

# Cobra Kayak's Pro Fisherman

Craig Mcsween | May 07 » Area Articles / Queensland / Southern QLD / Gold Coast /

**The Pro Fisherman by Cobra Kayaks is a fast yet stable kayak perfect for avid kayak fishers. The kayak's cockpit area has been designed with anglers in mind. It features a large rectangular hatch between your legs (to store landed fish) and two side cockpit hatches. There is also ample legroom for taller paddlers.**

## First GLance

As an angler who likes to take home a feed for the family, the most eye-catching feature of the Pro Fisherman was the large rectangle hatch positioned between the legs. It lets you easily access all that space in the centre of your kayak, from the comfort of your seat, while out on the water. You can stow your tackle box, fish to 10kg and even your rods, but still have easy access to them. The rectangular hatch sealed well, does not allow a drop of water inside and was also quick to take on or off.

The two side cockpit storage compartments worked a treat for stowing lures, allowing a quick swap between soft plastics in our search for mangrove jack. The foam covers for these side compartments were not waterproof but were tethered to the boat and held in position by the paddle parks on both sides.

The Pro Fisherman that was supplied for the review by Cobra Kayaks was the XT model, which comes standard with a rudder. The rudder is not retractable but will kick up if it hits an object in the water and then return to the down position. There are only three settings for the position of the foot pedals, catering well for taller paddlers. However, a paddler under 5'9" may have to stretch a bit for the pedals.

There is a large rear tank well and another rectangular hatch behind the seat. This hatch opens into a bull-headed compartment, which is excellent for use as a live bait tank. The Pro Fisherman comes with two recessed rod holders behind the seat, two drink holders, side carry handles and two end loops. I noticed that the side carry handles were not well placed, creating a fairly uncomfortable single person lift.

Most Cobra kayaks, including this one, have the option of mounting a large A-shaped front hatch to allow access to the storage space in the bow of the craft.

## Hull shape and stability

A few issues ago we spoke about the speed of a kayak in relation to its waterline length. This month I want to talk about hull shape and stability.

The greater the beam, or width, of a kayak the more stable it will feel. However, there are two kinds of stability. The first, *initial stability* refers to the amount of side-to-side rocking motion you experience just sitting in the kayak. Generally a wide, flat-bottomed kayak will give you good initial stability.

The second, *secondary stability* refers to the stability of a kayak when you lean to the side, putting the kayak over on its edge. A kayak with a more V-shaped hull will have greater secondary stability and give you better performance and stability in rough conditions.

So which one do you need? If you paddle predominately in flat water and are a pretty large person, I advise a fairly flat-bottomed, beamy kayak. If you paddle in bays and open water then consider looking for a kayak with good secondary stability. If you're not a heavy weight and are looking to cover some big distances travelling between bombies or trolling, I'd go for a narrower kayak with solid secondary stability.

## Comfort

The demo boat supplied had a Hi-Back rest with a pocket that allowed a comfortable seating position. The crossbar on the pedals gave good feet support. The different feet positions are 15cm apart, which is a little larger than on other kayaks as there are only three positions to choose from. You should check that you are comfortable at one of these leg lengths.

The access to the centre rectangular hatch was fantastic. It was very easy to grab all of the gear without twisting around or stretching forward to the bow.

## Stability, Manoeuvrability, Tracking & Speed

The Pro Fisherman had very good initial stability but not so much secondary stability. It was quite manoeuvrable, especially when using the likes of a bow draw stroke to bring the bow of the kayak around.

During the test we were flicking lures around pontoons in front of the mansions on Sovereign Island and I found the Pro Fisherman great for this type of fishing. Tracking wasn't an issue because the rudder was permanently engaged.

At a gentle cruising speed the Pro Fisherman moved easily through the water. On the way home we found that when you paddled harder the

craft began to push a bit of a bow wave at the side where the chines started to contact the water.

### **In the Surf and Cruising**

The Pro Fisherman performed well in the surf and while cruising. It punched through small waves with ease and had plenty of rocker and volume in the bow to keep the nose up when going down the face of the wave.

However, I would prefer to be able to retract the rudder in the surf zone to avoid damaging it if you broach sideways. Also, it lacked a little speed for long distance cruising or trolling.

### **The Wash-Up**

The large rectangular hatch between the legs and two side cockpit hatches are the outstanding characteristics of this kayak. Both features made this craft easy and enjoyable to fish from, even though I didn't land the big mangrove jack that Brad Dicker promised me!

I think the craft is perfect for people who don't want to cover large distances at any great speed. Floating down a river or poking around the mangroves for a few hours would be very enjoyable on this kayak, and Cobra has done a great job with the standard fit-out and deck layout.

### **Want One?**

The Pro Fisherman retails for \$1,650 or \$1,450 without a rudder. For more information contact Cobra Kayaks on (02) 9999 5553, or for Cobra dealers in Australia, email --e-mail address hidden--

*This review was conducted by Craig McSween of Splash Safaris Sea Kayaking who is also a Sea Kayak Instructor with Australian Canoeing. For feedback on this review you can contact us at Adventure Outlet (Kayaking, Camping & Outdoor Store) in Southport on (07) 5571 2929 or --e-mail address hidden--*

## **Facts**

### *Specifications*

<i>Length</i>	<i>4.15m</i>
<i>Width</i>	<i>73cm</i>
<i>Weight</i>	<i>23kg</i>
<i>Capacity</i>	<i>205kg</i>

## **Images**