

WEED BEACH PADDLING DESTINATIONS

* WHERE TO GO

Follow the guidance of the Downunder staff when planning where to paddle. Wind, tide and weather forecast all play a role. Rivers and coves are tidal, if the tide is going out you could end up stuck in the mud. Do NOT get off in the mud – it can be like quicksand, and is full of sharp shells.

1. HOLLY POND 1-2 HOURS

Holly Pond is very tidal, and there is a strong current in before high tide, and out before low tide. Staff will guide you to when it's safest to paddle in there. It can be a lovely 1-hour tide, and potentially a 2-hour paddle if you time it right and exit from behind Cove Island, below the walk bridge.

2. WALKBRIDGE @ COVE HARBOR 2 HOURS

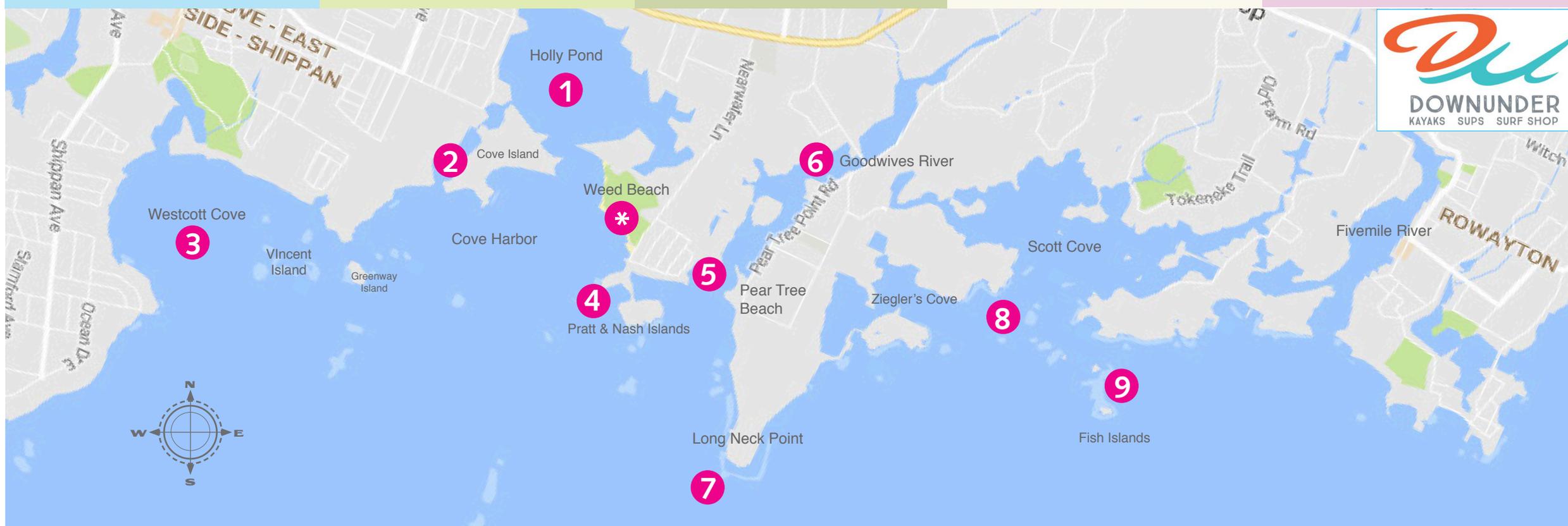
There's a lovely cove just around the point of Cove Island – an easy 1 hour paddle. A two hour paddle would be continuing into Cove harbor – just hug the shore and you will come across it. Paddle to the end into the marina and you will see the water outlet that equalizes Holly Pond. When timed right you can enter or exit Holly Pond via this outlet.

3. WESTCOTT COVE & VINCENT ISLAND 2-3 HOURS

Paddle directly over to Cove Island Point, and then continue to the next point. You can paddle around it, or 1 hour either side of low tide, you can paddle under the bridge that connects Greenway Island to the mainland. This brings you to Westcott Cove, where Vincent Island is located. The remains of a stone dwelling are on the island, gorgeous picnic spot. Be respectful of nesting birds. Allow 2 hours, more if you're picnicking.

4. PRATT ISLAND & NASH ISLAND 1 HOUR

Heading east (right) from Weed Beach, follow the land around the point, where Nash Island connects to Pratt – both residential islands attached to the mainland. An easy 1-hour paddle, with a lovely cove to explore.



5. PEAR TREE BEACH 2-3 HOURS

Continuing around the point, explore the coves on the backside of the islands, that back onto Noroton Yacht Club, and paddle over to the right where you can disembark at Pear Tree Beach, enjoy the concession and facilities. Allow 2 hours, potentially 3 if picnicking.

6. GOODWIVES RIVER 3 HOURS

Instead of crossing over to Pear Tree Beach, keep to the left and paddle up the Goodwives River, passing the Darien Boat Club on your right. Accessible at least 2 hours or more before high tide.

7. LONG NECK POINT 2-3 HOURS

Directly across from Pratt Island is Long Neck Point, where you can see some stately homes. You can paddle straight across, or meander around the shoreline.

8. ZIEGLER'S COVE & SCOTT COVE 4.5-5 HOURS

Continuing around Long Neck Point, and hugging the shore you will come to Ziegler's Cove. Just beyond that is Scott Cove, home to the Convent of St. Birgitta (not accessible during low tide).

9. FISH ISLAND 4 HOURS

When you reach Long Neck Point, you will see a grouping of islands directly across to the east. These are private islands and a wildlife sanctuary. Paddlers are allowed on the sandy part of the beach as far as the high tide line, and we urge you not to disturb any of the nesting birds. Be sure to pull your boat/board all the way up, being aware of the changing tide. During high tide on a full moon you might see horse-shoe crabs laying eggs.

WEED BEACH PADDLING SAFETY TIPS

At DOWNUNDER we're always looking out for our mates. When you're heading out for a paddle, there are a few things you need to know to keep everyone safe. If you run into any difficulties, please CALL US* - Westport (203) 956-6217; Rowayton (203) 642-3660. In a serious emergency call the Darien Marine Police (203) 655-9233.

WEATHER

Wind: look at which way it is blowing – that's where it will push you. Ideally go into the wind, so you have energy for the return trip. SUPers – if the wind is strong and you get tired, paddle on your knees – less resistance. You can even paddle prone (on your tummy with the paddle under you).

Thunder: is closely followed by lightning. If you hear thunder – head for land, ideally the coastline, not islands. Take cover away from any tall objects. If you have to paddle, stay low, keep your paddle close to the water. If you get stranded, call us!

TIDES

Downunder staff will let you know what the tide is and how that will impact your outing. At a low tide there are areas that you won't be able to get into, and there may be mud flats that you could get stuck in. The tide changes every 6 hours.

BOAT TRAFFIC

Boats have the right of way; cannot stop quickly; and may not see you - especially if you are on a kayak, and if the sun is behind you. If a boat is approaching - assume they can't see you and move out of the way if possible, or wave your paddle. You have a whistle on your life jacket, use it if necessary. Stay out of boat channels, if you need to cross, look both ways and cross quickly.

BEFORE YOU GO

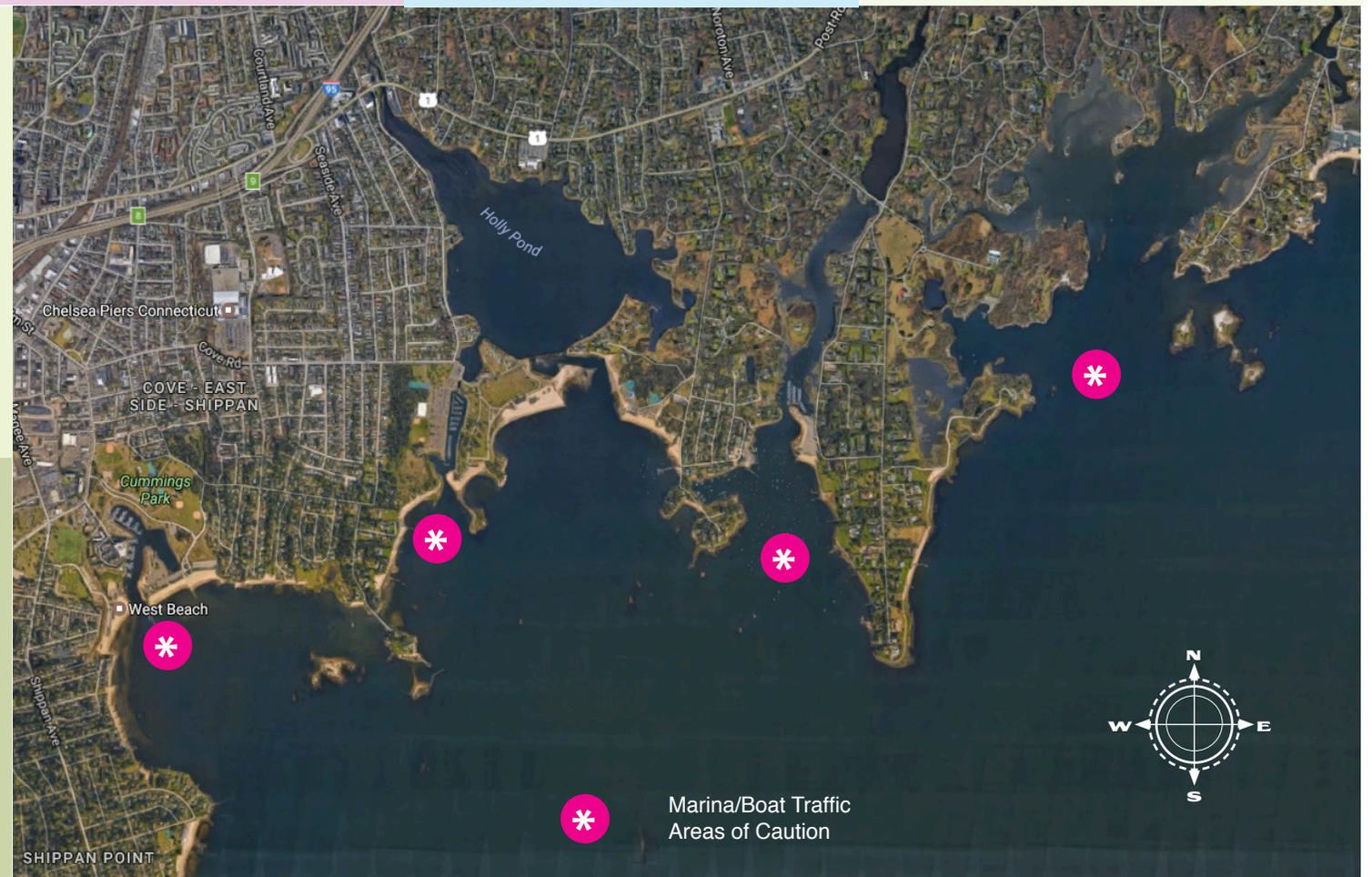
- **HYDRATE!** Take something to drink – we recommend a sip every 15 mins to stay hydrated. Electrolyte drinks are best – you retain them longer.
- **Sunscreen:** pre-apply it, and wash your hands so they don't slip on the paddle
- **Sunglasses:** the sun reflecting off the water can have a blinding effect
- **Sunglass Keeper:** so you don't lose your sunglasses, should you end 'up in the drink'
- **Hat:** helps deflect the sun
- **Footwear:** #1 accident while paddling (other than the occasional blister from gripping the paddle too hard) are cuts from not protecting your feet, and getting off the board on rocky shorelines and beaches. The shells are sharp!
- **Phone:** keep track of the time, and have a way to reach us if you need to – but turn it off unless you need it! Enjoy the tranquility of being on the water. Put it in a dry bag. We suggest programming *emergency numbers into your phone.

FALLING OFF YOUR BOAT

No worries, it's easy to get back on, and if you can't - just try to hold onto it and swim to shore. Your lifejacket will keep you afloat.

Getting back in kayak or on SUP:

1. While in the water, lean across to grab the opposite side, and while kicking hard, pull/propel yourself across the vessel, then slide on (board) or roll your bottom into the seat (kayak). Alternatively, climb on from the rear – at the stern of the vessel use your body weight to push it down, and shimmy up.
2. If you have a buddy, position them on the opposite side of the vessel to where you are. Have them reach across, grab the shoulder straps of your lifejacket and pull you across. Holding onto your board/boat they can keep it stable until you are settled.



HAZARDS

- The number one hazard is boat traffic* - keep out of their way and stay alert.
- The second is getting stuck in the mud - whatever you do, do not get off your vessel. The mud is like quicksand, and full of sharp shells. Call us, and we will guide you as to a course of action.
- Don't lose your boat/board! When you get off at a beach, pull your vessel up past the high tide line, so that if the tide goes out it doesn't take your mode of transport with it!

ISLANDS & BEACHES

- Do not get off on beaches that have a private residence on them (unless it's an emergency)
- You may only explore the interior of Vincent Island, not the Fish Islands.
- Pull your vessels up past the high tide line.
- Watch where you walk - sharp shells, nesting birds.