



Hui Wa'a Kaukahi's

PADDLE RATINGS

Open-top sea kayaking in Hawaii presents some interesting, and occasionally unique, challenges, not the least of which is, with warm water and usually fine weather, overconfidence. The difficulty of any given paddle, route or coastline is a function almost entirely of the weather, which in the tropics can change abruptly and completely – for good or bad. Many a balmy day's laconic paddle has turned into a terrifying experience for kayakers who were not prepared, observant or experienced enough to deal with deteriorating conditions, or the reality of a difficult situation. Experience has shown us over the years that mental preparation is paramount, and nothing takes the place of self-knowledge.

With that in mind, we have endeavored to develop a rating system that reflects the changeability of coastal conditions, as well as the stamina and experience required for any given paddle on our yearly schedule. There are many rating systems out there, some quite well thought-out, but after adopting and then discarding many of them, we're pleased to now have our own.

1	Easy Gliders	
These paddles introduce first-time paddlers to sit-on-top kayaking in Hawaii - although everyone is encouraged to paddle - children (always accompanied by an adult), grandparents, old-pros, and fisherpersons!		
Duration - 1-2 hours	Distance - 3 miles (or so)	Generally, flat water in bays, rivers, streams and lakes that are protected from surf and significant wind.
Recommended kayak type - Any kayak, including inflatables		

2

Intermediate Paddles

These paddles are great fun, but require paddlers to have more strength and kayaking skills than the E-Z Gliders.

Duration -
2-4 hours

Distance - 3 to
10 miles

Generally, launching and landing is from protected bays and beaches; however, surf launches and landings are possible given the day's conditions. The paddle may go outside the reef in open ocean, where 2- to 5-foot ocean swells can be encountered.

Recommended kayak type - Any kayak over 11 feet. Medium-pressure Hypalon inflatables

+ Blue Plus - This is an Advanced Intermediate Paddle in which wind and surf are more likely than not and/or paddling time is 3 to 4 hours. Must be able to get back in your boat with little or no assistance. Larger swells than "Intermediate" are expected.

3

Advanced Paddles

These paddles are the most challenging on Oahu. Paddlers should be in good physical condition and able to exit and re-enter their kayak easily without assistance in open ocean. Must be comfortable in open ocean swells of 2 - 8 feet

Duration -
4 hours
plus

Distance - 10
miles plus

Launches and landings are often through challenging surf. Paddles are outside the reef, in open ocean swells and around points where water is very choppy and unstable.

Recommended kayak type - Any kayak over 11 feet, and kayaks that are at least 14' long with rudder systems are highly recommended.

+ Red Plus - This is an Advanced Advanced Paddle in which wind, surf, and unstable conditions are typical and self-reliance becomes highly important.



Expedition

These paddles are multi-day excursions, requiring advance planning, provisioning and logistics. All recommended safety and survival gear must be carried on board.

Duration -
two days
or more

Distance - 5 to
20 miles per
day

Can involve landing and launching fully-loaded kayaks in moderate to high surf on unforgiving beaches. Third-party rescue and/or medical aid may be a day or more away. Self-reliance and familiarity with Hawaiian waters are high requirements.

Recommended kayak type - Any kayak over 14', with hatch straps and other deck modifications to allow on-deck stowage, gear securement, and self rescue. Rudder system is highly recommended. Fiberglass boats are discouraged.

Other

Kayak Clinics - These are classes, camps, clinics led by club members who have significant experience and/or ACA certified training in the area of expertise:

- Super Bowl Surf at the Mokes
- Easter Camp Introductory Paddling/Rescue Techniques
- Kapapa Island Campout
- Lanai Day Paddles Trip