



## PRESS RELEASE

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### SEA KAYAKING TREND BOOSTS SKYE TOURISM

Increasingly popular sea kayaking is attracting a fresh wave of visitors to the youth hostels of Skye, helping boost bookings on the island this summer.

SYHA Hostelling Scotland has reported a growing number of outdoor enthusiasts checking into its hostels, kayak under one arm, to enjoy the incredible seascape surrounding Skye.

The introduction of international sea kayaking courses catering from beginners to advanced kayakers has helped put Skye on the sport's radar.

Broadford Hostel is proving a mecca for advanced kayakers who have signed up to courses provided by leading instructors.

Meanwhile, those new to the activity and keen to give it a try can stay at Ratagan Hostel where local National Trust instructors operate a pick up service at the hostel.

At times, kayak sessions take place right next to the hostel, so it couldn't be easier for guests to try something new during their travels.

Frauke Dohrmann, Skye Group Manager for SYHA Hostelling Scotland, said: "Skye has long proven popular with outdoor enthusiasts, thanks to its fascinating landscape and stunning scenery.

"Now, in addition to walkers and cyclists we are welcoming far more kayakers. Sea kayaking is proving increasingly popular, and the introduction of new instruction courses close to our hostels has definitely helped draw the sport's fans to our hostels.

"Our hostels at Broadford, Ratagan and Uig are ideally placed for those keen to enjoy Skye's incredible seascape, with the benefit of expert instructors close by.

"It's said that on Skye you are never farther than five miles from the sea, so it makes sense to take to the water and have some excitement!"

Skye's sea kayaking community has also reported the sport's growing popularity. Gordon Brown, an international sea kayaking expert and owner of Skyak Adventures, said: "Sea kayaking is the world's fastest growing watersport, and Skye is the must-visit destination for enthusiasts. With such great variety to the landscape and conditions, there is always somewhere calm enough for novices trying their first paddle, and challenging waters for more advanced kayakers looking for a real thrill."

John Martin, co-founder of White Wave Activity Centre, said: "I wanted watersports to be something that could be tried and experienced on holiday, rather like people who would book a pony trek. That concept has come a long way with the massive growth in people taking up watersports while visiting Skye. Twenty years ago, if you saw a kayak on a car roof rack, chances were you knew the person. Now there are hundreds, it's fantastic to see."

Rule Anderson, one of seasonal rangers for the National Trust at Kintail, reported a year on year increase in holidaymakers trying their sea kayaking course, with the vast majority coming from within the UK.

He said: "We've been offering sea kayaking sessions since 2004 and we've seen an increase in uptake every year. We see everyone from families to retired couples giving it a try. This area is great for beginners as the sea is quite calm, and there are tremendous views and coastline to explore. More than 90% coming from the hostel are coming from within the UK. I think more people are holidaying at home and the want to try something new and exciting."

SYHA Hostelling Scotland runs five hostels on Skye, including Broadford, Flodigarry, Glenbrittle, Rasaay and Uig. In addition Ratagan is the closest mainland hostel to Skye, which enjoys views of the island.

The Skye hostels provide high quality, affordable accommodation on one of Scotland's most famous islands, appealing to outdoor enthusiasts, nature lovers and wildlife watchers, archaeologists, culture vultures, families, couples in search of romance and travellers just longing to get away from it all.

SYHA Hostelling Scotland is a registered charity dedicated to providing low cost, quality accommodation across Scotland. The charity is committed to promoting the social, environmental and educational benefits of hostelling to all, from families to retired people, couples to groups of friends.

Visit [www.hostellingscotland.com](http://www.hostellingscotland.com) for more information about the Hostel Network. Book on line or call the Reservations Team on 0845 293 73 73.

## **ENDS**

Note to Editors:

*SYHA Hostelling Scotland* currently has a network of 68 hostels throughout Scotland.

The charity's Hostels serve most of the country's most desirable destinations, from key urban locations to breathtaking rural areas, including some of Scotland's most remote, and enticing, beauty spots.

An important provider of accommodation services within the Scottish tourism sector, SYHA Hostels provide a unique base and services for the wealth of activities and events that take in the best of Scotland. These can include outdoor pursuits, festival going, environmental education, culture and heritage, wildlife watching, school trips, weddings and conferences.

Many of our hostels now offer single, twin and family rooms with en-suite facilities in addition to the traditional dormitory style accommodation.

With more than 20,000 registered members, *SYHA Hostelling Scotland* is the largest participant in the hostel market, attracting more than 400,000 overnight guests each year – of which about 40% are from out with Scotland – with a valued contribution of over £20 million to the Scottish economy per annum.

*SYHA Hostelling Scotland* is a member of the worldwide community of Hostelling International, incorporating the International Youth Hostel Federation, which covers more than 90 Youth Hostel Associations around the world and offers members and guests amazing experiences in over 4,500 Youth Hostels in more than 80 countries.

The charity's new website is designed to be user friendly, attractive and an inspiration to make the most of Scotland. To discover how we have improved it visit: [www.hostellingscotland.com](http://www.hostellingscotland.com).

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