

Sandfly Island Circumnavigation Information Sheet

Description: This is a relatively short paddle across Chokoloskee Bay to Sandfly Island. On your right (north) side you'll see a dock and landing that provides access to a one mile hiking trail on the island. The island was formed by Calusa shell midden over 2,000 years ago and later occupied by settlers in the early 1900's. Early remnants of civilization are few and the island settlement has become overgrown, returning to its more natural state. Continuing down Sandfly Pass, hang a right at the end of Sandfly Island and follow the mangrove creek north northwest, then north northeast back to Chokoloskee Bay and across to the Visitors Center.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Time: 5.7 Miles/3 Hours without hiking the trail.

Launch Site: Everglades National Park Visitors Center in Flamingo

Special Considerations: Crossing Chokoloskee Bay requires open water paddling, and the Bay can be quite windy at times. Tidal currents in the pass can be strong. Best paddled near the change of tides. There is a shore landing area on Sandfly if you intend to hike the Trail. Map, compass and GPS recommended.

Skill Level Definitions

Beginner: New to paddling and may need tips and or instructions about paddling strokes, safety procedures, and entering/exiting kayaks. Comfortable on short trips of 1 to 3 miles on protected waters, when wind does not exceed 5 mph.

Novice: Paddlers acquainted with basic paddle strokes and can manage kayak handling independently in winds not exceeding 10 mph on protected waters. Comfortable on trips up to 6 miles.

Intermediate: Paddlers with experience in basic strokes and some experience on different venues, including some open water. Comfortable on trip distances of 6 to 10 miles, winds not exceeding 15 mph.

Advanced: Seasoned paddlers who possess skills and experience to paddle all venues and conditions. Experienced in self-rescues. Should be comfortable paddling more than 10 miles in a day.

NOTE: Great care has been taken to ensure this guides accuracy, but weather, tides, and water conditions can change rapidly and create hazardous conditions. These maps are for visual reference only, please consult NOAA Charts for navigation. Paddlers should have all proper safety equipment and check conditions before departure. All paddlers should always wear PFDs while on the water, and leave a float plan. There are inherent dangers in any paddle sport. There are special hazards along the Florida coast due to shifting tides, changing wind and weather, shallow waters, and treacherous bottoms with soft mud, rocks, and oyster bars. It is up to each paddler to be aware of these dangers, to accept and be prepared for the risks involved, and to be certain they have the skills to safely paddle in these conditions.