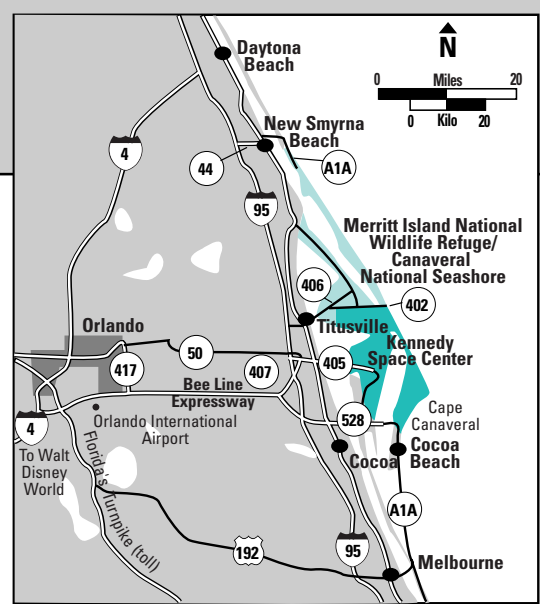
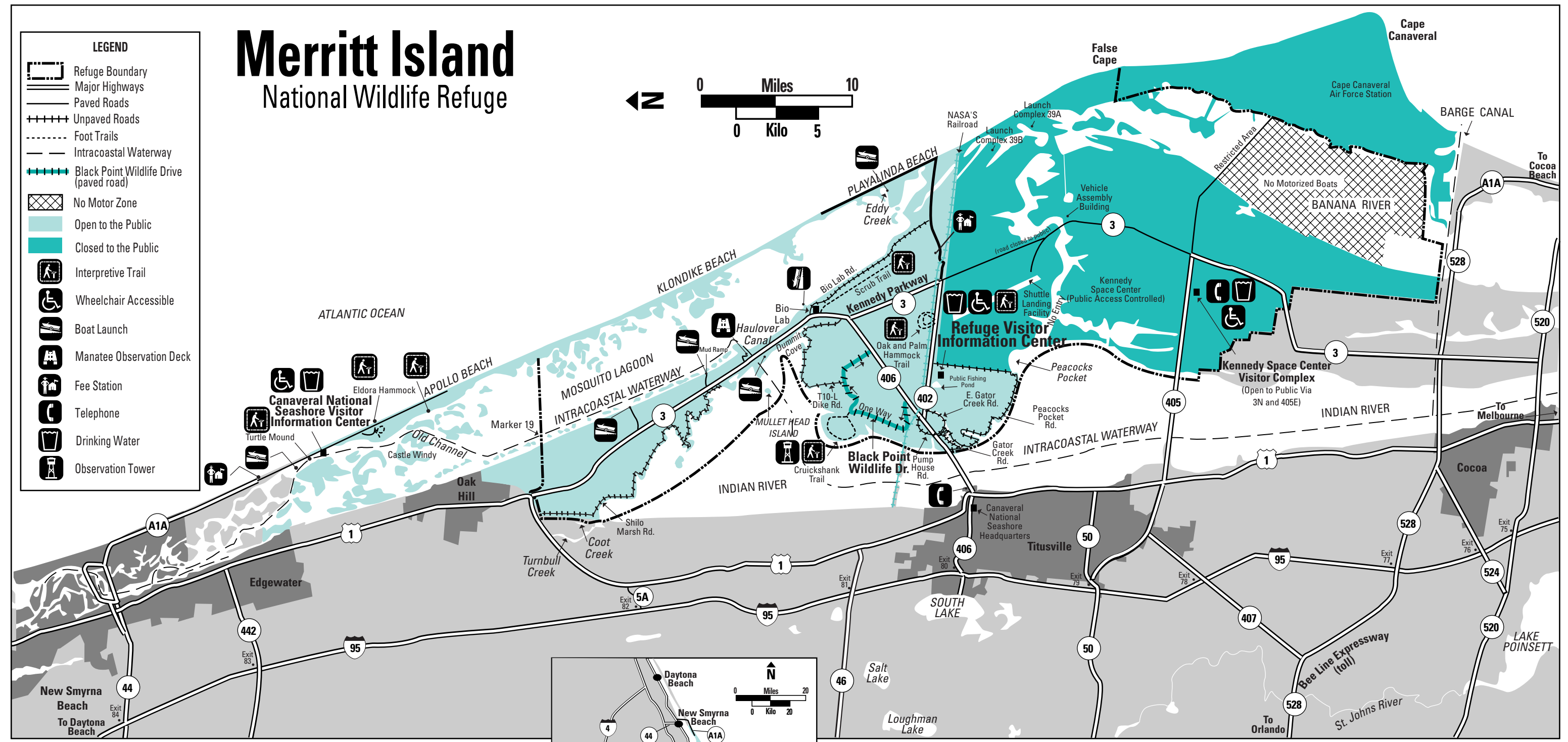


Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

LEGEND

- Refuge Boundary
- Major Highways
- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Foot Trails
- Intracoastal Waterway
- Black Point Wildlife Drive (paved road)
- No Motor Zone
- Open to the Public
- Closed to the Public
- Interpretive Trail
- Wheelchair Accessible
- Boat Launch
- Manatee Observation Deck
- Fee Station
- Telephone
- Drinking Water
- Observation Tower



Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

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. However, there is another kind of "space" here, one that is set aside for over 500 different species of wildlife and 1000 species of plants. Contained within this 35 mile long barrier island is found a rich abundance of plants and animals from both the tropical and temperate climate zones. It is strategically located on the "Atlantic Flyway", a major bird migration corridor, and is a key resting stop for many migrating bird species. Merritt Island remains unsurpassed as a refuge for endangered species. Currently, the refuge manages habitat for 21 federal and state listed threatened and endangered species, more than any other single refuge in the U.S. The unique relationship the refuge shares with NASA bears testimony that nature and technology can peacefully coexist.

For further information, contact:

Refuge Manager
 Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge
 P. O. Box 6504
 Titusville, FL 32782
 Phone: 321/861 0667
 Email: r4rw_fl.mrt.adm
<http://merrittisland.fws.gov>



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

This blue goose, designed by "Ding Darling," has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.



Visitor Center

The Visitor Information Center offers a variety of interesting displays that describe the wildlife and habitats of the refuge and offers educational resources available for sale through the book store. The Center provides an excellent opportunity for the visitor to become acquainted with the refuge before venturing out, and is highly recommended for the first-time visitor. The Center is open from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday-Friday, and from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekends. (Center is closed Sundays from April-October and on federal holidays).

Wildlife Observation and Photography

The main route to view wildlife is Black Point Wildlife Drive. Hiking trails, towers, decks and dike roads marked on the map offer excellent, alternative wildlife viewing, especially in the fall and winter. One of the best ways for viewing wildlife on the refuge is by canoe or kayak.



USFWS

Florida Scrub Jay

With the return of cooler fall temperatures the first major influx of migratory birds occurs, including shorebirds, waterfowl, fall warblers, and bald eagles.

Wildlife Drive

Black Point Wildlife Drive is a 7 mile, one-way, self-guided tour through salt and freshwater marshes. The drive offers several numbered stops which are described in a brochure that can be picked up at the Visitor Center or the entrance to the drive. Wading birds, shorebirds, raptors, waterfowl, alligators, otters, and other species of wildlife can be spotted along the drive. The Cruickshank Trail and Tower are located at stop #8 on the drive, and offers a view of the surrounding marshes.



American Avocets

The cool sunny days of winter ushers in the peak season for birdwatching and provides great opportunities for walking refuge trails. White pelicans, shorebirds, waterfowl, wading birds, and raptors are in peak concentrations.

Foot Trails

Hiking the refuge is most pleasant during the fall, winter, and early spring. Five walking trails are marked on the map. **Oak Hammock Trail** (1/2 mile) and **Palm Hammock Trail** (2 miles) share a common parking lot located 1 mile east of the Visitor Center. **Cruickshank Trail** (5 miles) is located at stop # 8 along Black Point Wildlife Drive. **Scrub Trail** (1 mile) is located off SR 3 north of SR406. For a shorter walk, try the boardwalk trail (1/2 mile) behind the Visitor Center.

Observation Tower

Cruickshank Tower is located at stop # 8 along Black Point Wildlife Drive a short distance from the parking lot.

Manatee Observation Deck

Manatees frequent this spot year round but can be seen more reliably in spring and fall. The deck is located 10.5 miles north of the Visitor Center off SR 3 at Haulover Canal.



Florida Manatee and calf

Boat Launching

Motor boats, canoes, and kayaks may be used for fishing, hunting and recreational uses. Boat/canoe launching is limited to designated launch areas, posted public access routes. Boat speed regulations are in effect in several areas for manatee protection. Only nonmotorized vessels are allowed in the northern portion of the Banana River.

Beach Access

An entrance fee of \$5 per vehicle is charged at the Canaveral National Seashore ranger station. Canaveral National Seashore/Playalinda Beach offers 24 miles of pristine, undeveloped beaches for sunbathing, swimming, wading, surfing, fishing, and hiking. Camping and horseback riding are permitted under special permit only November 1 through April 30. There are no designated picnic areas, telephones, food services, beach showers, or drinking water.

Restrooms

Restrooms are located at the Visitor Center, stop # 8 on Black Point Wildlife Drive and Playalinda Beach.



American Alligator on nest

Warmer days through the spring months offer a good opportunity to see alligators basking in the sun or breeding in the waters of the refuge. Colonial nesting birds, such as egrets and herons are busy in the rookeries and neotropical migrants begin moving through the refuge. Manatee population peaks in the waters of the refuge.

Telephone

There are no public telephones on the refuge. The nearest pay phone is at the fishing pier adjacent to the SR 406 bridge in Titusville.

Refuge Regulations

All recreational use is limited to daylight hours, year-round. Portions of the refuge may be closed from time to time due to NASA's launch activities.



Shuttle launch at Kennedy Space Center

- Air boats, Jet Skis, Wave Runners, and ATVs are not permitted.
- Firearms are prohibited other than for authorized hunting activities. Weapons and fireworks are prohibited.
- Feeding, enticing or disturbing alligators and other wildlife is not permitted.
- Littering is prohibited. Please take your litter off the refuge and dispose of properly.
- Camping and fires are not permitted on the refuge, but is available to scout groups only by permit.
- Pets are permitted but must be on a leash and under control by the owner at all times.
- Horses are not permitted on the refuge but are permitted on Canaveral National Seashore November 1 through April 30 by permit.
- Releasing of any wild or domestic animals is prohibited.
- Collecting of artifacts, natural features, animals and plants is prohibited, other than legally taken fish or waterfowl.
- Fishing and crabbing is permitted on the refuge in accordance with state regulations in the open waters of the Indian and Banana Rivers, Mosquito Lagoon, mosquito control impoundments and interior lakes except for the Kennedy Space Center security areas. A special permit is required for night fishing (permitted by boat only) and commercial fishing.
- Waterfowl hunting is permitted November through January in designated hunt areas. A refuge permit is required and all state, federal and refuge regulations apply.