

## S15UK Day Paddles - Upper Keys

## Pennekamp Coral Reef SP Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** Pennekamp State Park is the most visited tourist attraction in Key Largo. There is a concession with a huge fleet of kayaks and paddleboards. It can be a busy place on the water especially on weekends, holidays and in the Christmas to Easter season. There are multiple mangrove creeks and the farther you get away from the rental operation, the less people there will be. If you bring your own kayak, the rangers will direct you to the kayak launch area over the small wooden bridge. Besides other paddlecraft, look out for the departing glass bottom boat and dive and snorkel boats using the main channel.

**Skill Level:** Novice

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 5.6 Miles/3 Hours

**Launch Site:** Key Largo - John Pennekamp Coral Reef SP Ramp

**Special Considerations:** When launching at the state park, you will have to pay the entrance fee and deal with the many visitors at one of the busiest state parks in the state. The launch site provided is nice and the benefits of paying the park fee are bathrooms, a food concession, and other amenities like a visitors center and hiking trails.

### 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.