

## S15UK Day Paddles - Upper Keys

## Shell Key Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** Shell Key is a preserve located within the Lignumvitae Key Aquatic Preserve. Once out of the channels, the bottom on the way to Shell Key is full of finger coral. There is an opening to a lagoon inside the island on the northwestern side but it can be hard to find. The lagoon is a great protected place to explore, especially on a breezy day.

**Skill Level:** Intermediate

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 6 Miles/3 Hours

**Launch Site:** Upper Matecumbe Key - Teatable Key Bridge Paddle Launch

**Special Considerations:** If you do find the entrance to the interior of the island, tie something to the creek entrance so you can find the exit. Be sure to remove any markers before leaving the area. Heavy powerboat traffic in the channels. Popular fishing area.

### 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.