

Ani Smith Becomes First Person to Complete Roundtrip Swim Around American Shoal Lighthouse in the Florida Keys

Historic 14.4-mile swim completed in 90-degree water on June 22 in 7 hours and 36 minutes

MARTIN COUNTY, FL, UNITED STATES, July 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On June 22, Ani Smith became the first known human to complete a roundtrip open-water swim from shore to and

around the historic American Shoal Lighthouse in the Florida Keys, covering 14.4 miles in 7 hours and 36 minutes.

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The swim was a goal I dreamed about every day for a year. I wanted to pioneer a route that would bring awareness to the need to preserve Florida's lighthouses and the maritime history they represent.”

Ani Smith

The landmark swim began at Sammy Creek Landing at 8:06 AM and followed a route from shore out to American Shoal Lighthouse, around the lighthouse, and back to shore, finishing at Sammy Creek Landing at 3:42 PM.

The achievement was especially challenging because of the extreme water temperature. During the swim, water temperatures reached approximately 90 degrees, creating intense physical demands over the more than seven-and-

a-half-hour effort.

"The swim was a goal I dreamed about every day for a year. I wanted to pioneer a route that would bring awareness to the need to preserve Florida's lighthouses and the maritime history they represent. The challenges along the way, especially the extreme heat, made the success of the swim that much sweeter," said Ani Smith. "I am so grateful to my crew and all the support I have received along the way. I wouldn't have made it around the lighthouse without everyone. Just keep swimming for the light. Whatever your light may be."

American Shoal Lighthouse, located off the Lower Florida Keys, is one of the region's most recognizable offshore landmarks. Completing a roundtrip swim from shore, around the lighthouse, and back required not only endurance, but also careful planning, navigation, safety support, and the ability to manage heat, currents, marine conditions, and fatigue.

Ani Smith was supported by a dedicated crew that included Amy (official observer), Bill (captain), and Debbie (feeder). The crew provided navigation, safety monitoring, hydration, nutrition, pacing support, and encouragement throughout the swim.

"This accomplishment would not have been possible without my crew," said Ani Smith. "I am so grateful to Amy, Bill, and Debbie — I wouldn't have made it around the lighthouse without them."

The June 22 swim adds to Ani Smith's record of competitive and open-water swimming accomplishments. She previously won her age group at the Swim Around Key West.

A swimmer from Martin County, Florida, Ani Smith trained for the American Shoal Lighthouse swim over nine months. Her preparation included swimming up to 20-plus miles per week and weightlifting throughout her training period.

The swim was observed and documented by official observer Amy, with supporting documentation including GPS tracking, photographs, video, and a crew log.

Ani Smith hopes the swim will inspire others to support the preservation of Florida's historic lighthouses and to pursue their own bold adventures in the open water.

"This was one of the hardest things I have ever done," said Ani Smith. "But it shows that with heart, preparation, and the right crew, you can pioneer something no one has ever done before — and do it for a cause worth swimming for."

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Ani Smith on her return lap

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