

S15 Day Paddles - Upper Keys

Lake Surprise Paddle Information Sheet

Description: Leave from Florida Bay Outfitters in Blackwater Sound. Paddle northeast along the shoreline and enter Lake Surprise via a small channel. Circle Lake Surprise passing under the new US 1 bridge and return via the way you came. Keep your eye open for a manatee or the endangered crocodile in Lake Surprise, and large barracuda and tarpon at the edges of the mangroves in the northern end of Lake Surprise. This trip is along residential beach houses and along a mangrove lined shore. There are no good places to get out of your boat. Water clarity is decent to poor, depending on prevailing winds.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 8.8 Miles 3 Hours

Launch Site: Florida Bay Outfitters Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: Spray skirt, GPS, a good map and compass recommended. If leaving your car at Florida Bay Outfitters, let them know your paddling intentions and planned time of return.

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.