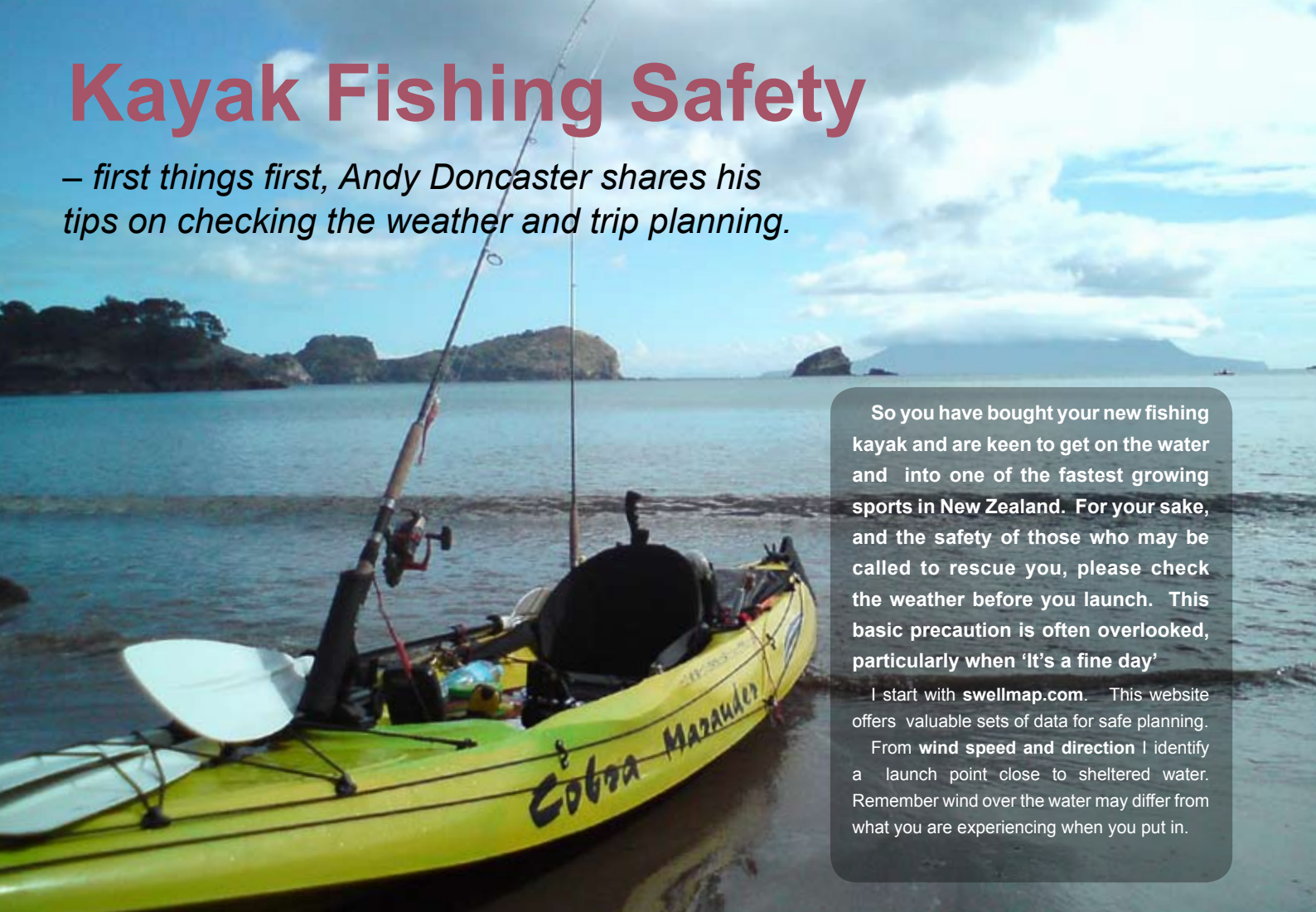


# Kayak Fishing Safety

– first things first, Andy Doncaster shares his tips on checking the weather and trip planning.



So you have bought your new fishing kayak and are keen to get on the water and into one of the fastest growing sports in New Zealand. For your sake, and the safety of those who may be called to rescue you, please check the weather before you launch. This basic precaution is often overlooked, particularly when 'It's a fine day'

I start with [swellmap.com](http://swellmap.com). This website offers valuable sets of data for safe planning. From wind speed and direction I identify a launch point close to sheltered water. Remember wind over the water may differ from what you are experiencing when you put in.

## Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers N.Z. Inc. (KASK)

**KASK is a network of sea kayakers throughout New Zealand**

KASK publishes a 200 page sea kayaking handbook which is free to new members: the handbook contains all you need to know about sea kayaking: techniques and skills, resources, equipment, places to go etc.



KASK publishes a bi-monthly newsletter containing trip reports, events, book reviews, technique/equipment reviews and a 'bugger' file. KASK holds national sea kayaking forums.

**Website:**  
[www.kask.co.nz](http://www.kask.co.nz)

**Annual subscription is \$35.00.**  
**Kask**  
**PO Box 23, Runanga 7841,**  
**West Coast**

**Wave height** tells you what you can expect off beaches in your area and **swell direction** indicates their effect on landing.

**Tide Height** gives you an indication of tidal flow and depth of water.

With this information you have a great foundation for planning a safe day on the water.

When you are on the road or water your VHF radio, tuned to the local weather Channel, will give you up to date information. Most marine forecasts report tidal flow conditions.

Now do your homework on **where you will go** for a day's fishing. Identify a **launch point** based on the predicted weather conditions and you can expect to be safe on the water.

However, as we all know, the weather does not always play the game, so use a chart of the area to **identify emergency exit points** should the weather, or any unforeseen event, catch you short. To avoid danger, exit points need to shelter you from wind and swell. With this in mind pick a main exit point, most conveniently the same as your entry point, and have one or two backups.

On the water always **know where you** are so you can easily head to one of your exit points. And watch for **weather change**. A cloud build up generally indicates a coming wind, especially so when the cloud is a wall on the horizon.

Remember your limitations and always **tell at least two people** where you will be going; where you will launch; all your emergency exit points; and when you expect to be off of the water. And it will save much anxiety and expense if you report, "I'm back!"

Right: Information as seen on [swellmap.com](http://swellmap.com)

