SEA KAYAKING IN NOVA SCOTIA
THE ATLANTIC COAST

The fog had just crept in and shrouded our island campsite in a thick mist as I made my way under the lichen-covered spruce in search of mushrooms for the evening meal. The silence was absolute, and disquieting, and I was anxious to return to the warmth of the fire. My gaze wandered over forest floor onto an oddly positioned stone. I took little notice. This scoured coastline is littered with such reminders of our glaciated past. Then another stone caught my attention, and another—all in an unnatural alignment. I edged towards them, puzzled, until it dawned on me: I was in the middle of a graveyard! We had made camp in an abandoned settlement.

Prior to my "voyage" around Nova Scotia in a canoe in 1980 I knew little about the coastline. Other than an occasional frolick at the beach as a kid I had but a cursory understanding of "Canada's Ocean Playground", as our tourism slogan then boasted. However, my journey changed everything. It introduced me to the biology, geology and, especially, the human history of my home province with an intense intimacy that I could not have anticipated. It has been a journey that I continue to this day.

Except for a narrow isthmus connecting it to the rest of North America, Nova Scotia would be an island and nowhere are you more than 50 km from the ocean. It is the second smallest province, about twice the size (ca. 51,500 sq km) of Massachusetts and with a population much less (under a million], but it's convoluted coastline traces over 7000 km and would take you to England and back if you could unravel it all. It has a diversity of inlets and islands, harbours and headlands that make it a world a class sea kayaking destination with highlights that include the highlands of Cape Breton, the massive tides of the Bay of Fundy (covered in a previous SK article), and the sand beaches of the North

Shore. However, it was the Atlantic coastline that gave me my first exposure to sea paddling and it remains my favourite region, and is now my home.

The Atlantic Coast of Nova Scotia extends from Yarmouth, at the entrance to the Bay of Fundy to the eastern tip of the mainland at Canso,. It traces a highly irregular path of drowned estuaries and prominent headlands, fringed with thousands of islands. The bedrock is predominantly greywacke (quartzite) and slate, initially deposited off an early Africa, and then thrust up against North America during continental drifting, millions of years ago. During this turbulent period magna flooded the cracks, and fissures resulting in the granite outcrops we find at Peggy's Cove and elsewhere. More recently, glaciers scoured the region and carried much of the soil far out to sea. What little there is now comes from sediment carried in rivers and from erosion of loose drumlins scattered along the shore. This has contributed to a large number of diverse habitats that include sand and cobble beaches, mud flats, and salt marshes. The predominant feature, however, is a rugged and unyielding rocky shore.

A harsh maritime climate has resulted in a challenged forest cover along the coast where white spruce and fir are the norm. Hardwoods are restricted to higher, better-drained soils, where they are protected from the salt-laden winds and, other than the ubiquitous white birch, there are few on the islands. On the headlands and ridges, stark and compelling vistas overlook the crowberry mats, sphagnum bogs, and "krummholz" (a zone of stunted and distorted trees). A bonsai garden of diminutive shrubs is tucked among the crevices and at the limits of the splash zone, only the lichens resist the constant spray. This is not farming country. However, the coastal waters are clear and clean, and the littoral vegetation blossoms. You will occasionally spot a porpoise or a whale but the main attractions are the sea bird colonies and the seals.

The history of this coast predates the arrival of the Europeans by over two thousand years. The native Mi'kmaq spent their summer months along the shore next to a bountiful sea, an unencumbered highway for their birch bark canoes (kayaks were unknown at this latitude). They have left their mark in place names such as Musquodoboit Harbour, Mushaboom, Necum Teuch, and Canso, and in the shellfish middens that have so far escaped the rising sea level. The first Europeans were fishermen who in the 1500's began to exploit the massive stocks that were to feed their societies for centuries and in 1605 the French built the first small settlement. During the next 150 years they competed with the English for dominance, a rivalry that culminated with the Deportation of the Acadians (1755) and the fall of the fortress of Louisbourg (1758).

European immigration continued until by the mid 1800's scarcely a cove or harbour did not have a homestead or village. Fishing was the main livelihood but, also, lumbering and shipbuilding for at a time world travel and trade depended on wood and wind, a bountiful and accessible source of timber was a definite asset. Prosperity shifted to the industrial heartland when steel and steam replaced sail and the recent collapse of the fishery has only exacerbated this trend. Many coastal villages continue to diminish in size and importance.

The offshore islands were also settled, as they were even closer to a livelihood and a highway – the ocean. However, the isolated coves and beaches that we romanticize during our summer paddling excursions belie the reality of an existence that included short and (often) foggy summers and long dreary winters. The borderline economics and the limited the social interaction that we collectively need, and often take for granted, gave them the push to move to the mainland communities, returning these to wilderness.

I have chosen to divide the description of our Atlantic coast into the Eastern Shore and the South Shore. These are not just arbitrary distinctions but represent significant differences in topography and human development - and resulting paddling opportunities. The capitol city of Halifax is almost at the midway, a dynamic sea port and also an eclectic paddling experience. It has been described in a previous article in Sea Kayaker Magazine .

THE EASTERN SHORE

When we left Halifax Harbour in 1980 in our 18' canoe I knew little about coastal paddling and even less about the Eastern Shore, a sparsely inhabited and seldom visited backwater. I know a lot more these days, as it is now my home, but little has changed in the past 30 years. The population has even dropped (the entire shore is home to less than 5000 people) and, although there are signs that the place is being "discovered", it still remains one of the most wild places along the Atlantic seaboard, south of Newfoundland.

The Eastern Shore extends from Halifax to Canso, approximately 250 km (155 mi.) as "the crow flies" but much more if you follow all the intricate meandering. Faults, perpendicular to the shore, have created several deep harbours as well as the numerous smaller coves sheltering the small fishing communities. Salt marshes have developed in a few shallow inlets near Halifax, but for the most part only the resistant bedrock brunts the ocean's constant onslaught. It is the offshore that defines this coastline and nowhere else in the province will you find

variety of shoals, islets and islands. A few are large, hundreds of acres in size, but most are more modest, and some barely breath air at high tide. Many are tree covered while others have only scrub bush and acid bogs. The smallest are mere lichen-draped rocks, fringed with seaweed. Collectively they offer a maze of endless routes – and a paddler's paradise isolated from the casual tourist.

Many of the islands were settled in the 1800's, but by the end of the Second World War, few permanent residents remained. Today there are none. Many of the private islands have reverted to public ownership and the remainder, unlike those on the South Shore, are rarely used with only a scattering of camps interrupting a mainly wilderness trail. The decline in the fishery has only hastened a long-established trend and outside of lobster season (mid April to mid June) you will encounter little motorized traffic (I have yet to encounter a jet ski). Even the lighthouses, operated manually until the '90s, have now all been automated.

SELECTED ROUTES

LITTLE HARBOUR – SPRY HARBOUR

About an hour from Halifax the highway touches the shoreline, and a stretch of coast bounded by two provincial parks [Clam Harbour Beach and Taylors Head]. Several small villages linger along the main road, each scarcely more than a few houses, and most of the interior has been left to the forest, and it's shallow lakes and rocky streams. At sea, wrapping around the headlands and filling the bays, are dozens of wilderness islands.

In the mid 1970's it was proposed that this exceptional natural area become a National Park. However, it was not to be. The era of imposing such projects without local support was ending and the residents, fearing lose of home and lifestyle, organized and killed the idea. In it's place, a large headland on the South Shore was expropriated (a much more palatable political decision, as it belonged to an American) and this became a marine adjunct to an existing park (the Kejimikujuck National Park).

In the intervening thirty five years little has changed and the islands retain the varied natural features that first drew the attention of the park service: a striking mix of rocky headland, cobble shore, crescent beach, salt marsh, and lagoon, all

with no development. The shore population has declined and, if anything, there is now even less inshore boat traffic. The proximity of the islands to one another and the mainland offer paddling routes with considerable shelter from the open ocean. It is a perfect destination for novices with little coastal paddling experience. Highlights include the outer cliffs of Baltee Island and Wolfe's Island, an idyllic double crescent beach at Sandy Cove Point, the salt water lagoon on Tangier Island and "The Baleen", a small inlet trapped between Gerard and Phoenix Islands and a sure place to view the seals. If the surf is up you can practice at Clam Harbour Beach or, if too high, you can hike out to Taylor Head to view the crashing display from the dominant headland. There are public launches in Tangier and Murphy's Cove and many other places that you can put in where the road skirts the coast.

BAY OF ISLANDS

The Bay of Islands stretches from Sober Island to Ecum Secum (pronounced eee-come see-come) and was given it's name by Samuel de Champlain who charted the coast over 400 years ago. He noted that the islands offered little shelter and, indeed, they are smaller, and further apart, and therefore more exposed than the Tangier grouping. However, they will appeal to those who seek an added aura of remoteness. I first visited these outposts in a zodiax well before I contemplated the canoe journey, assisting a friend researching the Leaches Storm Petrel. This is a bird unknown to even most Nova Scotians, although it has the largest population in the province. It is rarely seen since it nests in burrows exclusively on the islands and travels to and from it's feeding grounds offshore at night (avoiding predation by the gulls). Their erratic flight pattern around the campfire has many a kayaker believing they are bats.

Other nesting seabirds include Eiders, Common Tern, Black Back and Herring Gulls, and Gulliemots and a number of the islands have been designated as the Eastern Shore Wildlife Management Area. Access is restricted until mid August [although, there are other public islands nearby where you can camp] and there are plenty of landing spots for kayaks. Highlights include Pumpkin Island and the spectacular view from the top (only accessible in a calm sea), the immense bedrock spit and the large Grey Seal herd on the White Islands, the Beaver Island lighthouse, and the outer Bird Islands. The coastal highway touches the shoreline frequently along this route and there are frequent launch sites.

LISCOMB ISLAND

When I first made landfall on Liscomb Island I was feted with stories, plied with refreshments (read: rum) - and introduced to a life style that began in this province in 1734, with the construction of the first lighthouse at Louisbourg. In June 1980 the station had been freshly painted and the grounds were immaculate, in what appeared to be a constant struggle to keep the encroaching forest at bay. We stayed a couple of days (a welcome break for weary shoulders) and got the tour – from the workings of a light station, to the former settlement,

to the remains of a money pit where a treasure seeker was convinced he had found the location of Capt Kidd's booty. I have since returned to the island many times and the concrete light tower still stands, dominating a blustery point that seems the end of the world. But the houses have been demolished and the trail to the landing is overgrown and all is draped with a cloak of nostalgia.

On the eastern side, adjacent to the pond, a campsite on the last vestige of open space, overlooks Tobacco Island where eiders, gulls and an massive cormorant colony have reduced the spruce cover to bleached spires in a field of ferns. Beyond, the Fury continues it's journey into oblivion (see insert) and as with the ship, outlying Wedge Island is being rapidly eroded by the sea.

THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Along the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia the rugged inlets and islands seem to defy the elements with impunity and even the great ice sheets, which once scoured this land, have only marginally scratched its surface. Over the years I've seen few significant changes. Sometimes a rock pinnacle has unexpectedly tumbled, or a once stable beach dramatically reshaped by the onslaught of a viscous storm. But these are uncommon events, noteworthy only in their rarity. Stability is the norm.

Our human imprint, though, has been much more transient. The early settlers sought shelter and foraged and fished for a living but, eventually, most moved on. Their scant traces yielded rapidly to advancing coastal spruce. My local barometer of this progression has been the Fury, a rusting hulk that I first encountered on a canoe journey around the province thirty years ago. It was still a magnificent structure back then, having changed little since a hurricane, and a faulty rudder, drove it ashore in the mid-sixties.

For the past three decades, except for the few local fishermen who barely take notice, the Fury has been mine. It has aged with each season, gently at first, then with rapid abandon. The once modest hole in the rusty-orange hull has expanded as the winter storms gained purchase, fraying the superstructure and twisting the steel plate with unimaginable forces. The stack has listed and collapsed, and the bow section torn off, freeing the huge boilers, which will remain long after the remainder of the metal skin has disappeared under the surface. Where once I was able to paddle into the hold, and out the other side a proud vessel is now lying in tatters, a shadow of it's former self.

The Atlantic Ocean is indeed relentless, and the passage of time inexorable.

SUGAR ISLANDS

Long before historical accounts, European fisherman anonymously plied our coastal waters harvesting the bounty that was to help feed Europe for centuries. Capt. Savellette, a Basque pioneer in the salt cod fishery was one of many, and had been making this voyage each summer for over 40 years when Champlain recorded his encounter in 1607. Savellette choose this low lying and compact

group a few miles from the mainland for its protection from both the sea and the natives. If you stop at the expansive bar on northern tip of Winter Island you might tread on the same cobbles where Savellete dried his catch long ago.

The seven Sugar Islands (named for a boat full of molasses that went aground) are a compact 1 x 4 km band interspersed with numerous shoals. They are bustling during nesting season and the isolation and haul out options attract one of the largest concentrations of Grey seals along the coast. Cormorants have taken over Western Island, decimating the forest with their quano and leaving the trees as bleached skeletons. Larrys Island and Passage Island are grass covered, and home to gulls and eiders - and the persistent Atlantic spray. And Storm Petrel burrows are everywhere.

Put in at Charlos Cove and end in Port Felix, on a day long paddle taking advantage of the (usual) southwest breezes. You can also continue on to Whitehead, passing through the abandoned boat canal into Yankee Harbour, where New England fisherman regularly visited area in the 1800's. Some settled permanently and remains of their homesteads are found on the abandoned fields.

THE CANSO ISLANDS

The rugged headland that winds from Whitehead to Canso is more reminiscent of a remote Newfoundland shore than the rest of Nova Scotia. Or, perhaps, a vast Peggy's Cove but without the people. Most of it is a Wilderness Protected Area (but you may camp), and there is limited road access. The extensive barrens, strewn with erratic boulders, give the impression that the vast ice sheets have only just left and the coastal fringe is crowded with dozens of islands. Light coloured bedrock slelves slip gently under the surface, resulting a turquoise hue more reminiscent of a tropical locale. There are a few sand beaches but for the most part rock shelves line the coves, backed by heath barrens, and some of the best tent sites in the province.

Early settlements on Dover and White Island are gone but telltale marks of stone quarrying can be found on Charles Island and near Farewell Harbour dating from the 1800's, when the only practical way of transporting building stone was by boat. This is also the closest point on mainland North America to Europe and was once the landfall of all telegraph traffic from overseas. The marine charts indicate the underwater cables, now dormant, that come ashore in Dover Harbour. On the south tip of Whitehead Island an amazing display of vast granite platforms, overlain with boulders thrown up by the ocean swells, surrounds the lighthouse.

A 3-5 day journey will take you from Whitehead to Canso (the only takeout en route is Little Dover) or you can arrange day trips around the Whitehead peninsula (taking the small boat canal) and among the islets protecting the Canso Harbour, the longest continually occupied fishing community in North America. The remains of a early fort have been excavated by Parks Canada.

The Eastern Shore has endless paddling options and you can string several day routes together, hopping from island to island, avoiding the mainland and immersed in an aura of isolation that is rare this close to an urban centre. Little Harbour, Sober Island, Ecum Secum, Country Harbour are all readily accessible from the coastal highway and detailed descriptions are found in *Sea Kayaking in Nova Scotia*. Should your interests and skills include kayak surfing, there are excellent beaches at Lawrencetown, Martinique and Clam Harbour.

THE SOUTH SHORE

By late summer 1980 we had left the fog and tides of the Fundy and were again on the ragged Atlantic Coast, the last leg of our circumnavigation. However the South Shore wasn't a repeat of the Eastern Shore. A topographical diversity beginning with the extensive bogs and salt marshes of the Tusket region near Yarmouth and reaches up to the granite barrens at Peggy's Cove outside of Halifax, about 325 km (202 mi) away. On the way the largest bays, the longest sand beaches, and the highest sand dunes of our Atlantic coast await the paddler. The coastal islands, as usual, are the most enticing. They are further spaced than on the Eastern Shore and mainly clustered in groups as in Mahone Bay, Lobster Bay (each with over 350 islands) and along the Prospect Peninsula. Except for Tancook Island they are no longer settled but, in a practice abandoned long ago elsewhere, many are still home to year round sheep populations. With almost four dozen still standing on the headlands and islands, it lives up to it's slogan as the Lighthouse Route.

The South Shore has favoured more immigration than the Eastern Shore due to its proximity to Georges Bank, one of the most prolific fishing areas in the world. The well drained soil in locally abundant drumlins has been also more conducive to farming, and a significant adjunct to the fishery. When the French were expelled in 1755 they left place names such as La Have, Port Mouton, and Rossignol, and a void that was filled with (mostly) German immigrants who founded Lunenburg in 1758. This UNESCO Heritage town became a centre for the fishery and shipbuilding, and the home of our most iconic vessel - the Bluenose. Although the South Shore's fortunes have historically paralleled the highs and lows of the fishery it has been always more prosperous than the Eastern Shore.

As we approach Halifax the South Shore becomes progressively more populated (a downside for the paddler looking for a wilderness experience), with less public land and more private oceanfront development (although these sometimes provide impressive, and often ostentatious, architectural views). Inshore boat traffic, especially in Mahone Bay and near the harbours of the larger fishing communities, is heavier than on the Eastern Shore (here I have encountered a jet skis!). However, outside the main tourist destinations there are many secluded day long and extended paddling routes which you can combine with ample "après kayak"activites – such as restaurants, craft galleries, museums, and summer festivals.

SELECTED ROUTES

PROSPECT

Less than an hour from Halifax, and possibly Nova Scotia's most popular destination, lies Peggy's Cove whose iconic lighthouse adorns all tourist literature from the province. The setting is indeed spectacular but perhaps to be avoided during the peak summer period when visitors flood the rocks and the crowd various souvenir shops. Fortunately, a more undisturbed venue is the adjacent coastline from Prospect Bay to Terrance Bay where an austere landscape of glacial boulders, stunted trees and huckleberry bush awaits the sea kayaker. Other than a few summer homes and hunting cabins the islands are uninhabited and much of the mainland is undeveloped (public) and inaccessible by car.

On sunny weekends expect a few other craft, especially in the tiny cove of Rogues Roost, which attracts the sailing crowd, and off the sand beach on Hearn Island. Otherwise this is a surprisingly private and pristine venue. You can launch at the public wharves in either Prospect or Lower Prospect.

BLUE ROCKS

A few miles from Lunenburg, the compact archipelago of Blue Rocks is ideal for a half-day or day-long outing. The village owes its name to the greenish-blue slate, sheets of rock that have been folded and fractured at right angles to form shoals and islets with striking parallel striations. Some are covered with spruce and fir, others are denuded, but all are fringed with brown algae (rockweed and knotted wrack) which turns a brilliant golden-orange by mid summer. At high tide you can meander everywhere but with low water comes the challenge of navigating among the shallow passages and dead ends. Mid tide is best. And although beaches are scarce you can readily pull your kayaks onto the sloping ledges for a rest or a lunch.

The islands are protected and the sea placid during the prevailing southwesterly flow and during calm weather you can venture out to Cross Island (with it's lighthouse) or to the seabird nesting islands of Big Duck and Little Duck. However an easterly breeze can create a confusing, and noisy, sea especially among the appropriately named Racketts. It can be challenging (and fun) for the experienced paddler to weave among this chaos.

MCNUTTS ISLAND

Occupying much of the entrance to Shelburne harbour McNutts is one of our largest offshore islands. It is a fascinating and an easily accessible destination, a mere 2 km from mainland (Carlton Village), and weather permitting it can easily be circumnavigated within a day (ca 16 km). Otherwise, from the little used government wharf it is 4 km trail to the southern tip with its classic concrete light

tower. The outbuildings, in assorted states of collapse, are interspersed among bedrock outcrops and grassy hummocks that are constantly cropped by the resident sheep. The view is superb. This station was erected after a flotilla of refugees from the American Revolution, including over 2000 African Americans, founded the fourth largest city in British North America (1784). However, with little fertile land and poor economic prospects most moved on within a decade, many back to a more forgiving United States or (in the case of the blacks) to Sierra Leone.

Around the station you will clearly discern graffiti chizzeled into the quartzite, some dating from 1856 and probably the work of (possibly bored) lighthouse keepers. Particularly intriguing are some intriguing cryptic inscriptions that have raised speculation of pre-Columbian visitation (or perhaps more imaginative light keepers). In the woods behind the station, buried Quonset huts, collapsed trenches, and two large guns emplacements are all that remain of a World War II fort. A 10 inch M1888 cannon, rests where it was mounted, one of the largest of it's kind still left in the country and spared salvaging because of the prohibitive cost of removal. The Germans never felt it's effectiveness but according to one light keeper, during a test "it almost took the tower out".

Cape Roseway, as with all other stations in Nova Scotia, is now automated and only two residents ("come from aways") inhabit the only remaining homestead. A few summer cabins line the western inlet. You can camp by the wharf or on the southern tip, when a calm sea allows a landing at a cobble beach beside the light station.

THE TUSKET ISLANDS

Located off the southwestern extremity of the province, the Tuskets, rather than underlain by solid bedrock are composed of loose glacial debris [drumlins] - and they are eroding rapidly. Most were deforested years ago and remain so thanks to the sheep which are pastured year round. They also retain much of the character of earlier island settlements, long ago abandoned. Fishing shanties crowd several passages with wharves extending on stilts out into the flow, accommodating a 12 foot tidal range. Underwater cables bring power from the mainland and there is quite a bustle in late spring during the lobster fishery, with boats coming and going, unloading their catches into the huge storage cages tethered to the wharves. Some fishermen supplement their incomes by raking Irish Moss (Chondris crisipus) and other seaweeds at low tide. By early summer it is much quieter and when I arrived on my canoe voyage around the province, only the sheep, cats, and empty houses were there to greet me.

The best time to visit is in late summer when there is less chance of fog. You can put in at Little River Harbour, where there is plenty of parking and I would plan for an overnight trip (I prefer 2-3 days). You should be comfortable coping with tides and currents as this is not a place for unsupervised novices. Today some of the island shanties have been upgraded to summer homes, but the vacationing locals are very friendly and accommodating (and often a highlight of the trip)

and camping is not a problem. This mixture of past and present is particularly appealing.

Other routes along the South Shore include the La Have Islands, Mahone Bay (our version of Freeport, Maine), the seaside adjunct of Kejimkujik National Park and Port Mouton Harbour (with the highest sand dunes on the coast). Closer to Halifax, the oldest working lighthouse in the Americas (1758) rests on Sambro Island, and is easily accessible from the village of the same. You will find many launch options from the Nova Scotia Coastal Water Trail Website and detailed route descriptions from *Sea Kayaking in Nova Scotia*.

Much has changed since I stumbled onto the lost graveyard on Liscomb Island so many years ago. It was the beginning of a journey that eventually lead me away from the academic path I had chosen and back to my native province. The Atlantic Coastal islands are now my back yard. I still wander about it regularly, imbibing its moods and noting the incremental changes in an environment known for it's stability. I returned to Liscomb this past spring to find a trail totally overgrown and the graveyard overlain by blow down from major winter storm. Only the concrete light tower seemed fixed in time - but for how long.

TRIP PLANNER

The climate of the Atlantic coastline is similar to that along the New England coast. Daytime summer temperatures vary from l8°C to 22°C (65°F to 75°F) and somewhat more in the large enclosed bays such as Mahone and St. Margart's. Prevailing winds are from the southwest with brisk sea breezes of 20 knots or more and storms, when they occur, usually move through quickly. Rapid and dramatic changes, such as catabatic winds and electrical storms, are rare although be conscious of possible funneling effects around headlands. Expect fog from May to June (even later in some years) as warm, moist, continental air condenses over the ocean. The Tusket area is particularly "blessed" in that respect, with an average of l20 fog days a year, and Mahone Bay is less prone.

The tides range from 1 m (4 ft.) at Canso to over 4 m (l2 ft.) among the Tusket Islands (due to the influence of the Bay of Fundy). The currents are also significant only in the latter region, at times attaining 4-5 knots in the narrow passages. River outflow along this coast is insignificant and although large swells can create turbulence around shoals, they are attenuated inside the island belt.

Sea birds and seals are ubiquitous, but you may also encounter other animals. The white tail deer (and early introduction from the US) are good swimmers and you will encounter their scat and trails, which crisscross even the tiniest forested island. We also have river otters, mink, porcupines and, more recently, coyotes. Black bears are uncommon (I have yet to see one in 30 years) and there is no a need to take heroic precautions with your grub as on the west coast. Poisonous

snakes and insects are also absent and black flies are restricted to the mainland. (they prefer habitat with streams). Mosquitos may sometimes be an issue, especially later in the season, but they too are mercifully light along the exposed shoreline.

Bring your own drinking water. The islands have precious little and on longer trips I will often plan my route to include a mainland stream or a homestead for resupply (and where I might al so be fetted to some pie and tea). Clams and mussels are free for the picking (the waters are clean, but inquire about any bans) and you can troll a lure for mackeral or pollock.

Camping is rarely an issue, especially along the Eastern Shore islands where there is ample public land and options are abundant. Along the South Shore it is more of a concern but if you query the locals for suggestions before you launch you should have few problems.

HOW TO GET THERE

Halifax is about 6 hour drive from the border with Maine and the highway system skirts the coastline.
If you are flying check www.hiaa.ca for direct flights to Halifax from several US cities

MAPS AND CHARTS

Sea Kayaking in Nova Scotia (Nimbus Publishing)
The comprehensive route guide details 26 destinations along the Eastern Shore and South Shore with special attention to safety considerations and points of interest.
Includes chart and topo information.

The Nova Scotia Coastal Water Trail Website
(www.trails.gov.ns.ca)
This source lists over a hundred launch sites along the South Shore only (mainly public wharves and beaches), including a brief description and a few photos.
Includes chart and topo information.

COMMUNICATION

Cell phone coverage is available along the entire coastline (especially the offshore islands). However, check if your provider has access.

WEATHER FORECASTS

Online: several sites [Windy is one of the best]
VHF: Continuous marine and inland weather forecasts
Telephone: 902-426-9600 (Marine) and 902-426-9090 (Inland)

TOURIST INFORMATION

For general tourist information:
NovaScotia.com / 800-424-5000

RENTALS AND OUTFITTERS

Coastal Adventures (www.coastaladventures.com)
Oldest sea kayaking outfitter in the province. Rentals and day tours from Tangier as well as extended tours throughout Nova Scotia and Newfoundland

East Coast Outfitters (www.eastcoastoutfitters)
Rentals and day trips in Prospect Bay

Pleasant Paddling (www.pleasantpaddling.com)
Rentals and day trips around Lunenburg

Cape LaHave Adventures (www.capelahaveadventures.ca)
Rentals and day trips Mahone Bay, Cape Lahave Islands

Candlebox Kayaking (www.candleboxkayaking.com)
Rentals and day trips Tusket Islands, Shelburne