



- Know the weather forecast and leave a float plan and know their limitations. The wind is known to pick up early to mid afternoon, and storms are common mid to late afternoon.
- There is no fresh water on the public islands and only (seasonal). Carry your own water, food and other necessary supplies. Practice "Leave No Trace" principles and carry out all trash and garbage.

- Fog is a common occurrence in Long Island Sound. It is strongly recommended that paddlers travel with a nautical chart and a compass. When fog occurs, it can result in sudden and total disorientation. The sound of bells or foghorns, sightings of buoys and steady wave and wind direction will help to orient you. If fog or heavy rain sets in and the shore cannot be seen from the islands, heading in a northerly direction gets you to the mainland.

- Access to the islands requires crossing boating channels. It is imperative that paddlers know the buoy markers for channels, stay in close groups and cross at right angles. Make yourself visible and never assume a larger vessel has sighted your vessel or that you have the right of way.
- Throughout most of the year the prevailing winds blow out of the southwest. The average tidal range in the Norwalk Islands area is 7.5 feet. Each tidal cycle (from low to high) has duration of approximately 6 hours. Tidal currents are strongest on the mid-outgoing and mid-incoming tides and are more intense during foul weather conditions. Strong tidal currents can be felt between Shea Island and Chimon Island, and the sheer force of their flow can also cause difficult eddy and wave conditions, even on calm days.

- Paddlers must follow the same safe boating practices as any other small boat operator. All paddlers should take a course in safe boating such as those offered by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection or other organizations. Contact [http://www.ct.gov/Dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2222&q=32063&depNav\\_GID=1620](http://www.ct.gov/Dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2222&q=32063&depNav_GID=1620) or (860) 434-8638 for further information. All paddlers should know the principles of navigation and seamanship and be comfortable in the water.
- In addition to food and water, it is recommended to bring warm clothing, a spare paddle, a space blanket, hat, flares, first aid kit, an efficient sound producing device, i.e., whistle or air horn. Since visibility becomes poor due to fog, rain, etc and at night, it is important to have a flashlight. A VHF radio and a cell phone (in a waterproof container) is recommended. Monitor Channel 16 in marine emergencies. Recommended clothing includes - wicking fabric, not cotton, hat, sunglasses (w/croakie), water shoes, suntan lotion and bug repellent is required by the Coast Guard - make sure that you are visible to other larger vessels. The link to the Coast Guard federal requirements for paddle craft in our area is: <http://a013.uscgaua.info/requirements.htm>.
- Do not tamper with lobster pot buoys or shellfish bed stakes: the shellfish industry is a very important component of the local and state economy.

### Safety & Emergency Reminders

**Contact the Westport Conservation Commission**, 1 Myrtle Ave., Westport, CT or call 203-341-1170 for information and permitting.

**Contact the Norwalk Recreation and Parks Department**, 125 East Ave., Norwalk or call 203-854-7806 for information and permitting.

**Contact the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP)** at (860) 424-3034 or visit their website at <http://dep.state.ct.us> for more detailed information and maps concerning Long Island Sound, geologic formations, coastal access and wildlife habitat. A CTDEP guide entitled Sharing the Waterways: A Code of Ethics for Wildlife Watching Along the Connecticut Coast is especially useful.

**Contact the Norwalk Recreation and Parks Department**, 125 East Ave., Norwalk or call 203-854-7806 for information and permitting.

Go to [www.lisrc.com/edu/coastalaccess](http://www.lisrc.com/edu/coastalaccess) for more information about each boat launch site.

**Directions - From the South:** I-95 North to Exit 16 South to Exit 16 and turn right at the end of the ramp onto East Avenue. Follow East Avenue for about 0.4 miles to a railroad trestle bridge. Continue straight under the railroad trestle for 0.1 miles, then bear left around a cemetery, then immediately bear right onto Gregory Boulevard. Go 0.6 miles to the monument, go left around the monument, and then make the next right onto Calif Pasture Beach Road.

**Directions - From the North:** I-95 South to Exit 16 and turn right at the end of the ramp onto East Avenue. Follow East Avenue for about 0.4 miles to a railroad trestle bridge. Continue straight under the railroad trestle for 0.1 miles, then bear left around a cemetery, then immediately bear right onto Gregory Boulevard. Go 0.6 miles to the monument, go left around the monument, and then make the next right onto Calif Pasture Beach Road.

**Directions - From the South:** I-95 North to Exit 16 South to Exit 16 and turn right at the end of the ramp onto East Avenue. Follow East Avenue for about 0.4 miles to a railroad trestle bridge. Continue straight under the railroad trestle for 0.1 miles, then bear left around a cemetery, then immediately bear right onto Gregory Boulevard. Go 0.6 miles to the monument, go left around the monument, and then make the next right onto Calif Pasture Beach Road.

**Directions - From the North:** I-95 South to Exit 16 and turn right at the end of the ramp onto East Avenue. Follow East Avenue for about 0.4 miles to a railroad trestle bridge. Continue straight under the railroad trestle for 0.1 miles, then bear left around a cemetery, then immediately bear right onto Gregory Boulevard. Go 0.6 miles to the monument, go left around the monument, and then make the next right onto Calif Pasture Beach Road.

## Fairfield County is easy to reach by car, train, bus or ferry.



### Fairfield County



## Fairfield County/CONNECTICUT

# Norwalk Islands Kayak Trail



COMPLIMENTS OF



Fairfield County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
297 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06850 • 203-853-7770  
800-473-4868 • [www.visitfairfieldcountyCT.com](http://www.visitfairfieldcountyCT.com)

Easy • Fun • Rentals  
Instructions • Tours  
Norwalk, Connecticut

# The Norwalk Islands

Launch your own kayak or rent locally. Instructions and tours available. Find outfitters at [www.visitfairfieldcountyct.com](http://www.visitfairfieldcountyct.com).

## Environmental/Wildlife Consideration

Harbor seals have been spotted with greater frequency on the southwest corner of Sheffield Island on the rocks at low tide in the winter months. Recent studies suggest that kayak and canoe approaches disturb the seals who may sense predatory danger from the low-draft silent vessels. Please maintain a safe distance (50 yards) from the harbor seals. The Marine Mammal Protection Act protects these mammals from harassment and sets limits as to how close observers can approach. Visit Norwalk's Maritime Aquarium or its website [www.maritimeaquarium.org](http://www.maritimeaquarium.org) for information about marine life.

## The Norwalk Islands

There are approximately 23 islands located off the coast of Norwalk, Connecticut. Many of these islands are privately owned, some with residents living on them seasonally and others year-round. The islands of Chimon and Sheffield are part of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge (SBMNR) and access is restricted. The City of Norwalk owns Shea Island and Grassy Island, both of which are open to the public. Cockenoe Island is owned by the town of Westport. The islands are located about one mile off shore and provide canoeists and kayakers with daylong sightseeing, wind sheltered, and open-water paddling opportunities. Overnight camping is permitted only on Shea, Grassy and Cockenoe Islands. (Camping permit information below.) No fresh water is supplied to the islands.

**1. Calf Pasture Beach Boat Launch** - Recognized point of entry for car-top carrier boats. There is a \$15 entrance fee into the park for non-residents during the beach season and launching is from a gravel and mud beach entry area. This exposed launch area is the best point of entry to get to the islands quickly and safely.

**2. Grassy Island** - The coastline of this 7.3-acre island is composed of smaller gravel, sand and silts. The northwest, west and southwest coast are nice, sheltered areas to rest. Camping is permitted at four sites and permits can be obtained from the Norwalk Recreation and Parks Department.

**3. Chimon Island** - This 70-acre island is part of the SBMNR. The north and west coasts are gravelly; the south and east coast are strewn with boulders. Access is restricted from April 1st to August 15th during bird-nesting season. No overnight camping or use of the island's interior is allowed. For more information, visit the SBMNR website at <http://northeast.fws.gov/>.

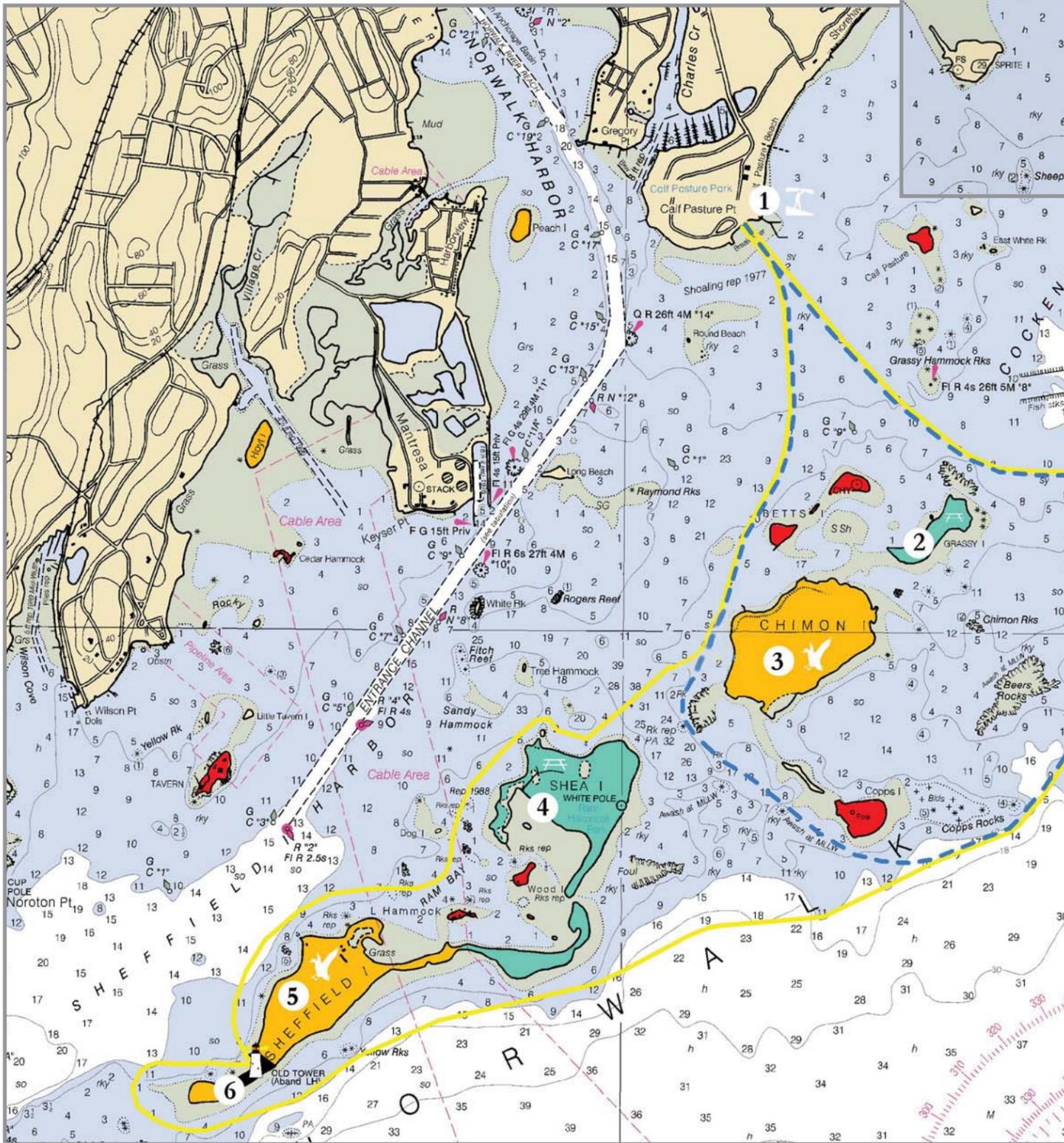
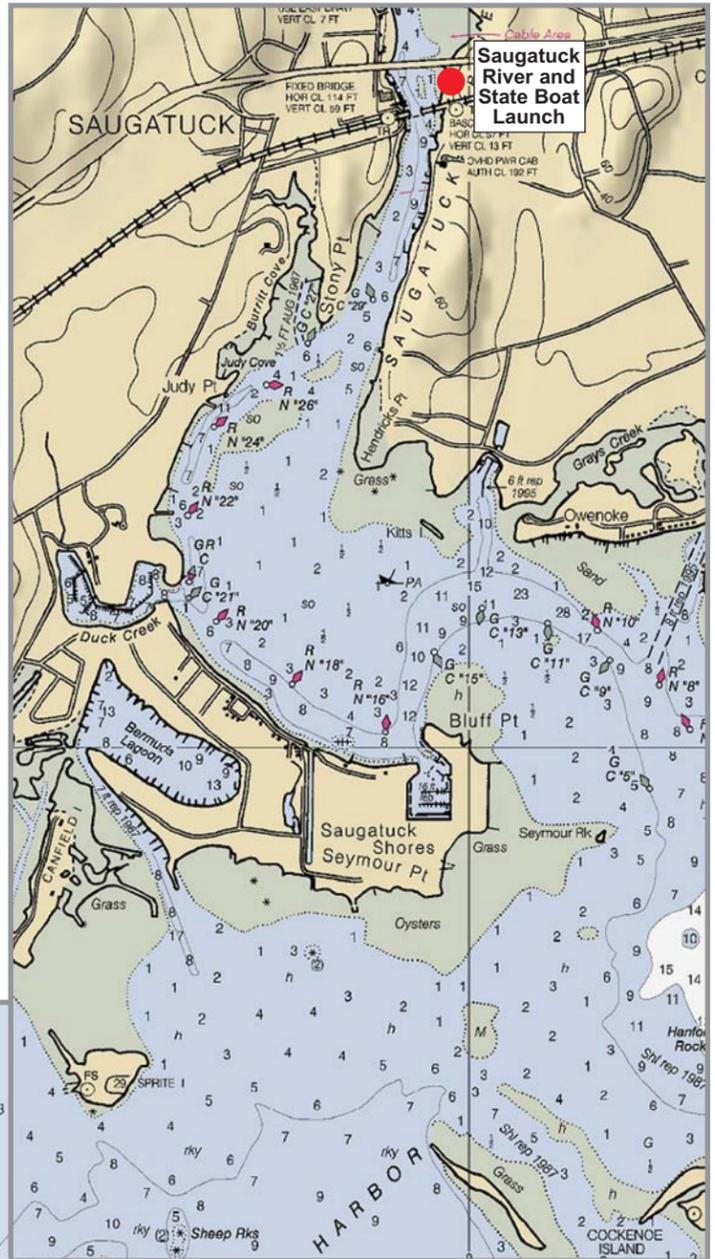
**4. Shea Island** - The entire shoreline of this 45-acre island is strewn with rocks and boulders. Many bird species are found on the island. Two solar powered restrooms are available seasonally along with 16 camping sites. Camping permits can be obtained from the Norwalk Recreation and Parks Department.

**5. Sheffield Island** - This 53-acre island is located 1.5 miles off the coast of Norwalk and is part of the SBMNR. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service controls the island except for the 3.5-acre parcel occupied by the Sheffield Island Lighthouse and grounds owned by the Norwalk Seaport Association. This is the largest island, and the entire shoreline is strewn with rocks and boulders. Sheffield Island supports a variety of bird species and has considerable nesting potential for osprey, herons and other migratory birds. To protect these birds, Sheffield Island is seasonally closed to public access each year. The refuge also provides important resting, feeding, and nesting habitat for many species of wading birds, shorebirds, songbirds and terns, including the endangered roseate tern. Adjacent waters serve as wintering habitat for brant, scoters, black duck and other waterfowl. [Kayak landing fee.](#)

**6. Sheffield Lighthouse** - The Sheffield Island Lighthouse was built in 1868 and provided navigational aid to mariners until about 1902. The Lighthouse is maintained by the Norwalk Seaport Association, a local non-profit, and Friends of the Norwalk Islands in partnership with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

The Lighthouse and surrounding picnic grounds are open seasonally. Tours and use of the picnic grounds are available during the summer for a nominal fee. Kayaks are also available for rent. Enjoy walking the nature trail on the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. The trail was constructed to provide controlled public access while protecting the natural resources of the island. Visit the Norwalk Seaport Association website for information on events, island cruises and membership at [www.seaport.org](http://www.seaport.org). [Lighthouse admission fee.](#)

**7. Cockenoe Island** - (pronounced "kah-KEE-nee") has almost all the bird rookeries in the island chain. Herons, egrets and black cormorants can be seen on Cockenoe. Camping permits limited to 4 parties per night can be obtained from the Westport Conservation Commission.



**Acknowledgements:**  
 Based on: Norwalk Island Canoe/Kayak Trail Calf Pasture Beach, Norwalk Connecticut. Prepared by the South Western Regional Planning Agency, October 2001. [www.swrpa.org](http://www.swrpa.org);  
 Base Map - National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration, Nautical Chart #12368: Stamford Harbor.

**SWRPA**  
 South Western Regional Planning Agency



Approximate Time Allowance

- Half-Day Loop
- Full-Day Loop

- City/Town Park Land
- Wildlife Refuge
- Private (No Access)
- Sheffield Island Lighthouse

1 Inch = 2000 Feet  
 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 Feet

Soundings: Feet At Mean Low Water