

S15LK Day Paddles - Lower Keys

Johnston Key Paddle Information Sheet

Description: Johnston Key is a part of the Great White Heron NWR and a popular nesting spot for seabirds. The creek on the way out is a good place to spot lettuce leaf slugs, which are pinky size mollusks that have the ability to consume jellyfish. On the way back from Johnston Key, your return is on the opposite side of Dreguez Key.

Skill Level: Advanced

Distance/Approximate Time: 13.3 Miles/6.5 Hours

Launch Site: Sugarloaf Key - Sugarloaf Marina Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: Strong tidal currents in the creeks and channels. Heavy powerboat traffic, in the channel, especially on weekends. Open water paddling. Launch fee at the Marina.

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.