

# Dress to SURVIVE!

Everyone has ideas on what to wear when kayak fishing. This is what I have found works well.

By Chris Nicholls

## WINTER

In winter, the balance between keeping warm while fishing and overheating while paddling, can be tricky.

I've found that removable, good quality, base layers of natural merino or manmade fabrics such as polypropylene (polypro) or 'Sharkskin' are best.



Sharkskin with 1/2 zip

In cold, wet and windy weather I'm aware that merino and polypro have great insulating properties, but offer no protection from wind and rain. 'Sharkskin' on the other hand has a three layer wind proof fabric. The outer layer is made from a durable UV resistant Lycra nylon blend. The middle membrane is both windproof and waterproof and the non-chafing inner thermal layer provides warmth and comfort against the skin.

Whatever base layer you choose you'll need a paddle jacket.

Amongst the many available I have two.

The one I most often use is the Rasdex light weight (2 oz) rip-stop nylon paddling jacket. It is light, wind proof with an opening neck for ventilation. The cuffs are Velcro sealed to prevent water dribbling down your arm.

The other is the Rasdex Adventure Semi Dry of 4 oz 'Tactel' textured nylon with a breathable, delamination-proof Exeat coating.

For comfort it has a folded neoprene neck and also has latex wrists. The extra fabric weight gives just a bit more protection on colder days.

Rasdex Light weight paddle jacket.



Rasdex Adventure Semi-dry paddle jacket.



Even heavier weight jackets are available, many originating in the white water industry. These Dry Tops with latex necks and wrist seals offer excellent protection from rain and wind, and stop water running down your arms and neck, even if immersed..

I wear base layer polypro and merino underwear on my legs for warmth and an over trouser for protection!

Because legs rarely heat up while paddling, I need a warm pair of pants.

You can choose from a basic tramping style trouser to a white

water designed product with closed latex seals on the ankles and high waistbands. A closed ankle means that you can stay dry when wading or dangling your legs over the kayak's side.

The Rasdex Adventure Pants are excellent value at around \$200.00. Its deep neoprene/fabric waistband with wide Velcro tabs ensures a snug, comfortable fit and Neoprene cone ankle seals give a comfortable, easy-to-get-into trouser.

And finally our feet! I have always used neoprene 'dive' or 'surf' booties. They provide warmth and flexibility to operate toe pedals. I make sure I have a well reinforced heel to protect me from the kayak's plastic.

My latest purchase was a pair of 'Palm' (in conjunction with Merrell) kayak boots. They resemble the high end tramping walking shoes produced by Merrell.

Their semi-rigid soles are made of neoprene rubber to offer great support, comfort and warmth. They also double as a great pair of rock hopping shoes when I paddle to a land based fishing spot. These boots have to be my product of the month – they are awesome!



Rasdex Adventure paddle trousers

## SUMMER

The health hazards of a New Zealand summer are well documented. One aspect is that sunlight, reflected off the water, is strong, so kayak fishing heightens the risk of cancer.

I stay sun smart and avoid over heating by wearing the old faithful, long sleeved Rash Top. It isn't bulky and doesn't overheat like some others I've tried.

I also have the new Sharkskin Performance top. Long sleeves made of lycra provide sun block but aren't wind proof. The front and lower back are made from the three layer 'Sharkskin' material. This combination, plus a light weight paddle jacket, means that I don't



Sharkskin Performance top.

overheat while paddling.

You also need to keep your head covered.

I found that a cap alone doesn't save my face and neck from sunburn and have added the tried and true, lightweight Buff reflective sock. This breathes very well, offers excellent UV and burn protection and is bright, a plus in a busy waterway.

With head, chest and arms covered for summer. I'm thinking about covering my legs without overheating or looking like a shrink wrapped desert runner.

A good pair of neoprene paddling shorts, booties for my feet (which burn as well) and a load of sun block work for me. But my legs don't heat up when paddling, and sitting on the kayak they can get a little cool. I like to wear a light pair of paddling pants.

If you prefer to use sun block, just remember to reapply it from time to time.



Matt Watson wears Buff

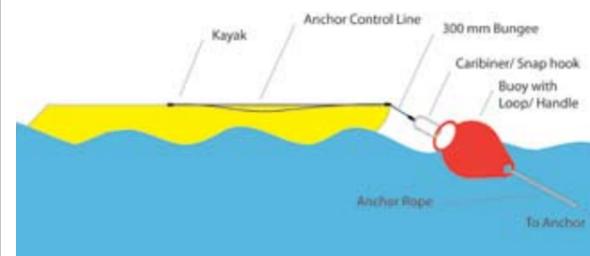


### To Anchor or not to Anchor?

The question should be:

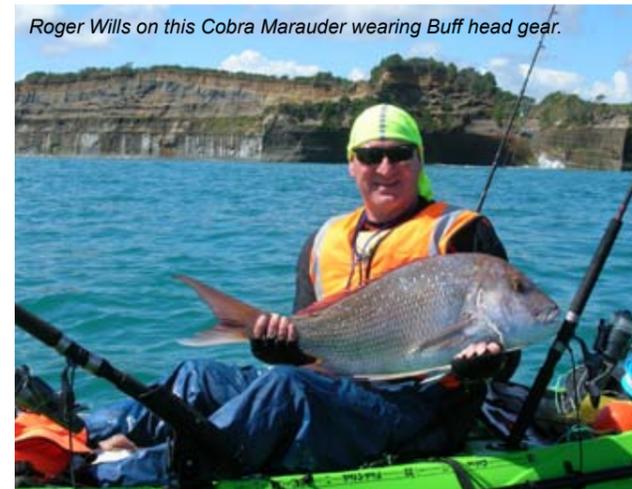
"What happens when I catch the fish of my life, but my anchor does not allow me the freedom to fight the fish on my terms?"

I have found that the only way to fish in my kayak is with the use of a sea anchor; fixed point anchoring has shown to be restrictive and in the odd occasion put me in the position of almost being pulled out of my kayak. On the rare occasion that I have decided to anchor I have found the safest method is as outlined below:



By hooking yourself up to your anchor system as shown above, you offer yourself the flexibility to stay anchored or Drift Fight your catch. When using an anchor, a quick release mechanism must always be used.

Tip: Plan for four seasons in one day. Even when it looks like or... forecast to be calm and dry all day... nothing beats being prepared. Carry extra base layers in a dry bag stored within easy reach. Use good quality gear which lasts longer.



Roger Wills on this Cobra Marauder wearing Buff head gear.

Tip: Cotton should NEVER be worn! When wet, cotton takes a long time to dry. Your skin cools in the process, possibly leading to hypothermia.

## CHILL-PROOF YOUR WATER SPORT WITH...

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Sharkskin garments come in a large range of sizes and styles providing the equivalent warmth of a 2.5 - 3mm neoprene wetsuit - but with better wind chill protection.



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