



Merritt Island Hunt Impoundment Conditions

November 1, 2023

Weather conditions for 2023 were ideal. The Refuge received regular summer rainfall without any major tropical storms or hurricanes. This allowed good conditions for the growth for submerged aquatic vegetation. The lack of any destructive storms meant that we could focus repairs from the previous year's storms. After a long wait and a lot of hauling of material, Peacock's Pocket is fully functional as a managed impoundment again. Lagoon levels were high again this September and October which led to saltwater entering some impoundments. However, all impoundments had a productive season of submerged aquatic vegetation. As of November 1st, conditions are set for an excellent waterfowl season.

The following is a summary of habitat conditions within individual impoundments open to waterfowl hunting. Water levels and salinity for November 2022 are included for comparison.

- Biolab (T-27A) - Current water level = 1.7, salinity 1 ppt, (2.2, 12 ppt 11/2022). Damage from last year's storms were repaired quickly and after a year's worth of regular rainfall the impoundment is in great shape.
- Max Hoeck Creek (T-27B) - Current water level = 1.7, salinity 1 ppt (2.2, 10 ppt 11/2022). This impoundment has been fresh all year and has excellent production of submerged aquatic vegetation.
- Eddy Creek Impoundment (T-38) - Current water level = 1.7, salinity 11 ppt (2.1, 8 ppt 11/2022). Water level and salinity are in our target range. Its position along the beach should bring in some interesting ducks this year.
- East Gator Creek (T-24B) - Current water level = 1.9, salinity 10 ppt (1.7, 10 ppt 11/2022). The impoundment has had favorable conditions all year and should be in good shape for waterfowl season. The access road is now one way with traffic entering from the second (middle) Gator Creek Road.
- Catfish Creek (T-24C) - Current water level = 1.9, salinity 11 ppt (1.8, 20 ppt 11/2022). This was the impoundment to be in last year and conditions look good again this year.
- Peacock's Pocket (T-24D) - Current water level = 1.9, salinity 8 ppt (1.8, 21 ppt 11/2022). The levee was finally completed at the beginning of the wet season. Water levels should be stable through the waterfowl season and conditions look great for a productive year.

- Gator Creek - Current water level = 1.9, salinity 6 ppt (1.7, 5 ppt 11/2022). Conditions have been excellent all summer and into fall. The impoundment is currently full of good quality waterfowl food.
- Shiloh 5 - Current water level = 1.9, salinity 4 ppt (1.8, 8 ppt 11/2022). Conditions have been good all summer and into fall. The impoundment is currently full of good quality waterfowl food.
- Shiloh 3 - Current water level = 1.8, salinity 5 ppt (1.7, 10 ppt 11/2022). Conditions have been good all summer and into fall. The impoundment is currently full of good quality waterfowl food.
- Shiloh 2 - Current water level = 1.9, salinity 5 ppt (1.7, 10 ppt 11/2022). Conditions have been good all summer and into fall. The impoundment is currently full of good quality waterfowl food.
- Shiloh 1 - Current water level = 2.0, salinity 6 ppt (1.9, 10 ppt, 11/2022). Shiloh 1 is currently in good shape.
- M Pond - Current water level = 1.8, salinity 9 ppt (2.0, 5 ppt 11/2022). Water level and salinity has been on target all summer. Waterfowl food production has been good.
- L Pond - Current water level = 1.8, salinity 20 ppt (1.9, 7 ppt 11/2022). Water level and salinity has been on target all summer. Waterfowl food production has been good.