

## **Visit Norwalk and Westport, Connecticut for Sea-Kayaking**

Kayaking the Norwalk area offers islands that are open to the public for camping and exploring, islands that are part of a national wildlife refuge, and views of all sorts of wildlife including a variety of nesting birds and deer. Several lighthouses can be found including the Historic Sheffield Island Lighthouse and kayaking is made even more interesting by the 7½ foot average height between high and low tide. Be sure to check the marine forecast and tide calendar before heading out.

### **Launch from Norwalk**

- Launch from Calf Pasture Beach Park off exit 16 of I-95. The park requires an entrance fee during the beach season but the park includes a boat launch dedicated to paddleboats, plenty of parking, rest rooms, food service and the launch is in direct view of all the Norwalk Islands.
- A one mile paddle directly south and you're out to the islands. Paddlers can find several islands open to the public for camping, exploring and picnics. You can check out several lighthouses including the Historic Sheffield Island Lighthouse on the western end of Sheffield Island. You can view all kinds of wildlife including a variety of nesting, wading and diving birds including an abundance of Osprey. Harbor Seals from Maine and Canada can be found in the fall and winter. You can go fishing by kayak and the views makes you feel like you're on a far away vacation. And for ambitious paddlers, it is over nine nautical miles to circumvent all of the Norwalk Islands.
- For coastal paddling, paddle east toward Westport and visit the marsh around the golf course and Canfield Island, or paddle west and up the Norwalk Harbor and River, or paddle further west toward Rowayton's Bell Island, the Five Mile River and the coast of Darien, where you can explore all kinds of "nooks and crannies" in Darien's coves.

### **Launch from Westport**

- Launch from the State owned Saugatuck River boat ramp directly under I-95 off of Compo Road South at exit 17. A paddle up the river takes you to downtown Westport, under two bridges and up to a small dam where the fresh water from the reservoir up north meets the salt water. See how many Great Blue Heron you can count on the way up along with all the other wading birds and Osprey flying overhead. Look for nesting Osprey in the area.
- A two mile paddle directly south from the Saugatuck River boat ramp and you will find Cockenoe Island, which is open to the public for camping and picnics. From there, you can paddle due west to the Norwalk Islands chain and find all kinds of wildlife, go fishing by kayak and the views makes you feel like you're on a vacation.
- For coastal paddling, paddle east out of the Saugatuck River, past Westport's beaches and over to Sherwood Island State Park, or paddle west past several waterfront homes and over to Norwalk's Calf Pasture Beach and the Norwalk River.

By David Park © 2013

### **More information is available in "Kayaking in and around the Norwalk Islands"**

For complete information and color photos on kayaking the Norwalk area including Westport and Darien "*Kayaking in and around the Norwalk Islands*" a guidebook by David Park is available on-line at [www.norwalkriver.org](http://www.norwalkriver.org) or locally at the Outdoor Sports Center of Wilton, the Small Boat Shop of South Norwalk, the Dock Shop Nautical Boutique of Darien, the Westport Historical Society gift shop and at Calfe Mu at Calf Pasture Beach in Norwalk.