

## S9 Day Paddles - Tampa Bay

### South Cockroach Bay Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** Cockroach Bay Preserve State Park is a series of barrier islands, collectively more than 617 acres in southeast Tampa Bay in Hillsborough County. The islands are located in the mouth of the Little Manatee River and extend southward along the shore of Tampa Bay. The state park serves to protect water quality, preserve wildlife habitat and provide nature-based recreation. The islands are surrounded by the 4,800-acre Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve. The bay is considered the least disturbed part of Tampa Bay which makes it popular for canoeing, kayaking, fishing and a premier spot for nature observation. Horseshoe crabs were once so abundant here that early Spanish explorers called them cockroaches, believing them to be seagoing cousins of the insects. This paddle explores the southern area of the Preserve and is more protected than the northern paddle.

**Skill Level:** Intermediate

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 7 Miles/4 Hours

**Launch Site:** Cockroach Bay Rd Paddle Launch

**Special Considerations:** A good map, compass and GPS are recommended. This area is tide sensitive, so plan your trip around medium to high tides. This area is tide sensitive. Paddling on medium to high tide recommended.

#### 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.