



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

Boating and Fishing Regulations

Welcome

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. Alongside NASA and other agencies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service helps conserve space for over 500 different species of wildlife and 1000 species of plants in Central Florida.

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 migratory 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. This unique relationship the refuge shares with NASA bears testimony that nature and technology can coexist.

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge
PO Box 2683
Merritt Island, FL 32781

Phone: 321/861-0667

Email: merrittisland@fws.gov

Web: http://www.fws.gov/refuge/merritt_island

Merritt Island NWR Fishing Permit

Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____

(I have read and understand all Refuge fishing regulations.)

In case of emergency, call 321/867 7911

Sportfishing Regulations (including crabbing, clamming, oystering and shrimping)

You may recreationally fish, crab, clam, oyster and shrimp in the Indian River Lagoon, Mosquito Lagoon, Banana River, mosquito control impoundments and interior freshwater lakes except for the restricted area of the Kennedy Space Center or as noted below. In advance of launches, the normal restricted area is expanded which temporarily closes certain waters that are normally open to sport fishing. If you have questions regarding these temporary closures, you may call the Refuge for more information. Individuals found in NASA's normal or expanded Restricted Area are subject to arrest. All Florida Fishing Regulations apply as well as the following Refuge Specific Regulations:

- You must possess a current signed Refuge Sports Fishing Permit at all times while fishing on the Refuge. The permit is self-issuing and assures you have read and understand Merritt Island NWR's fishing regulations.
- You may fish at night from a boat in the waters of Haulover Canal, Mosquito Lagoon, Indian River Lagoon and Banana River. Bank fishing after dark is not permitted. Impoundments and interior ponds are not open to night fishing.
- You may launch a boat at night from Bairs Cove and Beacon 42. All other Refuge Boat Ramps are closed to night launching.
- You may not crab or fish from Black Point Wildlife Drive or any side road connected to Black Point Wildlife Drive except L Pond Road.
- You may not launch boats, canoes, kayaks, or stand up paddle boards from Black Point Wildlife Drive or any side roads connected to Black Point except L Pond Road.
- Motorized vessels are not permitted in the Banana River within the posted No-Motor Zone. This includes an vessel having an attached or non-attached internal combustion or electric trolling motor capable of use.
- You may not use air thrust boats, hover craft, personal watercraft, or engage in kite surfing, kite boarding, wind surfing, sail boarding or other similar non-wildlife oriented recreational activities in Refuge waters.
- Vessel speeds must not exceed Idle Speed in Bairs Cove and KARS Marina or Slow Speed/Minimum Wake in Haulover Canal. Florida law also regulates boat speeds on other waters of the Refuge.
- You may not harvest or possess horseshoe crabs, frogs, turtles, snakes or other wildlife.
- Commercial fishermen and fishing guides are required to obtain and carry an annual Commercial Special Use Permit. Commercial fishing activities are not allowed inside Refuge impoundments.
- Fishing in the immediate vicinity of the Manatee Viewing Deck, both from the shore or from a boat, is prohibited.
- Camping, fireworks, and open fires are prohibited.

This is a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a network of lands and waters managed for the benefit of wildlife and people.



- Persons possessing, transporting or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuges must comply with all provisions of State and Local laws.
- Pets must remain on a leash and be under control at all times.
- Fish cleaning is not allowed on Refuge Property.
- Littering is prohibited and subject to a fine. We prohibit glass beverage containers.
- Vehicles, boats, equipment and other belongs are subject to inspection by law enforcement.
- To improve fishing and protect grass flats, two Pole & Troll Zones have been established in Mosquito Lagoon (see map). The zones are delineated with markers. Within the zones, internal combustion engines must be shut off (except in posted channels) and vessels drafting more than 12 inches at rest must not enter. Vessels may be propelled by a non-motorized power source such as drifting, push poles, paddles, etc. Electric trolling may be used through the zones. Boats may operate internal combustion engines only in the posted channels within the Pole & Troll Zones.
- The use of internal combustion engines is restricted to the perimeter impoundment ditch at all times, to reduce habitat degradation and damage to the marsh. Vessels may be propelled outside the impoundment perimeter ditches by push poles, paddles or electric motors only. Internal combustion engines must be shut off while inside impoundments past the perimeter ditch.
- Additional information may be obtained by contacting the Refuge Visitor Center. Call 321/861 5601 or visit the refuge website: www.fws.gov/refuge/Merritt_Island

