

S15LK Day Paddles - Lower Keys

No Name Key to Johnson Key Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This launch site used to be the ferry landing during the time that the railroad was still in operation. Cars would board the ferry at Lower Matecumbe Key in Islamorada for the 40-mile ride to No Name Key. After roads were added to the Middle Keys, the ferry ran from Knight's Key to No Name. The ruins of the ferry landing can be seen on the north side of the ramp. You will be paddling into the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge and to the edge of the Gulf of Mexico. True backcountry wilderness! If you decide to extend this trip to include Horseshoe Key, be mindful that it is protected as a bird rookery so you must maintain a 300-foot buffer around the island.

Skill Level: Advanced

Distance/Approximate Time: 11.3 Miles/5.5 Hours

Launch Site: No Name Key - State Road 4A Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: This is a long paddle involving open water so sea kayaks are recommended or at minimum, 14-foot sit on tops with rudder are suggested. Monitor the weather since conditions can change rapidly. If winds come up or skies darken, you may want to save paddling out to the Johnson Keys for another day.

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.