



ABOVE Shoalhaven Gorge, NSW. BELOW FROM LEFT Promise Bay, TAS. The Coorong Pier, SA.

For beginners to the more experienced, from the gentle to the adrenaline-driven, kayaking is a non-impact exercise that can be continued well into our senior years. Some liken it to 'dancing on water' even if you can't walk on land!

Working the body, mind and soul, it's an opportunity to experience nature and wildlife close up and to be empowered by fresh air and the natural energy of water. Scott Rawstone has built a life and career around paddling and has put together some of his top kayaking day-trips around our waterways.

Guides and images: Scott Rawstone

THE COORONG

South East Region, SA

Two hour's drive from Adelaide, The Coorong is a magnificent inland stretch of water that runs down the South Australian coast from the mouth of the Murray River. The setting of the children's book and movie, *Storm Boy*, it is a lesser-known natural wonder of Australia that deserves to be mentioned in the same breath as Uluru, The Twelve Apostles, Kakadu, the Bungle Bungles, Lake Eyre, and The Great Barrier Reef. Hundreds and thousands of water birds wheel left and right in unison in the morning and evening skies above the windswept sand dunes and emus patrol the shores, peering warily over tussocky vegetation. 24km return. Start and end at Long Point Boat Ramp, Narrung Road, Meningie West.





ABOVE FROM LEFT Paddling in the Tinchí Tamba, Wetlands, QLD. The atmosphere of Lake Jindabyne, NSW. Cookes Corner, Freycinet, TAS.

SHOALHAVEN GORGE

Illawarra, NSW

Two hour's drive south of Sydney, there's something very special about Shoalhaven Gorge—a communion with nature that rejuvenates your spirit and makes your heart sing. Motorboats are not allowed and the steep walls of the gorge mean there is little traffic apart from other fellow paddlers. Passing the 'Boulevard of Broken Trees' the magnificent escarpment opens to a natural amphitheatre and perfect acoustics to pause and listen to birdcalls, including Bellbirds and Lyrebirds. 15km round trip. Start and end at Tallowa Dam, Morton National Park. Kayak hire:

www.kangaroovalleycanoes.com.au

LAKE JINDABYNE

Southern Tablelands, NSW

It's not often that an Aussie gets to paddle with snow-covered alps in the background. An easy day trip from Canberra, Lake Jindabyne provides such an opportunity and on a calm day, there is an amazing atmospheric clarity that makes reflections gently shimmer across the water's surface. In an area better known for skiing and snowboarding, the clean crisp air and alpine reflections provide a truly memorable kayaking trip. Remember though, the combination of some strong winds and icy water means it is important to bring appropriate cold weather gear and check the weather forecast before launching. 28km return. (Trip can be shortened.) Start and end at Barry Way Boat Ramp, Jindabyne.

TINCHI TAMBA WETLANDS

Pine River & Bald Hills Creek,
Southeast Coast, QLD

The exotic, rhythmically delightful name is a simple combination of the indigenous words for mangrove and ibis. Yet these thriving wetlands offer so much more—eucalypt, casuarinas and paperbark forests, saltmarsh, grasslands, eagles, kites, kingfishers, several other birds on their annual pilgrimage and even kangaroos. If you don't mind getting muddy feet, there is a delightful bird hide overlooking the water at Bald Hills Creek and an amazing mangrove tunnel is just a little further upstream. 16km return. Start and end at Deep Water Bend Reserve Boat Ramp, Wyampa Road, Bald Hills.



Scott Rawstone is an Australian Canoeing certified kayak instructor and tour guide who was the primary author of the popular *Paddling Around New South Wales* guidebook.

He is now researching and writing a guidebook for Queensland and a wide range of guides to the best kayaking locations in the rest of Australia. Scott can organise tours or provide more detailed advice on the destinations and kayak hire for the areas listed in this article.

All of his guides are also available online from www.globalpaddler.com.au

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COLES BAY

Freycinet Peninsula, TAS

Perhaps more than any other place in Australia, Tasmania offers the nature lover an opportunity to indulge in wilderness therapy. And kayaking at Freycinet, on the 'sun coast' of Tasmania was listed as the #4 experience in Australia on the Nine Network's *Things To Try Before You Die*. Two hours and 45 minutes drive from Hobart, the unique fusion of abundant marine life, pink granite boulders, white sandy beaches and crystal clear turquoise waters make this sea kayaking paradise well worth the trip. Tours and kayak hire range from three hours to five days. Start and end at Muirs Beach, Coles Bay. For more information visit www.freycinetadventures.com.au

PENGUIN AND SEAL ISLANDS

from Rockingham, WA

Drive one hour south from Perth and you can embark on a gentle kayaking adventure into this spectacular marine park all within an easy one kilometre paddle offshore. You will explore limestone islands, shallow reefs and secluded bays, and sea lions will playfully swim right up to your kayak. It is a truly magical place to paddle due to the myriad of islands, birds and marine life. Five-hour kayak tours are available through Rockingham Wild Encounters, which include guided walks and snorkels and Penguin feeding at the Penguin Island Discovery Centre. More information can be found at <http://www.dolphins.com.au/sea-kayak-tours-of-penguin-island.html>