



PROFILE

ANDREW SCOTT

Chronicling the BC coast,
one paddle-stroke at a time

BY TREVOR MARC HUGHES

It was in 1990 that author and journalist Andrew Scott chose the kayak as his tool for researching and writing about British Columbia's coastline. He admits he dreamed about making ambitious kayaking expeditions long before he took the plunge. But when he purchased a white Arluk IV from Ecomarine Paddlesports Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia, it set the stage for his future as a writer.

"In the beginning, kayaks simply suited my station in life," Scott tells me at his home near Sechelt, on BC's Sunshine Coast. "I was a freelance writer without much money but with a strong desire to visit historical sites on the BC coast. I also needed some exercise."

What followed were about 1,000 articles about his kayaking adventures. Then there were his books. *Secret Coastline*, and following the success of that, *Secret Coastline II*, are collections of stories about the people and places along BC's 27,000 kilometres of shoreline, with the kayak as the central mode of transport.

"There's something rather unassuming, I find, about showing up by kayak," Scott explains. "People are more willing to talk to you or engage with you. People appreciate that you've made an effort to reach them."

Harkening back to simpler times has allowed him to connect with the province's history. "I think that any non-mechanized form of transport, like paddling or rowing or sailing, allows you to connect emotionally with older modes of travel."

This connection has played a part in writing other books such as *Painter, Paddler*, the chronicle of BC artist Stewart Marshall, who has made many extensive solo kayaking adventures up and down the west coast in a hand-built kayak, and what some think is Scott's masterpiece: *The Encyclopedia of Raincoast Place Names: A Complete Reference to Coastal British Columbia*.

Scott, 70, has made a career out of writing by kayak, but he found that the fringe benefits of connecting with nature also helped him in his craft. "I found that camping and travelling by kayak helped free my imagination," he says. "It helped me imagine how things might have been in the past or helped bring to more

vivid light accounts that other people had written about what had happened in the past.

"Travel by kayak is simplified and stripped down," he continues. "You have minimal baggage. You're not bogged down with machinery or equipment. It is hard work though."

In recent years, Scott has kayaked further afield than his favourite coastline, taking on expeditions with his wife Katherine, who paddles a Nimbus Solander. Paddling off Ellesmere Island, in Nunavut, is a highlight he will never forget. But he still enjoys paddling locally, putting in at Sechelt Inlet to meander up to the pleasant collection of spectacular beaches accessible only by watercraft. If anything, his travels to other coastlines have just made him appreciate BC's more.

"I'm glad I spent as much time as I did exploring remote BC," he says. "Much of the time it seemed as if I had the place to myself." ✕

Author Andrew Scott
with his mode of
exploration—the kayak.

THE LOW DOWN



TREVOR MARC HUGHES