

## S15 Day Paddles - Lower Keys

## Howe Key Paddle #2 Information Sheet

**Description:** Watch for big sharks and big barracuda on the east side of Howe Key. Also, watch for Key Deer on the shoreline of Big Pine Key and Howe Key. Water clarity is generally excellent. The fun part is the tiny mangrove tunnels and ponds that connect and lead to the lagoons. The entire trip is along wilderness mangrove shoreline after leaving Big Pine Key. As you are driving to the launch area watch for the endangered miniature Key deer.

**Skill Level:** Intermediate

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 8.3 Miles/4 Hours

**Launch Site:** Gulf Blvd Paddle Launch

**Special Considerations:** Medium to high tides required to access the lagoons. Spray skirts recommended. Not recommended on windy days. A good map, compass and GPS recommended. Limited roadside parking at launch site.

### 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.