

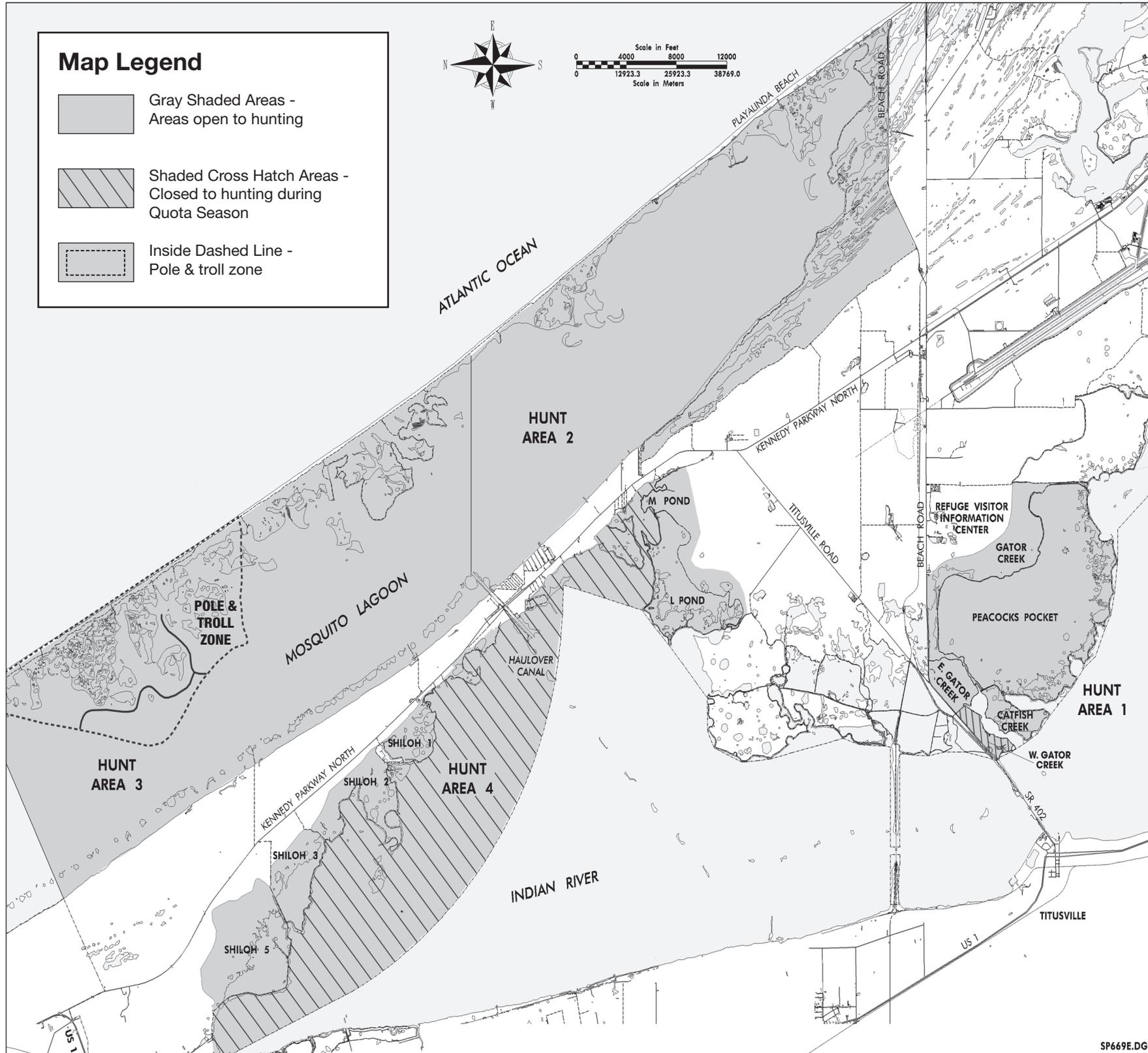
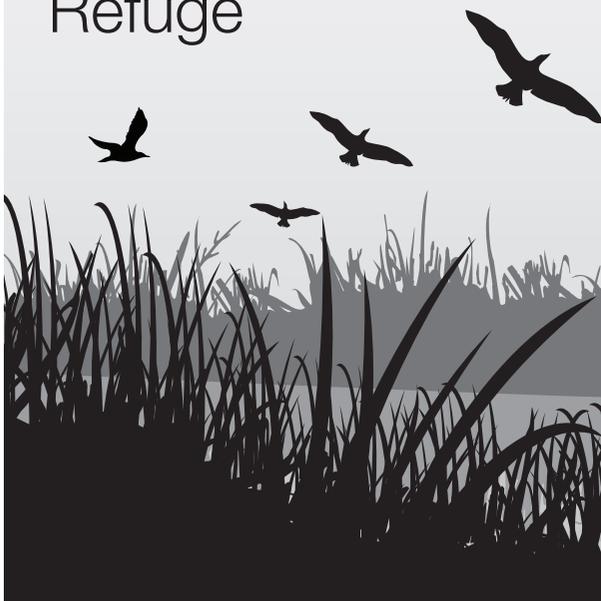
Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge - Waterfowl Hunt Areas

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

2015-2016 Waterfowl Hunt Regulations



Merritt Island
National Wildlife
Refuge



Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 2683
Titusville, Florida 32781
321-861-5601
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Merritt_Island
<http://southeast.fws.gov>



Welcome to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1963 as an overlay of the John F. Kennedy Space Center. The tremendous variety of habitats found on the refuge and its location on the Atlantic flyway makes Merritt Island an important wintering area for migratory birds.

Concentrations of waterfowl occur in the open waters of Mosquito Lagoon and in the brackish and fresh water impoundments during the fall and winter. Common species include scaup, mottled ducks, blue-winged teal, and pintail.

Hunting on Merritt Island

Waterfowl hunting is permitted on 36,000 acres of the refuge's 140,000 acres. The remainder of the refuge is closed to hunting to protect non-game birds and endangered species and to permit other recreational activities to take place. Hunting areas include the open waters of Mosquito Lagoon and most impoundments outside the NASA security areas. The waters of the Banana River are closed to hunting at all times. Some or all areas of the Refuge can be closed by NASA for Safety or Security purposes. When NASA expands their Security perimeter, it affects the use of Hunt Area 1, 2, and the southern portion of 4. The Refuge will post this information on our website. If you have questions, it is advisable to call the Refuge in advance of your visit. Individuals found in NASA's "normal" or "expanded" Restricted Area are subject to arrest. The Refuge has no control over NASA's closures, therefore refunds for quota permits will not be provided.

Quota Permits

If you wish to hunt in Area 1 or 4 during the months of November or December you will need to purchase a Merritt Island Waterfowl Quota Permit. Quota permits are issued through the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission's (FWC) Total Licensing System.

- Each hunter may purchase up to 3 permits.
- Each permit costs \$16.50 and is good for the permit holder and up to 3 guests.
- You must be 16 years of age to apply and the permit is non-transferable.
- Permits which are lost or stolen may not be replaced.
- You must have a picture ID, a Florida Hunting License, a valid Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge Hunt Permit (free from the refuge), and all appropriate state and federal stamps. A Florida Wildlife Management Area Permit is not required.
- Each permit is issued for a specific impoundment and is good for a specific date(s).

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for a quota permit go to www.MyFWC.com/hunting, click on "Limited Entry/Quota Hunts", choose "Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge" and then "Merritt Island Permit Application Worksheet". Complete the worksheet and present it to a license agent, tax collector office, or apply online by logging

Hunting Regulations

Waterfowl hunting on Merritt Island NWR is in accordance with State and Federal Migratory Bird regulations. Hunters should consult these regulations before going afield. Refuge regulations are more restrictive and are listed below.

- **Permits** - You must possess and carry a current signed Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Hunt Permit for the current year at all times while hunting on the Refuge. The free permit, attached to this leaflet, is self-issuing and required by all hunters. In addition, a Quota Hunt Permit is required for all impoundments in Hunt Area 1 and 4 during the months of November and December. You must purchase a Quota Permit which is only valid for a specific impoundment on the date(s) printed on the permit. The quota permit can be used for a single party consisting of the permit holder and up to three guests. **The permit holder must be present.** The guests may occupy separate blinds but must remain within 30 yards of the permit holder. All permits must be kept in the hunter's possession while hunting. Quota Permits are non-transferable (See details below for applying).
- **Season:** The open season for ducks, mergansers, and coots is concurrent with seasons established by Florida (See Hunt Days). No species other than ducks, mergansers, and coots may be taken.
- **Hunt Days:** Hunting is allowed three days each week, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday, and holidays (Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day) within the framework of the State season. Hunting is allowed from one-half hour before sunrise until 12:00 pm. Entry into the Refuge for waterfowl hunting may begin no

into your account at GoOutdoorsFlorida.com and choosing "Apply for Limited Entry/Quota Permit."

Phase I - Random Drawing

WHEN TO APPLY

- **From 10 am (Eastern Time) on September 18 to September 28 (11:59 pm Eastern Time)**

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Permits will be issued by random drawing.
- You are limited to one application and one permit during this phase.
- There is a cost of \$5.00 (non-refundable) for applying.
- To apply submit worksheets by the deadline.
- The results of the random drawing will be posted by **10 am (Eastern Time) on October 2 to October 12 (11:59 pm Eastern Time)** at GoOutdoorsFlorida.com. Log in to your customer account and view your status under "Permit Applications."
- You may pay for your selected permit (\$16.50) starting on October 2 at a license agent, tax collector office or online by logging into your account at GoOutdoorsFlorida.com and clicking the "Claim" link and proceeding with your payments. **Please have an operating printer for online claims so you may print your permit at the time of purchase. The deadline is October 12 at 11:59 pm (Eastern Time).**

earlier than 4:00 am. All hunters must check out at the Refuge Check Station before 1 pm.

- **Hunt Areas:** Hunting for waterfowl is permitted in four areas of the Refuge. The areas open to hunting are delineated on the map on the reverse side. **Hunting is only permitted in the shaded areas. Hunting outside of the impoundments in Area 1 and along Black Point Wildlife Drive is prohibited. The open waters of Hunt Area 4 and West Gator Creek impoundment in Hunt Area 1 are closed during the Quota Hunt season.**
- **Parking:** Hunter parking is allowed on dike roads within the hunt areas or on hunt access routes leading up to the hunt areas. When parking, do not block a barricade or boat ramp. Vehicles blocking entry to these areas may be towed. All vehicle and boat trailers must be pulled off the side to allow other vehicles to pass safely. You may not access hunt areas from Scrub Ridge Trail or Playalinda Beach Road (Hunters may park at Eddy Creek).
- **State Certified Hunter Safety** - is required by all hunters in all areas. Hunters must carry their wallet-sized card as proof of completing the course while hunting. The Refuge honors all state-sponsored hunter safety training courses.
- **Check Station:** Check out at a Refuge Check Station is MANDATORY for both successful and unsuccessful hunters and must be completed before 1 pm.
- **Youth Hunting** - is in accordance with State Law. Youth hunters must remain in sight and normal voice contact with an adult 18 years or older.

Phase II - 1st-come 1st-served

WHEN TO APPLY

- **10 am (Eastern Time) October 16 until permits are sold out.**

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Remaining permits will be issued 1st come, 1st served.
- Each permit cost \$16.50
- To check permits availability, go to GoOutdoorsFlorida.com and choose "Permit Availability."
- If you apply at a license agent or tax collector office and you are awarded a permit, you will receive your permit from the clerk.
- If you apply online during this phase and get a permit, please print your permit right away on your own printer.
- You may receive 1 permit per transaction and are limited to 3 permits for the season (2 if you were successful for the Phase 1 drawing).

If you have problems with the issuance of your quota permit, please contact FWC at (850) 488-3641 (M-F 8 am -5 pm).

- **Steel Shot:** Only steel or other approved nontoxic shot may be used. Possession of lead or other toxic shot is prohibited.
- **Shot Limit:** Hunters may **only possess 25 shells while hunting.** This includes shotgun shells within vehicles.
- **Hunting Blinds:** Hunters may bring portable blinds or construct temporary blinds of natural vegetation. Temporary blinds do not become the builder's property and become available for general use on subsequent days. Construction of permanent blinds, pit blinds and digging into dikes are prohibited activities.
- **Hunting or Shooting** - within 15 feet of any dike is prohibited. You may not shoot within 150 feet of any paved road right of way. You may not shoot over any dike or roadway.
- **Personal Property:** Decoys, boats and other personal property must be removed from the field daily and all hunters must check out at a Refuge Check Station before 1 pm.
- **Dogs:** The use of retrievers is encouraged. Dogs must remain under the owner's control at all times.
- **Camping** - and overnight parking is prohibited (See Hunt Days above for entry time).
- **Manatee Regulations:** Most lagoon waters of the Refuge are regulated for manatee protection. Comply with all manatee protection zones.
- **Professional Hunting Guides** - are required to purchase a Special Use Permit and have it in their possession while guiding.
- **Universal Access:** Special accommodations are available for persons with physical disabilities. Contact the Refuge Headquarters for additional information.

- **Repeat Violations** - of refuge regulations may result in the loss of hunting privileges.

- **Pole & Troll Zone:** To improve fishing and protect grass flats, two Pole & Troll Zones have been established in Mosquito Lagoon (See Map). The zones are delineated with buoys and within the zones use of internal combustion engines is prohibited (except as noted below) and vessels drafting more than 12 inches at rest are not allowed. Vessels may be propelled by a non-motorized power source such as drifting, push poles, paddles, etc. Electric trolling motors are allowed. Boats may operate internal combustion engines only in the posted channels within the Pole & Troll Zones.

To help protect marsh habitat, hunters are requested to limit the use of gasoline motors to the perimeter ditches of the impoundments.



Merritt Island
National Wildlife Refuge
2015-2016 Hunt Permit
for Duck, Merganser, and Coot

Name _____
Print

Address _____
I have read and understand Merritt Island N. W. R.'s hunting regulations.

Signature _____
(This permit valid only when signed.)

In case of emergency call 321-867-7911



Merritt Island
National Wildlife Refuge
2015-2016 Hunt Permit
for Duck, Merganser, and Coot

Name _____
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I have read and understand Merritt Island N. W. R.'s hunting regulations.

Signature _____
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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. If you have questions about this project, contact the Refuge Headquarters. If you see anyone tampering with water control structures please call or contact the refuge.

For further information, write:

Refuge Manager
Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 2683 Titusville, Florida 32781
Phone (321) 861-5601
or visit our website:

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