

## S16 Day Paddles and Overnight Camping Trips – Biscayne Bay

### Arsenicker Keys Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** This is a long open water paddle out to a cluster of four mangrove islands that make up the Arsenicker Keys. The paddle is mainly offshore from the Turkey Point Nuclear Generating Station and its associated cooling canals. The water is generally clear except after periods of high winds when the bay gets churned up. Dolphins and fish are a common sight, as well as plenty of shorebirds around the keys. "Arsenicker", or "Arnsicker", is a corruption of "Marsh sneaker", a name used by Bahamians for the Great Blue Heron.

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 15.4 Miles/6.5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Biscayne National Park -Dante Fascell Visitor Center Paddle Launch

**Special Considerations:** Keep away from the west shoreline, as it is part of the off limits Turkey Point Nuclear Generating Station and is closely monitored. There are no fees to enter the Visitors Center. Biscayne Bay is a large body of water, and although fairly shallow, there can be a lot of fetch, and it can get quite rough on windy days. Winds are generally lighter in the mornings, and tend to pick up in the afternoons, except when cold fronts come through in the cooler months. Always check the local weather reports before departure.

#### 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.