

S15UK Day Paddles - Upper Keys

ENP - Upper Nest Key Camp Trip Information Sheet

Description: This is one of the few legal campsites in the Florida Bay section of Everglades National Park. It has beach camping for up to 24 campers but the beaches are very narrow and seem to be shrinking. There are spots on the west facing side of the island where the portajohn is located but the north facing side (just around the point from the toilets) is nicer. The water is shallow and clear, making it nice for swimming. Things you may see are dolphins, sharks, bald eagles, and diamond-backed terrapins. Please pack out your garbage. Leaving it by the toilets does not mean it will be picked up anytime soon and may end up in the water.

Skill Level: Intermediate /Advanced

Distance/Approximate Time: 8.5 Miles each way/4 Hours each way

Launch Site: Key Largo - Florida Bay Outfitters Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: Florida Bay Outfitters allows overnight parking even for those not renting kayaks from them. Please be courteous and go inside the shop to leave your name, phone number and license plate info. If arriving before or after store hours, call them at 305-451-3018. For camping reservations, call the Flamingo Ranger Station at 941-695-2945. Starting in January 2019, fees are also mandatory for day users. Go online to purchase a park pass good for up to 7 days. On weekends and holidays, North Nest Key is a hangout for locals from Key Largo in their powerboats but it is mostly families and they will all leave at or before sunset.

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.