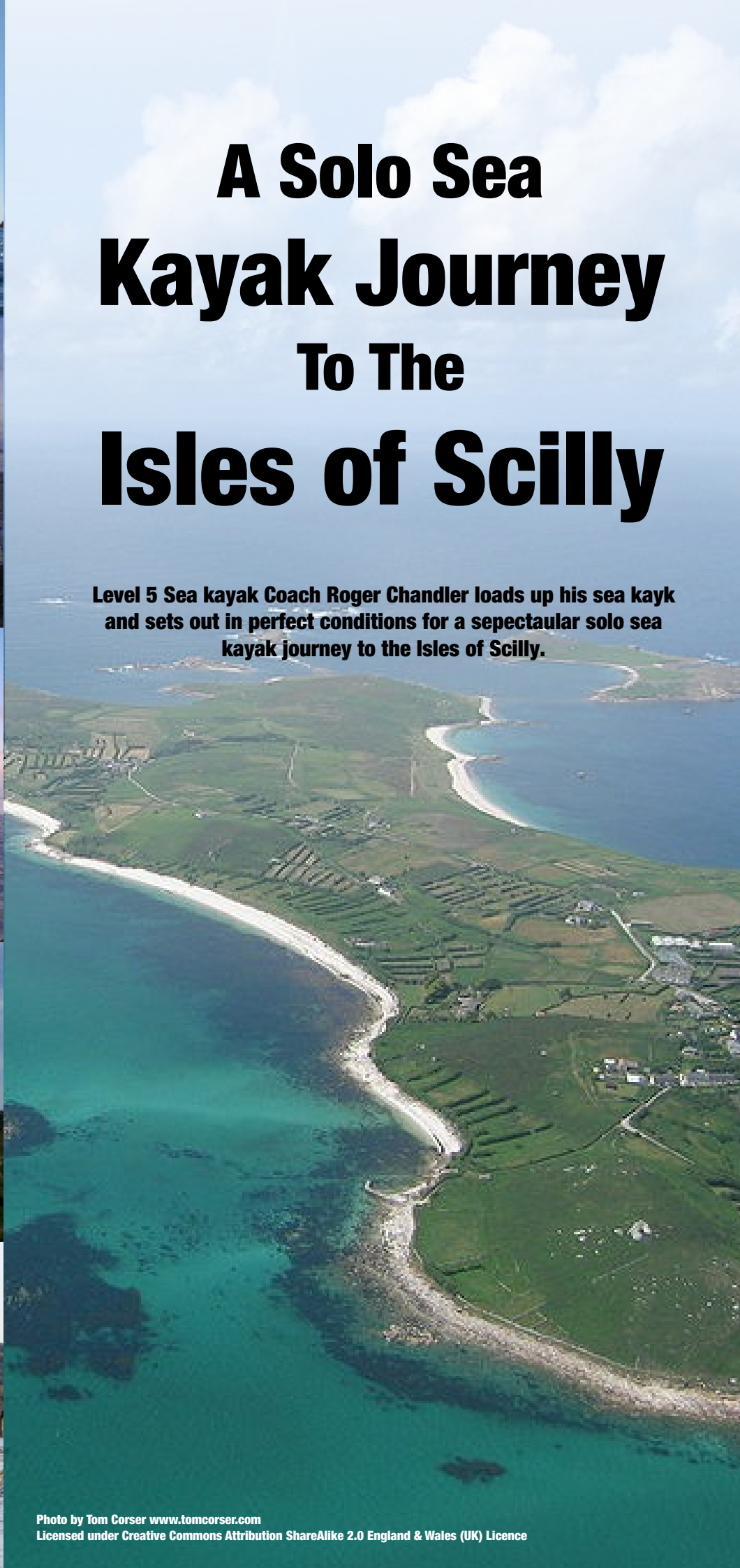
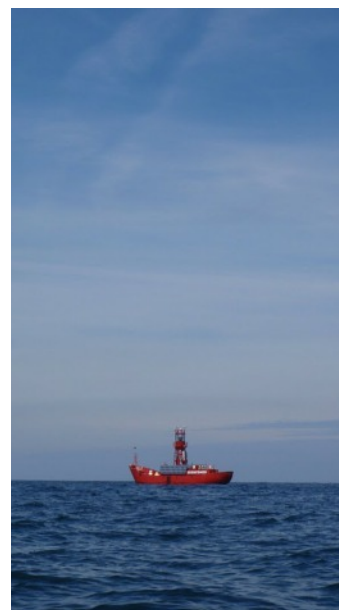




A Solo Sea Kayak Journey To The Isles of Scilly

Level 5 Sea kayak Coach Roger Chandler loads up his sea kayak and sets out in perfect conditions for a sepectaular solo sea kayak journey to the Isles of Scilly.







Something had caught my attention. A large fin was moving slowly across my path. It was a shark at least 3.5 metres, my pulse quickened, 'jaws' has a lot to answer for! I just kept telling my self it was a Basking shark, a plankton feeder and then I noticed a second one. This was shorter and probably a young one. I was keen to get a photo but also ensure I kept my distance, not wanting to spook mum!

I had been waiting for the last 9 months for settled weather and time off work to come together for a paddle to the Isles of Scilly. As I drove down on the Monday, I realised that it was the longest day and with it being the best forecast, I was keen to make the most of it and paddle out that evening.

Gone to the Birds

I began my paddle at about 5pm and went out to the Long ships lighthouse; this was where my compass bearing started. I was nervous and excited as I paddled out, but conditions were amazing. I decided to take a break on the hour, for food and water and it was in the second hour that I began to settle into a rhythm. It was another 3 hours before I could just make out the beginnings of the Isles of Scilly. I was visited by many gannets, shearwaters and an occasional storm petrel visited me, all flying in and checking me out. The sunset was stunning and the moon provide adequate light, and with the occasional shooting star, it really was quite magical.



Star Gazing

I arrived at the first group of island, called the Eastern Isles at 11pm and I was pleased to have covered the 42k in 6 hours. I could hear the occasional splash and deep breathing nearby, I decided was an inquisitive seal, although my senses were twitching. It took another hour for me to find a suitable place for the night. I was very content and had a brew, before falling asleep under the stars.

Sunrise was spectacular and I watched it for 20 minutes or so, before returning to my bivi bag. At 0700 I got up and packed away my kit and decided to go over my return journey. This was to take in the Seven Stones Light Ship, about a third of the way back and a little further to the north.

Ship A Hoy

I paddled in to St Marys that day and had a wander around the shops and then moved on to St Martins. The whole place had a real Caribbean feel about it, and the colours of the sea and sand were amazing. I decided to stay the night and have a paddle around the Eastern isles, and see the seals before settling down for the night. On the crossing out I had only seen 3/4 large container ships on the horizon, and by the time I got into the Traffic Separation Zone (TSZ), all was quiet.

A few seals guided me out of the Eastern Isles, the next morning and then a small pod of porpoises joined me. I soon saw the Seven Stones lightship, it was certainly worth the de tour, just for the crazy demonised sea gull recording

AUTHOR

Roger Chandler is an active Level 5 Coach -Sea, who runs Coastal Spirit with his partner Sonja. A North Wales specialist sea kayaking company who also run REC First Aid courses www.coastalspirit.com Coastal Spirit is a professional partner with Peak Uk and we would like to thank them for their support.

You can follow Coastal Spirit and Rogers adventures on his blog: www.northwalesseakayaking.blogspot and on <http://www.facebook.com/people/Coastal-Spirit/100000102778514>



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and the add excitement of the shallower ground which forced up the occasional larger curling swell.

On the crossing back I only came across one tanker and I had the situation of upping my paddle rate to see if I could pass beyond it, to realising I couldn't ... it was best to sit it out and have a break, and view from a distance!

The End in Sight

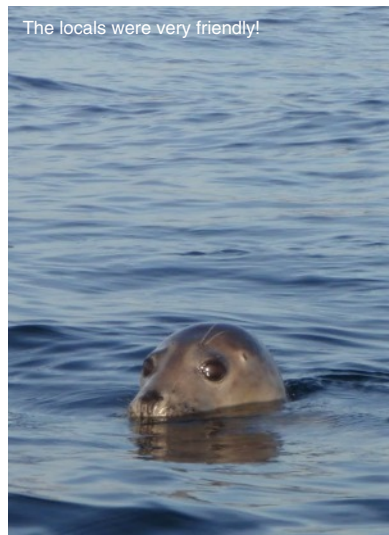
On approaching Lands End, the place was quite different than before. A gentle broad rolling Atlantic swell had developed and now it was opposing current and the cliffs at Lands End, it was very atmospheric. On top of this I was tired from being out in the mid day sun, having run out of water and hour or so ago.

Just after 1500, I was safe through the reefs and surf, pleased with my achievement. I loaded all my kit and boat, on to the van, phoned Sonja and then went looking for an ice cream!

The islands have a wealth of flora and fauna



The locals were very friendly!



TOP TIP

If going from Sennen Cove, park at the smaller harbour car park, pay for the days you believe you will be gone and leave a note for the attendant, to say what you have done.

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