what this new system will look like but expect to see some positive changes in the coming weeks. For now, if you and your partner from the same household would like to borrow a canoe, please continue to email canoebooking@vckc.ca

Meanwhile, stay warm and safe and I hope to see you back on the water soon!

~ Louise de Montigny, Canoe Director

Kayak Update



We were hoping that with lower case numbers and vaccine roll-out the COVID restrictions would start to ease off in February. Unfortunately, Dr. Henry's announcement on Feb 5th confirmed that organized on-water kayak program activities would remain on-hold until further notice. In anticipation of the resumption of club sponsored paddling your kayak program team has met and is busy working on tentative schedules for Paddle Canada skills courses, skill development clinics, and group paddles.

We've got a team of six Paddle Canada certified instructors and eleven trip-leaders ready to start getting things moving again. Be sure to watch the club website, Facebook page, and

your email box for updates once the Provincial Health Officer gives us the green light.

Although we can't get together for club paddles yet, with the slow creep towards Spring comes increased opportunity to get out on the water and get some exercise. Remember there are six club kayaks (with spray-decks, paddles and required safety gear) available for use by members having at least a Paddle Canada Basic Kayak certification. Club kayaks can be used only on the Gorge waterway into Portage Inlet (no further than the Gorge-Tillicum Bridge). Please remember to follow all COVID protocols for accessing the clubhouse storage area and post-use cleaning. To book a club kayak please email: kayakbooking@vckc.ca

When on-water Club sponsored training and trips are allowed to restart these activities will have priority for using the Club kayaks. We will do our best to know in advance when programs will need boats and block them as unavailable, but there may be circumstances where we need to change your reservation. Please be understanding if you are asked to reschedule your paddle to allow Club use of the boats for Club activities.

When returning a Club kayak to the storage racks please remember to store the boats with the bow into the rack first. This helps prevent damage to skegs and rudders, and keeps the fleet out of the maintenance shop. Please remember to follow all COVID protocols for accessing the clubhouse storage area and post-use cleaning of the boats and the gear.

As always if you have questions or comments about the club's kayak program please email Craig, the kayak program director at: KAYAK@VCKC.CA

~ Craig Thomson, Kayak Director

Marathon Update

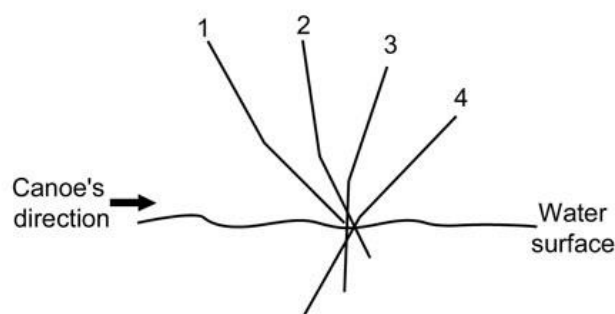
I have to start by giving a "shout out" to fellow marathon/ kayak paddler Jan Urban who inspired this marathon report. He recently sent me an article by George Almond, a professor with degrees in biomechanics and recreation and extensive paddling experience, entitled [Canoe Stroke Efficiency](#).

This got me to thinking that if there was an "off-season" for marathon canoe paddling, we are likely in it, albeit a very brief one of days rather than weeks or months. As I write this, it's a balmy -2 degrees, winds 30-50 km/hour with a subsequent wind chill of -9 degrees. No time to be testing the elements on the water!

However, like any off-season, it can be a time to do some dry-land training, check out new boats and paddles on offer, and dream of sunny warm days on the water. It's also a good time to go back to school and review the basics of good paddling techniques. I want to be clear that this profile of stroke efficiency is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive and is no substitute for adapting sound techniques to your own body, abilities and experience. As Ron Williams is fond of saying, *"I'm over 80 and I'm still learning something new every time I am on the water."* While there are subtle variations in paddling techniques across disciplines, there are many more similarities than differences. The overall aim of improving your paddling technique is to paddle more economically and therefore conserve your energy for a sprint finish or an overall faster cruising speed.

The stroke can be broken down into **four phases**. Areas where improvements can be made are the catch, power phase, exit and recovery. Improvements in technique will inevitably lead to increased confidence, so that the paddler's body weight will be totally committed to each paddle stroke i.e. supported by the resistance of the water.

Figure 1: Power Phase, Paddle on Right Side



What follows has been borrowed in part from George Almond's article as well as [Kinematic Analysis of Canoe Stroke and its Changes During Different Types of Paddling Pace – Case Study](#) and [Marathon Kayak Paddling Technique](#) published by Racers Edge in New Zealand.

Note – the 'stroke side' relates to the arm actually doing the work, the one nearest the water and the 'top arm' is the one pushing through the air getting ready to start the stroke.

The Catch (The blade enters and locks onto the water at the start of the stroke). The paddle enters the water quickly and cleanly (i.e. little or no splash), close to the boat and as far forward as possible with the blade at 90 degrees to the direction of pull (but not 90 degrees to the direction of movement of a wing blade!). This ensures that the paddle blade presents its maximum area to the direction of pull. The arm remains firm and straight (but not stiff and tense). The trunk and shoulder must not begin to unwind before the paddle is fully in the water. This ensures that the powerful muscles of the back and shoulders are in their strongest position for the subsequent pull.

Figure 2: Preparatory Position



The Power Phase (The blade is immersed fully in the water at the start of the stroke, power is applied by pushing on the footrest until the blade exits the water). Once the paddle is fully in the water the trunk should rotate enabling an initial straight arm pull using the large trunk muscles.

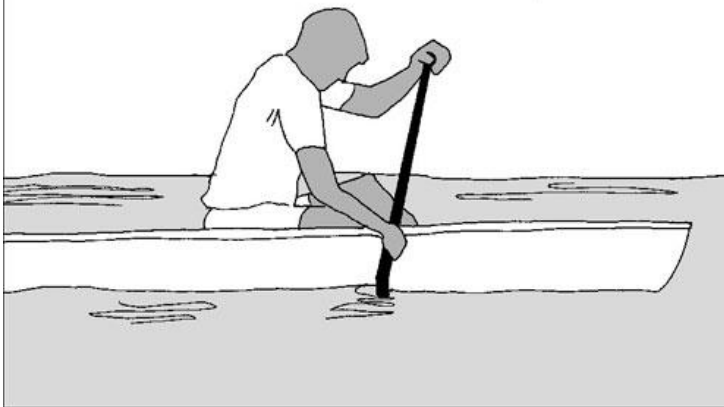
The top arm acts as the pivot point during this straight arm pull with the lower arm side. This first part of the power phase takes the paddle from a slight forward angle, through the 'vertical' position (in relation to the boat when viewed from the side). The 'vertical' position of the paddle in relation to the boat should be well in front of the body and near the front of the

cockpit and should be maintained until level with the hips.

To maintain maximum boat speed the blade must accelerate through the power phase as the leverage increases. The wing blade will naturally drift/pull out to the side (this effect increases as more power is applied). For maximum

effect the blade must not be allowed to slip water and therefore must be kept upright and at right angles to the direction of pull. The top arm supports/pushes the paddle shaft forward in front of the face to full arm extension, the boat moves past the blade which is fixed in the water. This action should take place at eye level in order to ensure that the blade in the water does not go too deep, that the paddle is kept as close to the vertical (in relation to the water) as possible, and to prevent lifting water, towards the end of the power phase, by the blade in the water. The emphasis is on guiding the paddle with the upper hand rather than pushing hard.

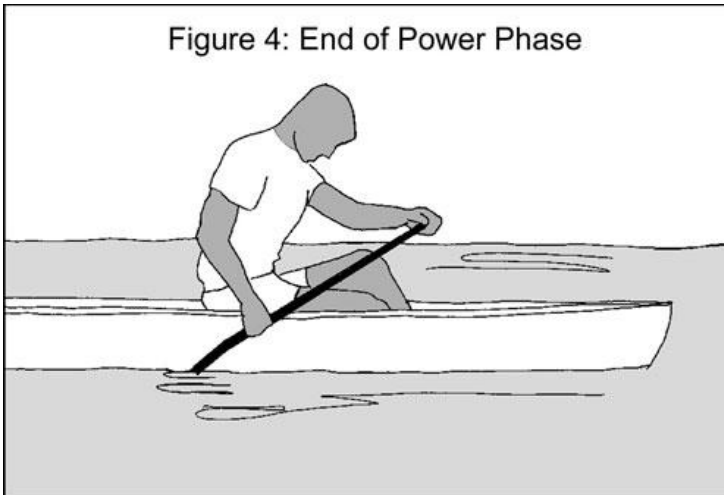
Figure 3: Middle of Power Phase



The trunk should rotate during the power phase but should not rock/move backwards as this would cause the boat to pitch backwards. As the trunk rotates, the leg on the paddling side is straightened (extended) as the foot pushes firmly, but not forcefully, against the footrest in order to impart the pull from the paddle to forward movement of the boat. The leg on the opposite side is flexed at the knee. (Some paddlers fix pull bars to their footrest to assist with balance when the opposite leg lifts clear of the footrest).

This flexing and extension of the legs during the recovery and pull stages of the stroke gives a cycling motion with the knees alternately rising and lowering to facilitate the rotation of the trunk from the hips. Failure to rotate the trunk sufficiently is usually indicated by this cycling action not being apparent at the knees. The elbow will be slightly bent at the end of the power/stroke phase as the hips come level with the blade. Allowing the body to pass the blade results in a less powerful pull and slows the boat as the right angle of the blade in relation to the pull can no longer be maintained and the elbow has to bend to a weaker angle for pulling. It is also more unstable.

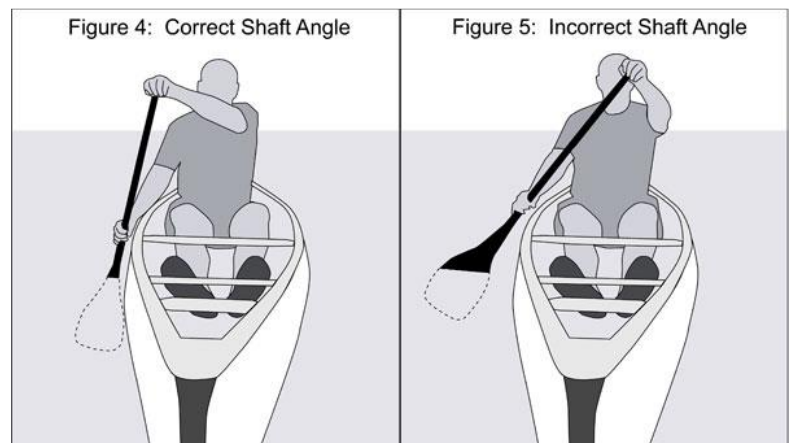
Figure 4: End of Power Phase



The Exit (The blade is clipped from the water, before the hand nearest the water has passed the hips). The blade is clipped quickly and cleanly out of the water as the hips come level with the pulling hand. The wing edge should lead out of the water to prevent water being lifted. A slow exit of the blade from the water will slow the boat as the forward momentum of the boat drags the blade forward through the water.

As the lower hand quickly lifts the blade vertically out of the water to shoulder height, (shoulder stays level and elbow only rises minimally) the top arm remains extended and still at eye level. This gives an apparent pause in the stroke during this glide phase when both blades are clear of the water. The exit phase ends with the paddle held parallel to the water at eye level with the leading arm fully extended in preparation for the entry phase of the stroke and the back hand at shoulder level.

The Recovery (air work) – (The paddle blades are clear of the water preparing for the next stroke). This phase starts with the trunk rotated 30-40 degrees forward from the hips towards the side of the next paddle stroke. The back is straight with a slight forward lean (approximately 80%) but the trunk is not rocked forward, as this would cause the boat to pitch forward. A common mistake is to rotate the shoulders but not the whole trunk. The shoulder and forward arm are relaxed but firm (not stiff) and the arm is extended at eye level with the arm, elbow, wrist and hand in a straight line.



The fingers are relaxed, but still controlling the paddle shaft. If the upper hand grips the paddle too tightly it will be impossible to extend the upper arm fully. Also, if the wrist drops, so that the fingers are pointing into the air, the paddling position is weakened and repetitive strain injury to the wrist can result.

The back arm has started this phase at about shoulder height causing the paddle to be held parallel to the water in front of the face. As this arm drives/pushes further forward at above shoulder level, the blade being prepared for the next paddle stroke pivots in the forward hand and is driven into the water for the catch with both arms and shoulders together down towards the water.

As the backhand pushes forward at shoulder height or just above, the blade being prepared for the next paddle stroke will pivot in the front hand and move towards the water. Transfer the foot pressure on the footrest. If the backhand is not pushed forward at eye level it will be difficult to place the paddle in the water close to the boat. The front forward arm remains extended and the shoulder drops towards the water as the backhand takes the responsibility for placing the paddle in the water. The leading shoulder should not move backwards, and the trunk must not unwind before the paddle enters the water fully.

There are many instructional videos, but by far the best one to have a look at if you have the time is by Ivan Lawler and his [kayak masterclass video](#). As they say, a canoe is a canoe and a paddle is a paddle, so his advice is as relevant to canoe or kayak or outrigger.

See you on the water
~ Peter Elson, Marathon director

Looking for some online adventure to get you through the last few weeks of winter nights?

- [BC Marine Trails 2021 Online Speaker Series](#): February 26th features Paddle Canada Instructor Trainer Norm Hann
- the 36th Annual [Wilderness & Canoe Symposium](#) February 17th
- Rapid Media's [Paddling Film Festival](#) is available in the comfort of your own home
- The [Banff Mountain Film Festival](#) can also be attended from your couch, while supporting your local outdoor shop or club

2021 Herring Watch – The Gorge Herring Project



Background

The Gorge Waterway is in the territory of the Lkwungen Peoples. Lkwungen means “Place to smoke herring”, and Pacific Herring are a part of traditional Lkwungen culture and diet ¹. Pacific Herring are an important link in the food chain as food for many other animals. There is evidence that the Gorge herring population is genetically distinct ² making it an important subpopulation to monitor. Overharvesting, habitat loss, pollution, climate change, and predation have likely played a role in the decline of the Gorge herring ³.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada reports herring spawning in the Victoria area from 1931 to 1995. From 1931 to 1951 spawning occurred yearly with many years having multiple spawns. The last recorded spawn was 25 years ago in James Bay. Today, anglers catch adult herring off Craigflower Bridge and juvenile herring are observed throughout the area. It is likely that spawning is still occurring nearby, but is unclear where this is happening, as there are very few observed spawning events.

FIELD ID: Lower jaw protruding; large scales, no adipose fin; strongly forked caudal fin. Maximum length 46 cm.

HABITAT: Harbours, bays & open ocean. Observed in large schools near the shoreline, as well as more offshore

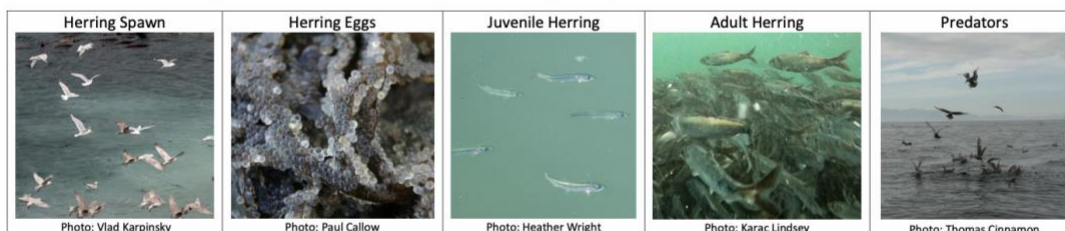
HERRING VS SMELT & STICKLEBACK: Juvenile Pacific herring can be distinguished from smelt by the absence of an adipose fin on the lower back, and from stickleback by the less jerky swimming behaviour and more frequent “flashing”.

Life Cycle

Pacific Herring mostly spawn between February to April, however some populations spawn in June. Herring congregate in large schools that attract birds, sea lions, and other animals. Spawning mostly occurs in shallow nearshore habitats, however some herring may be spawning in deeper water ⁴. Females deposit clear, sticky eggs on marine vegetation and males release milky sperm into the water. Spawning turns the ocean waters chalky white and can cover kilometres of shoreline. Twenty-one days after fertilization, 9mm herring larvae hatch and spend their first year in nearshore habitats. After the first year, herring migrate to offshore feeding areas. As adults, Pacific herring have iridescent silver-white sides, a blue green back, and are about 15-25 cm in length.

Herring Observation Network - Become a Citizen Scientist!

For the 2021 herring season we are calling on the naturalists, and citizen scientists of Victoria to help us collect herring observations. We are interested in collecting five types of observations:



Submit photos and observation to...



iNaturalist
[Pacific Herring in the Salish Sea](#)
[Nature in Victoria Harbour](#)



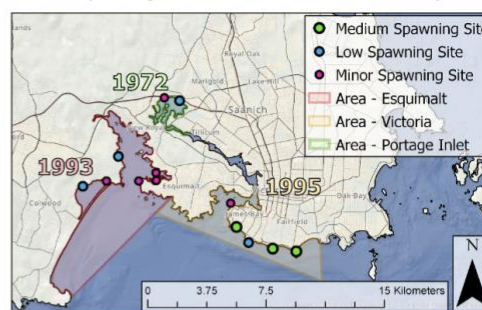
Facebook
[World Fisheries Trust](#)



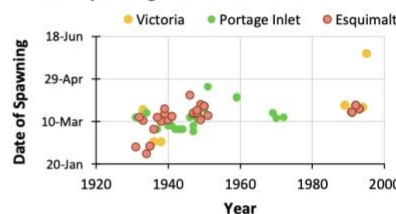
Coastal Collaborative Sciences
thomas@worldfish.org
 778-430-7585



DFO Spawning Locations & Last Year of Recorded Spawn



Date of Spawning in the Victoria Area



FORAGE FISHES - HERRING

Pacific herring
 Clupeidae - *Clupea pallasii*



Thank you to our funders!

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Victoria Herring Enhancement Project

¹ McKechnie, Iain, et al. "Archaeological data provide alternative hypotheses on Pacific herring (*Clupea pallasii*) distribution, abundance, and variability." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111.9 (2014): E807-E816.

² Beacham, T. D., et al. "Use of microsatellites to determine population structure and migration of Pacific herring in British Columbia and adjacent regions." *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 137.6 (2008): 1795-1811.

³ Francis, Tessa, et al. "Assessment and Management of Pacific Herring in the Salish Sea: Conserving and Recovering a Culturally Significant and Ecologically Critical Component of the Food Web." *The SeaDoc Society, The Salish Sea Pacific Herring Assessment and Management Strategy Team* (2018): 74 pp.

⁴ Gauvreau, Alisha M., et al. "“Everything revolves around the herring” the Heiltsuk-herring relationship through time." *Ecology and Society* 22.2 (2017).

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