

Safety at Sea – Paddle Craft Safety

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Why bother?

- Paddling is popular, and participation is growing
- Paddling accidents, injuries and deaths are increasing as participation increases
- Nearly all paddling accidents, injuries and deaths are preventable
- Preventing accidents, injuries and deaths makes paddling more fun

Overview

- Paddling participation
- Common accidents and injuries, and causes of paddling deaths
- Data-based measures to help you stay safe and have fun on the water

Paddle Sport Background

- Paddlecraft include:
 - Canoes
 - Kayaks
 - Rafts
 - Stand up Paddleboards (SUPs)
- Paddling venues include:
 - Ponds and lakes
 - Rivers
 - Oceans
 - Surf



Paddle Sport Background

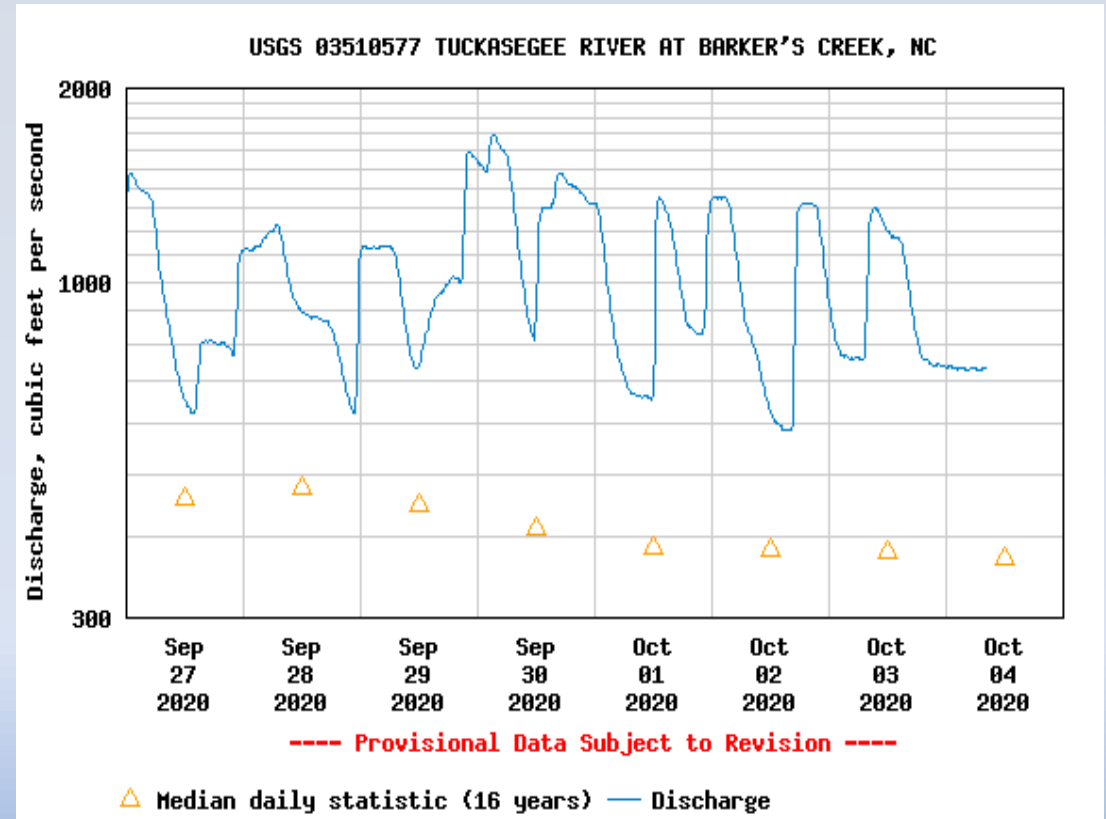
- About 22 million people paddled in 2019
- Common accidents include:
 - Falling overboard
 - Capsizing
 - Collision (run over by a motorized boat, run into debris)
- The rate of serious accidents (requiring hospitalization or causing death) is very low – a few hundred per year – but it could be even lower because nearly every paddling accident is preventable

Why do paddling accidents happen?

- Common problems include:
 - Weather and water conditions (wind, current, waves and cold)
 - Inexperience (which can lead to capsizing and falling overboard)
 - Collisions (with fast moving and/or slow stopping motorized craft, and with on-water hazards)

How do we prevent and manage paddling accidents?

- Expect to swim – paddlers are boaters, but we're also swimmers who periodically sit in boats
- Know the weather and water conditions
 - Weather forecast
 - Water levels
 - Water temperature
- If conditions are off, do something else



How do we prevent and manage paddling accidents?

- Wear a lifejacket – Wearing a life jacket is the single most important thing you can do to improve your safety
- Most people who die boating aren't wearing a life jacket – don't be one of them!



How do we prevent and manage paddling accidents?

- Dress for conditions
- Plan to swim and dress for immersion – life jacket and proper clothing
- Remember that water below 70 F is considered cold
- Water below 60 F can be immediately life threatening



How do we prevent and manage paddling accidents?

- Learn the hazards and avoid them
 - Water features like low-head dams and strainers (debris that lets water, but not you or your boat, pass through) can look harmless but can be very dangerous



How do we prevent and manage paddling accidents?

- Learn the hazards and avoid them
 - Other boats – paddlers are slow, small and hard to see
 - Stay in a group, so that you're easier to see and there are people around to help you if there's a problem



How do we prevent and manage paddling accidents?

- Know your limits and develop your skills
 - Rescue
 - Paddling
 - Planning

How do we prevent and manage paddling accidents?

- Rescue – every paddler should be able to help rescue themselves and others
 - Reenter the boat after a swim
 - Tow another paddler
 - Roll the boat up



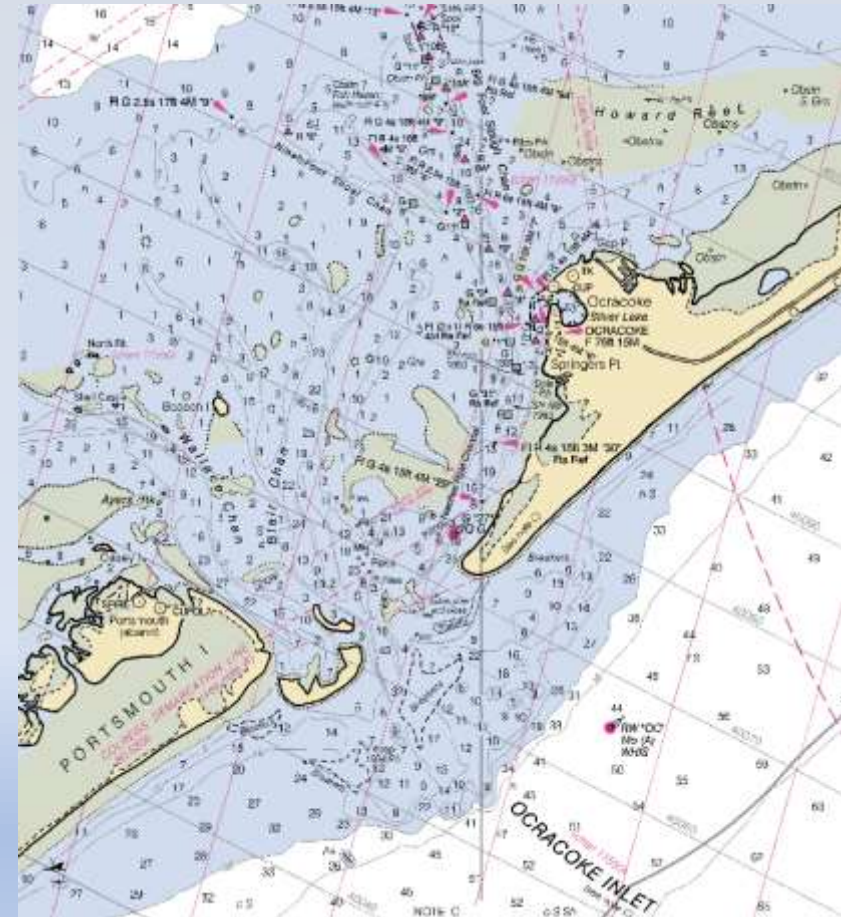
How do we prevent and manage paddling accidents?

- Develop your paddling skills
- Take lessons
- Go practice!



How do we prevent and manage paddling accidents?

- Plan your trip
- Know where you're going, how you'll get there and what weather and water conditions will be like
- Decide what you'll need for supplies
- Communicate the plan



How do we prevent and manage paddling accidents?

- Common supplies
 - Rescue and communication equipment
 - Extra paddle
 - Food and water
 - Extra warm clothing
 - Survival and repair equipment
 - First aid kit



How do we prevent and manage paddling accidents?

- Let people know where you're going and when you'll be back – File a float plan
- Be sure to let them know you are back when you're off the water!
- Float Plan
 - Number of people on the trip (ideally, with their contact info)
 - Number of boats on the trip, and a brief description of them
 - Where you're going
 - When you expect to be back
 - When you should be considered overdue
 - What to do if you're overdue

Take Home Messages

- Plan your trip
- Know the hazards and how to manage them
 - Capsizing and falling overboard are the most common accident types
- Dress to swim – life jacket and proper warm clothing
- Develop and practice your skills
- Remember you're slow, small and hard to see – avoid collisions
- Have Fun!

Questions?