

## S23 Day Paddles - St Johns River

### Hontoon Island Circumnavigation Information Sheet

**Description:** The paddle around the island is 11 miles filled with birds and wildlife, past ancient cypress and oak trees. Circumnavigating Hontoon Island in a canoe or kayak is a perfect day's paddle. You can bring your own or rent them at Hontoon Island SP. The kayak route around the island includes paddling right past Blue Spring where you can stop for a break. There are maps of the route at the park and the Hontoon SP rangers usually suggest you start counter-clockwise around the Island. This takes you first along the scenic Hontoon Dead River. It is anything but dead: It is full of wildlife and lined with a thick forest. What its name denotes is that it ends in a dead end, but many miles away. It probably was an earlier route of the St. Johns River. Return is on the St Johns River.

**Skill Level:** Intermediate/Advanced

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 11Miles/5.5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Hontoon Island State Park Paddle Launch

**Special Considerations:** Be mindful of powerboat traffic on the St Johns River return.

#### 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.