

## S15LK Day Paddles - Lower Keys

## Saddlehill Key Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** Exploring the three islands off Geiger Key is a lot of fun – there is a good place to snorkel some large coral heads offshore of Pelican Key and a swim hole on the north end of Bird Key. Look for a small creek that parallels the north shore of Saddlehill Key for a short while.

**Skill Level:** Novice/Intermediate

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 4.7 Miles/2.5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Geiger Key Paddle Launch

**Special Considerations:** Be aware of boats leaving and arriving to Geiger Key Marina, some driving at top speed. There is a bar and grill there to visit after your paddle with cold beer and often live music. The Naval Air Station on Boca Chica Key is home to top gun pilots that may be out training while you are paddling. They are noisy but cool to see!

### 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.