

Murrelet

by Pygmy Boats

Our new 17' x 22" Murrelet line of touring kayaks has four different decks, two cockpit sizes, and two hull versions to choose from. The Murrelet 4PD (four panel rear deck)-v2 (Version 2 hull) reviewed here has a lowered rear cockpit for Greenland-style rolls, but a higher rear deck for additional storage space for extended trips. Her patented new arched cockpit combines a comfortably high 10.1" knee height with a very low 7.9" rear cockpit height. Her new seat-back design offers excellent comfort and back support, yet swings down out of the way during a Greenland roll, allowing the paddler to lie flat on the rear deck. The Version 2 reviewed here is Pygmy's most maneuverable hull. While Version 1 tracks strongly, Version 2 features more rocker, cuts very sharp leaned turns, and is very responsive in the way Greenland technical paddlers enjoy. The boat reviewed has the standard 15.85" x 33" cockpit. A 17" x 33" cockpit is also available.

—John Lockwood, Pygmy Boats

REVIEWERS

GL: 5' 11", 165-pound male. Three day trips. Winds 5 to 20 knots, waves 1 to 2 feet. Cargo 45 pounds.

MC: 6' 1", 160-pound male. Day paddles and playing in surf over four days. Winds 5 to 25 knots, waves and surf to 3 feet. No cargo.

MN: 6', 220-pound male. Day paddle. Winds to 18 knots, waves to 2 feet. No Cargo.

Length overall	17' ½"
Beam	22 ⅛"
Volume	12.5 cu. ft.
Cockpit size	16" x 33"
Cockpit coaming height	
Forward	11"
Aft	6 ¾"
Height of seat	7 ⅞"
Weight	43 ½ lbs.

THE REVIEW

First Glance

The Murrelet, a kit boat from Pygmy, has a "multi-chined hull and multi-panel deck that are quite elegant. The low rear deck is nicely sculpted around the cockpit. The curves and chines are all fair and nicely proportioned" (MN). "The panels look perfectly and solidly joined and a smooth clear finish allows the wood grain to shine through. The Murrelet is a very easy solo carry owing to the light weight. It is nicely balanced, although my shoulder wanted to be where the thigh braces are placed. There are no bow or stern grab loops, probably something I'd want for rough-water play, but I had no problem grabbing the hull for a tandem carry" (GL).

Fit and Outfitting

For MC "the cockpit was spacious and comfortable; I had no trouble entering or exiting and felt there was ample space for my feet. The underside of the deck screws are exposed but this did not pose a problem with snagging." "The long, narrow cockpit tapers neatly toward the front. It was easy to sit down and bring the legs in afterward, and the thigh braces don't interfere. My size-10 booties fit in fine, very comfortable" (GL). For MN "the cockpit was long enough for me to get in seat first then legs with a bit of leaning back. The cockpit opening is narrow on me. I had a good lateral fit while seated but reentry was snug. My size-13 neoprene booties were at the limit of the foot room—in contact with

the deck but not cramped by it. The foredeck was nicely contoured to stay well clear of paddle strokes. The Murrelet was designed for doing Greenland style layback rolls and it certainly delivers. I could do a very comfortable layback with full contact of my PFD on deck—superb."

The seat is molded foam and is held to the hull by Velcro. All reviewers described it as "comfortable." "The foam-padded plastic back pivots and provides excellent support and does a nice job of getting out of the way for layback maneuvers" (GL). The thigh braces are sculpted from stiff foam and their position is adjustable. They "provide good support and excellent contact location for bracing and rolling" (GL). MC found "the aggressive angle of the foam somewhat uncomfortable" but it is easily modified. "The foot braces are solid, comfortable and easily adjustable while sitting in the cockpit without opening the spray skirt" (MC).

The deck fittings are attached by short straps bolted on deck. The builder can easily arrange the bungees and grab lines to suit. As the Murrelet supplied was rigged, "the perimeter lines provide a great level of safety and the bungee cords allow quick attachment



of gear" (MC). The Murrelet was not equipped with rudder (available from Pygmy) or skeg.

Stability and Maneuverability

GL rated the Murrelet's initial stability as "moderate." MC found it "slightly twitchy on first impression but almost immediately it began to feel comfortable even in rough water." MN commented: "The initial stability is good—easy to rock side to side—but not twitchy on flat water. Taking beam seas was not so secure feeling. I kept one paddle blade flat in the water and one hand on the shaft to steady myself." For GL secondary stability was "moderately high; secure and predictable on edge." MN rated the secondary as "good—it falls off when the coaming touches the water. The stability profile is good for leisure pastimes in calm conditions and active paddling in a chop."

The Murrelet "tracked well" (MN). "Steering with leaned turns was excellent, and very little effort produces a long-radius turn" (GL). "A single sweep will initiate a turn and Murrelet will continue to carve on its own while edged" (MN). GL found "no noticeable weathercocking with the wind coming from any direction; I felt no need to adjust trim, lean or paddle stroke while paddling across a stiff wind. Turning upwind or down was not difficult, so I don't feel that the Murrelet needs a skeg or rudder." Similarly, MN "detected very little weathercocking. I could paddle with the wind on the beam and take only an occasional sweep. The only trouble I had was when going downwind in small waves. The bow veered if I leaned forward while paddling. The Murrelet was sensitive to trim, so if I sat up straight or leaned back the balance downwind was restored. There isn't a skeg or a rudder to use to make adjustments but weight shifts provide some adaptability."

Speed

GL felt the Murrelet had "very good to excellent cruising speed, with excellent acceleration and good sprint speed as well." For MC "it felt reasonably quick and responsive." MN, using a GPS, measured "a cruising pace at 4.25 knots, 5.25 knots at an exercise pace, and I could power up to a maximum speed of 5.75 knots." The Murrelet had "excellent acceleration to easily catch wind waves, and not difficult to stay on them" (GL). "It was a bit fussy on take-off, and correcting a slight angle on take-off required a stern rudder to pry the bow downwave" (MN).

Rolling and Rescue

"Rolling is a real pleasure with this kayak" (MC). It's "a rolling machine; even hand rolls are not difficult" (GL). "The very solid fit in the cockpit made rolling a breeze. C-to-C was a snap—I over-rotated on my first roll and had to ease up to finish upright. The layback was excellent" (MN). "There were no significant challenges to wet reentries except that the seat can be washed out of the kayak by breaking waves" (MC). "Crossed shock cord, either fore and aft of the cockpit, can be used for a paddle float reentry. The cockpit is large enough for quick and easy reentry. Reentry and roll was no problem. The cockpit drains easily of water with a single lift of the bow" (GL).

Cruising

Stowage space aboard the Murrelet is "excellent for a week outing or longer. The extra depth of the four-panel aft deck allows for bulky items like my large bear canister. The hatch covers close the gasketed openings with a lever and webbing system. I found only a teaspoon of water in each compartment after self-rescue practice"

BEST FEATURES

- Layback clearance
- Turning ease

TO IMPROVE

- Securing the seat



The 4PD Murrelet has adjustable thigh braces and a cockpit and deck configuration aft that offers clearance for layback rolls without sacrificing storage volume.

(GL). The plywood bulkheads are glassed in. With 45 pounds of cargo aboard "the kayak tracked and turned nicely, and secondary felt bomber secure" (GL).

The Bottom Line

The Murrelet is a "great kayak for Greenland-style rolling, and yet has some stowage advantages for long trips. I loved the light weight for cartopping and enjoyed paddling and showing off this wooden beauty. It's stable enough for athletic beginners, and a playful, rough-water rolling machine for the experts" (GL). MC was "impressed by the Murrelet. It exceeded my expectations for ease of rolling and was quite comfortable to paddle, even in rough water." For MN "the Murrelet was a great combination of features for cruising, playing when the wind is up and rolling for the sheer fun of it."

MANUFACTURER'S RESPONSE

I'm very pleased with the reviewers' praise of our Murrelet 4PD-v2 design: the ergonomics of the cut-away foredeck, the new pivoting seat-back, the added foot room and knee height, the hull's excellent acceleration and speed, its ability to be steered with a leaned turn, and its absence of weathercocking despite its increased maneuverability. I worked hard to refine all of these characteristics. This new kayak went through more prototype testing and redesign than any of my prior designs. This new design has had a major effect on my paddling. Despite the fact that I am the oldest member of my paddling group (I'll be 70 in December), when I am paddling a Murrelet they can't leave me behind. I've started using a Greenland paddle, which is easier on my old shoulders. The Greenland paddle combined with the narrower beam and angled deck of the Murrelet allows me to use more body rotation for greater efficiency. I can

push the Murrelet to its hull speed and hold it there for extended periods of time. Since the Murrelet's introduction, a number of local Pygmy Murrelet owners have quickly mastered the grace of a Greenland static brace and rear-deck roll. A traditional Greenland roll with a full-body swing that ends on the rear deck is a beautiful sight to see.

The seat issue mentioned by one reviewer can be remedied by modifying the Velcro tabs that secure it in the boat. The Murrelet 4PD is part of a design series that comes in two different hull versions and four deck configurations. This allows paddlers the freedom to choose a hull and deck configuration that best suits their paddling style and body type. Thanks to *Sea Kayaker* for the time, effort, experience and skill it brings to these reviews.

-John Lockwood, Pygmy Boats

KAYAK REVIEWS

MURRELET

MANUFACTURING DATA

Designed: 2011

Standard construction: Glass-wood-glass composite, sold as a kit

Standard features: Seat, backrest, foot braces

Options: Rudder, deck rigging, perimeter lines, bulkheads and hatches

Weight: 38 lbs.

Price: \$1,049

Availability: Order direct from Pygmy Boats Inc.

Manufacturer: Pygmy Boats Inc., 360-385-6143, www.pygmyboats.com, info@pygmyboats.com

SPEED VS. RESISTANCE

Resistance in pounds.

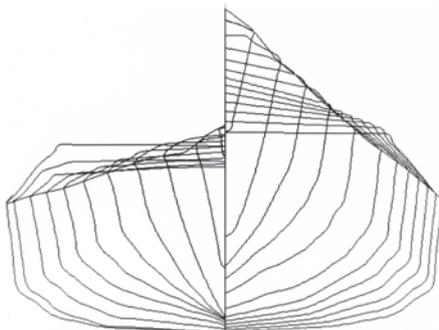
Speed	Winters/KAPER	Broze/Taylor*
2 knots	0.93	0.86
3 knots	1.95	1.95
4 knots	3.67	3.77
4.5 knots	5.56	5.51
5 knots	8.51	8.55
6 knots	14.88	16.07

*Automated with the Gertler program by Robert Livingston

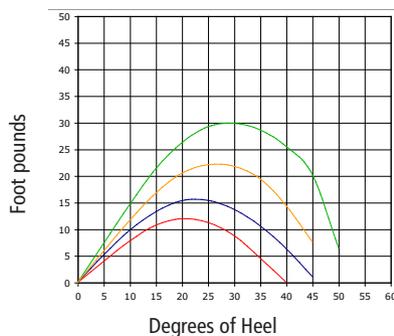
HYDROSTATICS

Waterline length	15' 2.1"
Waterline beam	21.7"
Draft	4.9"
Prismatic coefficient	0.47
Wetted surface in sq. ft.	21.81
Center of buoyancy	51.6%

(Hydrostatics calculated with a 250-pound load.)



Righting/Heeling Moments (Fixed-weight)



Stability Curves*

- 150 lb. paddler, no cargo
- 200 lb. paddler, no cargo
- 150 lb. paddler, 100 lb. cargo
- 200 lb. paddler, 100 lb. cargo

*Formula revised December 2009. (Not comparable with stability graphs generated prior to December 2009.)

TECH TALK: Readers interested in the full set of hydrostatics can find them posted on our website at www.seakayakermag.com along with additional data. An explanation of the terms and procedures used in the kayak test program is also available on the site.

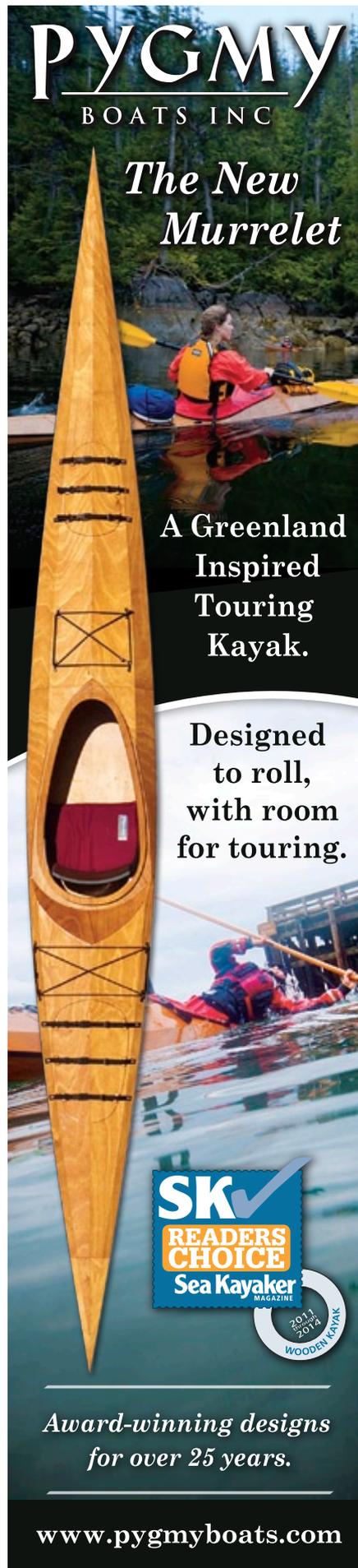
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