

## S8 Day Paddles - ICW

### Egmont Key NWR Circumnavigation Information Sheet

**Description:** Egmont Key NWR was formed in 1974 to protect the island from development. The current Egmont Key Light dates from 1858. It is the oldest structure in the Tampa Bay area still used for its original purpose. This is a great island to stop and visit the remains of Fort Dade. It is also a great place for wildlife photography, snorkeling, shell collecting, fishing, and for birding. The southern third of the island is designated as bird sanctuary.

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 8.3 Hours/5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Fort Desoto Park Beach Paddle Launch

**Special Considerations:** Beach launch. This is an extremely dangerous open water crossing because of the large ocean going ship channel, strong tides, deep water and large fetch which can contribute to big waves. Only very advanced paddlers, with very good rescue skills, should attempt this. Egmont Key is usually very busy during the summer months, especially on weekends.

#### 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.