

2003 Inflatable Canoe Test Results

The **AIRE Traveler** has an attractive price and looks great on the showroom floor, but it did not come close to delivering what the salesman promised-ability to transport heavy loads of, say, a moose. While I have always been impressed by AIRE's quality manufacturing, I was so leery of this boat's load carrying capacity that I decided to test it out near town before depending on it while moose hunting. I'm glad I did, since the Traveler offered a deep draft of nearly half the tube diameter with only 500 lbs. aboard. Anything above the tubes that hung over the top edge dipped into the water, which I found to be problematic and unsafe. I decided that with a load of even half a moose, the Traveler would be an inadequate float hunting watercraft. I chose not to carry this boat afield for hunting trials, based solely on my personal observations. However, light loads would allow this watercraft to shine brightly.

The **Grabner** is a watercraft that I tested alongside the SOAR 16-fter two years ago. I felt no need to revisit the woes encountered with this boat. While I consider this canoe to be an ideal watercraft for big water, its restrictive capacity and poor maneuverability in windy conditions or meandering rivers spotlights its greatest flaws. However, if hunters are looking for a classy boat that is fit for whitewater and light loads, the Grabner is fully capable.

I found that I like the weight capacity of the **Incept** but disliked its maneuverability when heavily loaded. It's a beefy canoe and is worthy of continued observation and use under a variety of hunting scenarios. Overall, I was impressed by the value of this boat and its performance. However, I felt that I sacrificed overall performance with maneuverability and weight carrying capacity when compared to the Pro Pioneer. It became evident that the Incept canoe performed well to within about 75% of its manufacturer recommended weight capacity. Thus, a load of about 700 lbs. is the maximum capacity that I felt controllable and therefore safely maneuverable. While it boasts an 1100 lb. capacity, I'm confident that this boat would not be safe to operate in the places and rivers I hunt in Alaska, except within comfortably familiar river corridors.