

Merritt Island

National Wildlife Refuge

Waterfowl Hunting Regulations 2018-2019



Welcome to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (MINWR/ 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, pintail, gadwall 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. Concentration of waterfowl occur in the open brackish waters of Mosquito Lagoon and impoundments which are managed for freshwater. Please see map on back for details. There are color maps on our website at: 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 end of State season.** The Quota Hunt Permit is a limited entry/quota permit, area-specific, and nontransferable.

- All hunters must possess and carry a current, signed Refuge brochure permit.
- We prohibit access, launching a boat, or leaving a vehicle parked for hunting purposes on Black Point Wildlife Drive, Playalinda Beach Road (Beach Road), or Scrub Ridge Trail.
- Three total guests are allowed per quota permit and each guest must remain within 30 yards (27.4 meters) of the quota permitted hunter.
- 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.
- Hunters must have on their person all applicable Florida hunting licenses and permits and must comply with State requirements for hunter-education courses.
- Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuges must comply with all provisions of Federal, State, and local law. Persons may only discharge firearms in accordance with Federal regulations.
- Licenses, permits, all hunting equipment and effects such as vehicles and/or other conveyances are subject to inspection by law enforcement officials.

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

P.O. Box 2683

Titusville, FL 32781

http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Merritt_Island

321/861 0669 Visitor Center

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

1 800/344 WILD

August 2018

**Merritt Island
National Wildlife Refuge
Waterfowl Hunt Permit 2018-2019**

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
Federal Wildlife Officer 407-275-4150_7**

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Equipment

- Each hunter may only possess a maximum of 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.
- We prohibit construction of permanent blinds or digging into dikes.
- Drones and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) are NOT allowed on the Refuge.

Scouting

- Boats must remain within the perimeter impoundment ditch and may not be in the interior while scouting.
- Hunters must carry their valid Quota Hunt Permit identifying the permitted hunt area and dates while scouting areas 1 and 4.
- Hunters must be in possession of all required State and Federal licenses, stamps, and permits while scouting.
- Hunters may not possess hunting equipment while scouting such as guns, ammo, decoys, etc.

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 and non-successful hunts, prior to leaving the Refuge and no later than 1 pm.**
- **Biolab Road is a one-way road from north to south to Max Hoeck Road and a two-way road from Max Hoeck Road to Playalinda Beach Road.**
- 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.
- Hunters may enter the Refuge no earlier than 4 am for the purpose of waterfowl hunting.
- We prohibit hunting or shooting within 25 feet (7.6 meters), or shooting from any portion of a dike, dirt road, or railroad grade. In addition we prohibit shooting over any dike or roadway. We prohibit hunting or shooting within 150 yards (135 meters) of all paved roads.
- 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.

- 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 buoys in Mosquito Lagoon (see map). Use of internal combustion engines is prohibited within zones. Outside the designated running lanes, vessels must be propelled by push-poles, paddles, or electric motors only.

Season: 2018-2019

- We allow hunting on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day; provided they fall within the State's waterfowl season.
Wood duck/teal: September 22-26, 2018
Teal only: September 27-30, 2018
First Phase: November 17-25, 2018
Second Phase: December 08, 2018-January 27, 2019
Duck Youth: February 2-3, 2019
Regular season: Quota Hunts Area 1 & 4: November, December, and January
Regular season: Open Hunts Area 2 & 3: November, December, and January

Limited Entry/Quota Permits - Obtained from 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 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 dates. See map for details.

- You must carry 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, (go "**Apply for Limited Entry/Quota Permit**" then "**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. 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

Phase I Applications: September 14-24, 2018

Permit Claim Deadline: October 8, 2018

Phase II Leftovers: October 11, 2018 – until filled or the final hunt date

What You Need to Know

- Phase I permits are issued by random drawing
- Remaining permits will be issued on a first come, first served basis
- To check for availability go to 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 (Monday-Friday 8 am - 5 pm)

