

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Department of the Interior  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge  
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# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 12, 2016  
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### Refuge Celebrates Endangered Species Day

Endangered Species Day is an opportunity for people of all ages to learn about the importance of protecting endangered species and everyday actions they can take to help protect them. Started in 2006 by the United States Congress, Endangered Species Day is a celebration of the nation's wildlife and wild places. Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge provides habitat for 14 different federally listed threatened and endangered animals. Some species, like the green sea turtle are difficult to see because they are active mainly at night after the Refuge closes. Other species such as the wood stork, Florida scrub jay, or slow moving manatee are easier to catch a glimpse of when visiting. The refuge will be celebrating with events on Friday and Saturday May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

#### Scrub Jay Program at 5:30pm.

Celebrate Endangered Species Day by learning about the unique Florida Scrub Jay. This highly endangered bird is found only in Florida and notably on Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Join wildlife biologist James Lyon and learn about the challenges facing the jay and the scientists that work to conserve it. Meet in the Refuge visitor center auditorium at 5:30PM. Reservations are recommended as space is limited.

#### Discover Nature Tour at 9 am

Join a refuge volunteer for a guided three hour tour. The tour may include the scenic Blackpoint Wildlife drive as well as the manatee observation deck. Look for wildlife including many species which are either currently in decline or once were and are now recovered including: alligators, wood storks, reddish egrets, glossy ibis and manatee while learning about the national wildlife refuge. Space is limited on the shuttle bus so please call 321-861-5601 for reservations. **This program is offered at no charge today in celebration of Endangered Species Day.** Free loaner binoculars and field guides are available.

#### All About Manatees at 12:30 pm.

Learn all about manatees during this half hour presentation at the visitor center auditorium. Find out where and how they live, what they eat and how you can safely observe them. Meet in the Refuge visitor center auditorium at 12:30PM.

#### About The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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