

# Merritt Island

## National Wildlife Refuge

### Waterfowl Hunting Regulations 2017-2018

#### Welcome to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR/ Refuge) was established in 1963 as an overlay of the John F. Kennedy Space Center (KSC). Some areas of the Refuge can be closed by NASA for safety or security purposes. Individuals found inside NASA's "normal" or "expanded" restricted areas are subject to arrest. Merritt Island NWR and KSC maintain the right to close any portion of the refuge for any length of time. In that case, we will not refund or reissue any permits. The tremendous variety of habitats found on the Refuge and its location on the Atlantic Flyway makes the Refuge an important wintering area for migratory birds. Common species include lesser scaup, teal, wigeon, and coots.

Waterfowl hunting is permitted on 36,000 acres of the Refuge. The remainder of the Refuge is closed to hunting to protect non-game birds and endangered species and to permit other recreational activities. The waters of the Banana River are closed to hunting at all times. Concentrations of waterfowl occur in the open waters of Mosquito Lagoon and in the brackish and fresh water impoundments during the fall and winter. Please see map on back for details and color maps are available at [www.fws.gov/refuge/Merritt\\_Island](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Merritt_Island).

#### Waterfowl-Specific Hunting Regulations

Waterfowl hunting on the Refuge is in accordance with State and Federal Migratory Bird Regulations. Hunters should consult these regulations before going afield.

Listed below are Refuge-specific regulations that pertain to Merritt Island NWR for waterfowl hunting. These regulations may be modified annually or as habitat, populations, or other conditions change. Violation of regulations may result in the loss of hunting privileges. We allow hunting of ducks, mergansers, and coots in designated areas of the Refuge subject to the following conditions:

#### License and Permits

- Hunters must carry a valid State-issued Merritt Island NWR 'Waterfowl Quota Permit', which can be purchased through the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) **while hunting in areas 1 or 4 from the beginning of the regular waterfowl season through January.** The Quota Hunt Permit is a limited entry/quota permit, area-specific, and nontransferable.
- Guest hunters must remain within 30 yards of the hunter who possess the valid State-issued Merritt Island Waterfowl Quota Permit (purchased from FWC) while hunting in areas 1 or 4 during regular waterfowl season.
- We require an adult, age 18 or older, to supervise hunters age 15 and younger. The adult must remain within sight and normal voice contact of the youth hunter at all times. Three total guests are allowed per permit.
- Hunters must possess and carry a current, signed Refuge brochure permit.

- Hunters must have on their person all applicable Florida hunting licenses and permits and must comply with State requirements for hunter-education courses.

#### Equipment

- Each hunter shall only possess 25 shells during one hunt day which includes both vehicles and boats.
- Only steel shot or other approved non-toxic shot is allowed. Possession of lead or other toxic shot is prohibited.
- Drones and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) are NOT allowed on the Refuge.
- We prohibit construction of permanent blinds or digging into dikes.

#### Scouting

- Boats must remain within the perimeter impoundment ditch and may not be in the interior while scouting.
- Hunters may not possess hunting equipment while scouting such as guns, ammo, decoys, etc.
- Hunters must have possession of all required permits to scout areas 1 and 4.

#### Harvest

- The use of trained dogs to retrieve is encouraged. However, dogs must remain under owner's control at all times.
- Hunters must report all hunting activities at one of the two check stations, including both successful

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge  
P.O. Box 2683  
Titusville, FL 32781  
[http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Merritt\\_Island](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Merritt_Island)  
321/861 0669 Visitor Center

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
1 800/344 WILD

August 2017

#### Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Waterfowl Hunt Permit 2017

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(I have read and understand all Refuge hunting regulations.)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (This permit is only valid when signed.)

In case of emergency call 321/867 7911



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

and non-successful hunts, prior to leaving the Refuge and no later than 1 pm.

- Legal shooting hours are ½ hour before legal sunrise until 12 noon. All waterfowl hunters must remove all equipment and must be off the Refuge by 1 pm daily. Permanent blinds are prohibited.
- Hunters may enter the Refuge no earlier than 4 am for the purpose of waterfowl hunting.
- We allow hunting in four designated areas of the Refuge as delineated in the Refuge hunting regulations map.
- Hunters must launch from within Refuge boundaries to access hunt areas 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- You may use gasoline or diesel motors only inside the impoundment perimeter ditch. Outside the perimeter ditch, vessels must be propelled by paddling, push pole or electric trolling motor.
- The Indian River within the Refuge boundary adjacent to hunt areas 1 and 4 is closed to all hunting. Access to all impoundments in areas 1 and 4 is prohibited from the Indian River.
- Two poll & troll zones are delineated with poles in Mosquito Lagoon (see map). Use of internal combustion engines is prohibited within zones. Outside the designated running lanes, vessels may be propelled by push-poles, paddles, or electric motors only.
- We prohibit accessing a hunt area from Black Point Wildlife Drive, Playalinda Beach Road (Beach Road) and Scrub Ridge Trail. We prohibit launching a boat and leaving vehicles parked for hunting purposes on Black Point Wildlife Drive, Playalinda Beach Road (Beach Road) or Scrub Ridge Trail.
- We prohibit hunting from or shooting within 150 yards from SR 402, SR 406, or any paved road right-of-way. We prohibit hunting from or shooting within 8 yards from any portion of a dike, dirt road, or railroad grade. In addition we prohibit shooting over any dike or any roadway.
- **Biolab Road is a one-way road from north to south to Max Heck Road and a two-way road from Max Heck Road to Playalinda Beach Road.**

*Season: 2017-2018*

- We allow hunting on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, Thanksgiving, and New Year's Day; provided they fall within the State's waterfowl season.

**The last day to waterfowl hunt on the Refuge is January 14th with the exception of the youth hunt; provided this day falls within the State's season and on a Wednesday, Saturday or Sunday.**

Early teal: September 16-24

First Phase: November 18-26

Split NO HUNTING November 27 - December 8

Second Phase: December 9 – January 14

Youth Waterfowl: February 3-4

### **Limited Entry/Quota Permits Regulated by FWC**

To hunt waterfowl in **areas 1 and 4** during the months of **November, December, or January**, you will need to purchase a Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Waterfowl Limited/Quota Permit through the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Recreational Licensing Issuance Services System (RLIS).

- Each permit costs \$27.50 and the permit is non-transferable
- You must be 16 years of age to apply
- Each hunter may purchase up to 3 permits per season
- Each permit allows up to 3 guests
- Preference points do not apply
- Each permit is area specific and for specific date. See map for details.
- You must have a picture ID, a Florida Hunting License, a self-issuing Refuge Permit (signed brochure), a Florida Limited/ Quota Permit, and all appropriate state and federal license (youth must have a signed brochure)
- A Florida Wildlife Management Permit is not required

### **How to Apply**

To apply for a Merritt Island NWR permit online go to [www.MyFWC.com/hunting](http://www.MyFWC.com/hunting), (go “**Apply for Limited Entry/Quota Permit**” then choose “**Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge**”) or complete the application worksheet and present it to a licensed agent or tax collector office. Florida residents applying through the internet must have a valid Florida driver's license or ID card to be considered a resident. Youth, active duty military, resident disabled customers, and residents age 65 or older that do not have an active Florida Driver's license or ID card must apply at a licensed agent or tax collector office to show alternate proof.

### **When to Apply**

<b>Phase I Application:</b>	September 15-25
<b>Claim Deadline:</b>	October 9
<b>Phase II Leftovers:</b>	October 12 until filled

### **What You Need to Know**

- Phase I permits are issued by random drawing
- Remaining permits will be on a first come, first served basis
- To check for availability go to [www.MyFWC.com/hunting](http://www.MyFWC.com/hunting) then go to “Permit Availability”
- Drawing results are typically posted on the FWC website within two weeks after the end of the application period
- If you are successful in the Phase I drawing you may claim your permit online and print from your own printer or claim your permit at a licensed agent or tax collector office
- If lost or stolen you may reprint your permit at no cost from the online website or for \$2.50 from a licensed vendor, or you may download the “FWC Fish/Hunt Florida App” and sync your license to your smart phone
- If you have problems with issuance of your quota permit, please contact FWC at 850/488 3641 (M-F 8 am-5 pm)

### **Waterfowl Management Notes**

Proper water level and adequate food availability are two very important aspects of waterfowl habitat. To ensure continuing high-quality habitat, marsh restoration projects were initiated. The objective is to enhance the salt marsh ecosystem for many different species in coordination with mosquito control operations. Restoring the marsh areas by reconnecting them to the river will allow for greater species diversity in the impoundments. It will also be a part of the overall management of the Indian River Lagoon System in its entirety.

Short-term inconveniences to waterfowl hunters may be realized in some areas. Lower water levels in various areas on a rotational basis will allow plants (waterfowl food) to grow in the otherwise nutrient-poor mud flats. This will help reestablish a food chain and provide better food supplies to increase the quality of habitat (and hunting) on a long-term basis. The Refuge is dependent on rainfall for fresh water. Therefore, if you see anyone tampering with water control structures please call or contact the Refuge. If you have questions about this project, contact the Refuge Headquarters.

## Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Waterfowl Hunt Zones

