

Merritt Island NWR is an overlay of NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center where the world's most advanced technology launched man to the moon, and today, continues space exploration. However, there is another kind of "space" here, one that is set aside for over 500 different species of wildlife and 1000 species of plants. Contained within this 35-mile long barrier island is a rich abundance of plants and animals from both the subtropical and temperate climate zones. The Refuge is strategically located on the Atlantic Flyway, a major bird migration corridor, and it is a key resting stop for many migrating bird species. Merritt Island NWR's habitats support one of the highest numbers of endangered and threatened species found within the refuges of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The unique relationship the Refuge shares with NASA bears testimony that nature and technology can coexist.

- L Pond Road and Shiloh Marsh Road are closed annually from November 1 to February 15.

Black Point Wildlife Drive - 3.5 miles  
Hammock Trails - 1.5 miles  
Manatee Observation Deck - 10.5 miles  
Playalinda Beach - 7 miles  
Scrub Ridge Trail - 6.5 miles  
Pine Flatwoods Trail - 13 miles

Refuge Manager  
Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge  
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Titusville, FL 32781  
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Email: [merrittisland@fws.gov](mailto:merrittisland@fws.gov)  
<http://www.fws.gov/merrittisland>  
**Emergency by cell phone: 321/867 7911**  
Canaveral National Seashore Headquarters: 321/267 1110  
Canaveral National Seashore Closure Information:  
321/867 4077  
Kennedy Space Center Information: 866/737 5235



Visitor Center

Highly recommended for the first-time visitor. The Center is open from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday-Friday, and from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekends. (Center is closed on Sundays from April-October and on all federal holidays). The Center is located on SR 402, 5 miles east of US 1 in Titusville. The Center offers:

- Refuge Maps and Information
- Wildlife and Habitat Displays
- Auditorium for Movies and Programs
- Bookstore/gift shop
- Educational Resources
- 1/4 mile Boardwalk

Refuge Fees

Entrance Fees are charged at Black Point Wildlife Drive and three refuge boat ramps (Bairs Cove, Beacon 42, and Bio Lab). All passes admit pass holder and all passengers in private non-commercial vehicles. Children under the age of 16 are admitted free. Daily fees are collected on an honor system at each site and cash or checks are required, credit cards are not accepted. Canaveral National Seashore Passes are accepted. Visitors carrying a current Federal Duck Stamp, Refuge Annual Pass or American the Beautiful Senior, Annual, or Access Pass are not required to pay the entrance fee but must display their pass. Call the refuge visitor center for details: (321)861 0669.



USFWS, Florida Scrub Jay

Scrub habitat on the refuge supports one of the largest populations of the threatened Florida scrub-jay. The management technique of conducting prescribed fire (controlled burns) is essential for maintaining the Florida scrub jay's natural habitat.

Daily Entrance Fee: \$5.00 per vehicle (includes motorcycles).

Individuals on foot or bicycle: \$1.00 per day

Merritt Island NWR Annual Pass: \$15.00. For an additional \$20.00, this pass can be upgraded to a Canaveral National Seashore's Annual Pass at beach fee booth.

America the Beautiful Access Pass - Free for medically authorized individuals.

America the Beautiful Senior Pass. - \$10.00.

America the Beautiful Annual Pass - \$80.00.

Federal Duck Stamps: \$15.00.

Wildlife Observation and Photography

The main route to view wildlife is Black Point Wildlife Drive. Hiking trails, towers, decks and dike roads marked on the map offer excellent, alternative wildlife viewing, especially in the fall and winter. One of the best ways for viewing wildlife on the Refuge is by canoe or kayak.

Black Point Wildlife Drive

This 7-mile, one-way drive travels through salt and freshwater marshes and is located on SR 406, one mile east of the intersection of SR 402 and SR 406. Pick up an auto tour brochure at the drive's entrance or at the Refuge Visitor Center. A Daily Entrance Fee of \$5.00 is collected on a honor system at the drive's entrance. For details see Refuge Fees. The brochure includes numbered stops describing the natural history and management of the area. Wading birds, shorebirds, raptors, waterfowl, alligators, otters and other wildlife species can be observed. The Wild Bird Trail (1/4 mile round trip) is located at Stop # 4. Located at Stop #9 are: parking lot, restrooms, observation tower, wheel chair accessible platform, and the trail head to Cruickshank Trail (5 mile loop).

Foot Trails

Hiking the Refuge is most pleasant during the fall, winter, and early spring. Seven walking trails are marked on the map.

- Visitor Center Boardwalk - 1/4 mile Loop
- Oak Hammock Trail - 3/4 mile Loop
- Palm Hammock Trail - 2 mile Loop
- Scrub Ridge Trail - 1 mile Loop
- Cruickshank Trail and Tower - 5 mile Loop
- Wild Bird Trail - 1/4 mile Round Trip
- Pine Flatwood Trail - 1 mile Loop

Manatee Observation Deck

Manatees frequent this spot year-round and can be seen more reliably in spring and fall. The deck is located 10.5 miles north of the Visitor Center off SR 3 at Haulover Canal. Bairs Cove boat launch offers another viewing area.



West Indian Manatee and calf

Boat Launches

Motorboats, canoes and kayaks may be used for wildlife observation, fishing and hunting. Boat speed regulations are in effect in several areas for manatee protection. Boat/canoe launching



Shuttle launch at Kennedy Space Center - The Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge is a 140,000 acre overlay of Kennedy Space Center.

is limited to designated launch areas. An entrance fee is charged at Bairs Cove, Beacon 42, and Bio Lab. For details see Refuge Fees.

- Bairs Cove - Haulover Canal
- Beacon 42 - Mosquito Lagoon
- WSEG - Mosquito Lagoon
- Bio Lab - Mosquito Lagoon
- Eddy Creek - Mosquito Lagoon

Beach Access

Canaveral National Seashore/Playalinda Beach offers 24 miles of pristine, undeveloped beach for sunbathing, swimming, wading, surfing, fishing, and hiking. Limited camping and horseback riding are permitted November 1 through April 15 by obtaining a special use permit. There are no designated picnic areas, telephones, food services, beach showers, or drinking water. An entrance fee of \$5.00 per vehicle is charged at the fee station. The Refuge Daily Entrance Pass is valid for entry. See Refuge Fees for details. For current beach information, call 321/867 4077.

Restrooms

Restrooms are located at the Refuge Visitor Center, Stop #9 along Black Point Wildlife Drive and Playalinda Beach.

Wheelchair Accessibility

- Refuge Information Center and Boardwalk (1/4 mile loop)
- Manatee Observation Deck
- Observation Deck at Stop # 9 on Black Point Drive
- Observation Deck at Refuge entrance on SR 406
- Beach Access at Eddy Creek (Parking Lot # 8) at Playalinda Beach

General Refuge Regulations

The Refuge is closed to entry from sunset to sunrise. All use is limited to daylight hours, year-round. Portions of the Refuge may be closed from time to time due to NASA's launch activities.

- Air boats, Jet Skis, Wave Runners, and ATV's are not permitted.

- Carrying, possessing fireworks or explosives is prohibited. Persons possessing firearms on National Wildlife Refuges must comply with all provisions of State and Local laws.

- Feeding, enticing or disturbing alligators, manatees and other wildlife is not permitted.

- Littering and dumping are prohibited. Please take your litter off the Refuge and dispose of it properly.

- Camping, open fires and barbeque grills are not permitted on the Refuge.

- Pets are permitted on the refuge, but must be leashed and under control at all times.

- Horses are not permitted on the Refuge, but are permitted at the North District of Canaveral National Seashore in New Smyrna Beach from November 1 through April 15. Call 386/428 3384, ext. 10 for information and reservations.

- Releasing of any wild or domestic animals onto the Refuge is prohibited.

- Collecting of any animals, plants, artifacts and natural features is prohibited, other than legally taken fish or waterfowl.

- Fishing and crabbing are permitted on the Refuge in accordance with state and Refuge regulations. A Refuge permit is required for both recreational and commercial fishing. Fishing is allowed in the open waters of the Indian River Lagoon, Banana River, Mosquito Lagoon, mosquito control impoundments and interior lakes. Fishing is prohibited on the Kennedy Space Center security area, and along Black Point Wildlife Drive and its adjacent dike roads except for L Pond Road.

- Two pole and troll zones are located in Mosquito Lagoon. Operation of internal combustion engines is not allowed within the zones and vessels drafting more than 12" may not enter. Electric trolling motors and non-motorized power sources such as push poles or paddles are permitted.

- Waterfowl hunting is permitted November through January in designated hunt areas. A Refuge permit and hunter safety certification is required. State, federal and Refuge regulations apply.

- Glass beverage containers are prohibited

- Bicycles are prohibited on all foot trails.



American Alligator on nest

Warmer days through the spring months offer a good opportunity to see alligators basking in the sun or breeding in the waters of the refuge. Colonial nesting birds, such as egrets and herons are busy in the rookeries and neotropical migrants begin moving through the refuge. Manatee population peaks in the waters of the refuge.