

## S22 Day Paddles - Upper ICW

### Marsh Bay Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** This paddle follows along the northern impoundment of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, and includes a short shoreline area of marsh in Marsh Bay that does not include impoundment. The refuge traces its beginnings to the development of the nation's Space Program. In 1962, NASA acquired 140,000 acres of land, water, and marshes adjacent to Cape Canaveral to establish the John F. Kennedy Space Center. NASA built a launch complex and other space-related facilities, but development of most of the area was not necessary. In 1963 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service signed an agreement to establish the refuge and in 1975 a second agreement established Canaveral National Seashore. Today, the Department of Interior manages most of the unused portions of the Kennedy Space Center as a National Wildlife Refuge and National Seashore. This is a bird lovers paradise.

**Skill Level:** Intermediate/Advanced

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 10.2 Miles/4.5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge - Dummit Cove Paddle Launch

**Special Considerations:** The bay can get quite rough on windy days, especially when the wind is northwesterly.

#### 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.