



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (2019/07/23)

URL: <https://hokw.jp/canoe-PR>

The Hokkaido Wilds
Atsubetsu-ku, Sapporo City
JAPAN

New Zealand team to document 50 northern Japan canoe and packrafting routes

URL: <https://hokkaidowilds.org/paddling>

Sapporo City, Japan: New Zealand couple Rob and Haidee Thomson have announced a three-year 'expedition' to document over 50 canoe and packrafting routes in Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island. Along with former New Zealand whitewater kayak representative Chris Auld, the team will produce detailed route guides for the established lake and river touring routes to be posted on their popular Hokkaido outdoor website, HokkaidoWilds.org. These routes guides, produced during weekend and vacation trips across the island, will be the first of their kind to be produced in English in Japan.

"Hokkaido is Japan's most wild and rugged island, with a number of pristine rivers and lakes, many perfect for overnight and multi-day canoeing trips," explains HokkaidoWilds.org founder Rob Thomson. "These are no secret to local canoeists, with a number of Japanese guidebooks published in the 1990's. We're calling this project an expedition, but we have day jobs. So really, it'll be three years of weekend and vacation micro-adventuring, making the most of the time we have off. We've already published over 100 ski, cycle, and hike routes, so we're excited to add canoeing and packrafting routes to the site."

Hokkaido Wilds canoe touring database features:

- GPX and KML route files for GPS navigation.
- Printable PDF topographical maps and official topo map references.
- Live river water level information including webcams.
- Put in locations and public transport information.
- Location-based search (find routes near you).
- Route guide plus photos.
- Onsen hotspots nearby each route.
- Safety tips and frequently asked questions.

Ainu place names: Along with canoe touring routes, new to HokkaidoWilds.org is the inclusion of Ainu river, lake, and mountain names on route guide posts. HokkaidoWilds.org is committed to acknowledging historical and contemporary Ainu heritage of Hokkaido.

Sponsors: The Hokkaido Wilds canoe route documentation project is supported by the following companies.

- *Guide House Canoa* – Based in Lake Shikotsu Village in Hokkaido, Canadian canoe guiding company Canoa provided two Nova Craft Prospector 16' canoes for the project.
- *MRS Packrafts* – As one of the world's leading packraft manufacturers, MRS provided Hokkaido Wilds with their two-person Barracuda R2 Pro packraft.
- *Day Two NZ* – Based in Rotorua, New Zealand, Day Two has provided discounted gear.

About Hokkaido Wilds: [The Hokkaido Wilds](https://hokkaidowilds.org) is a non-profit website that exists to inspire people to explore and enjoy Hokkaido's extraordinary outdoors by ski, bicycle, foot, and canoe in an informed and responsible way. The site currently boasts over 100 ski touring, cycle touring, and



hiking routes, all accessible for free.

100% of revenue earned on the site through guide referrals and links goes to a fund to support local Hokkaido volunteer groups committed to sustainable access to the Hokkaido outdoors (incorporated non-profit status planned for early 2020).

Hokkaido Wilds founder Rob Thomson is no stranger to adventure travel and expeditions. He previously cycled from Japan to Switzerland, and still holds the Guinness World Record for the Longest Journey by Skateboard (12,159km). He has lived in Japan for 12 years (8 in Hokkaido), and works as an assistant professor of media and communications at Hokusei Gakuen University in Sapporo City. Chris Auld has completed a number of multi-day whitewater expeditions in North America and New Zealand. HokkaidoWilds.org visuals were designed by award-winning Polish graphic designer Dominika Gan.

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