

## S15 Day Paddles - Middle Keys

### Long Key Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** This is a long, mostly protected paddle along the southern shoreline of Long Key Bight and into a mangrove lagoon. Watch for small sharks, rays and barracuda and lots of upside down jellyfish, (Cassiopeia) in the Bight. Water clarity is usually good to excellent. Most of the trip is wilderness and there are some nice small remote sandy beaches to explore along the south side of Long Key. The turnaround point is a small launch area just past the office at the park entrance.

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 14.8/ 6.5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Long Key State Park Paddle Launch

**Special Considerations:** State Park entrance fee. Caution, during certain tides water can be extremely low, and paddlers should be prepared to deviate from the trip directions if necessary. Medium to high tide only. Good map, compass and GPS recommended for entry into the lagoon. The water along the south shore can get quite rough with southerly winds.

#### 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.