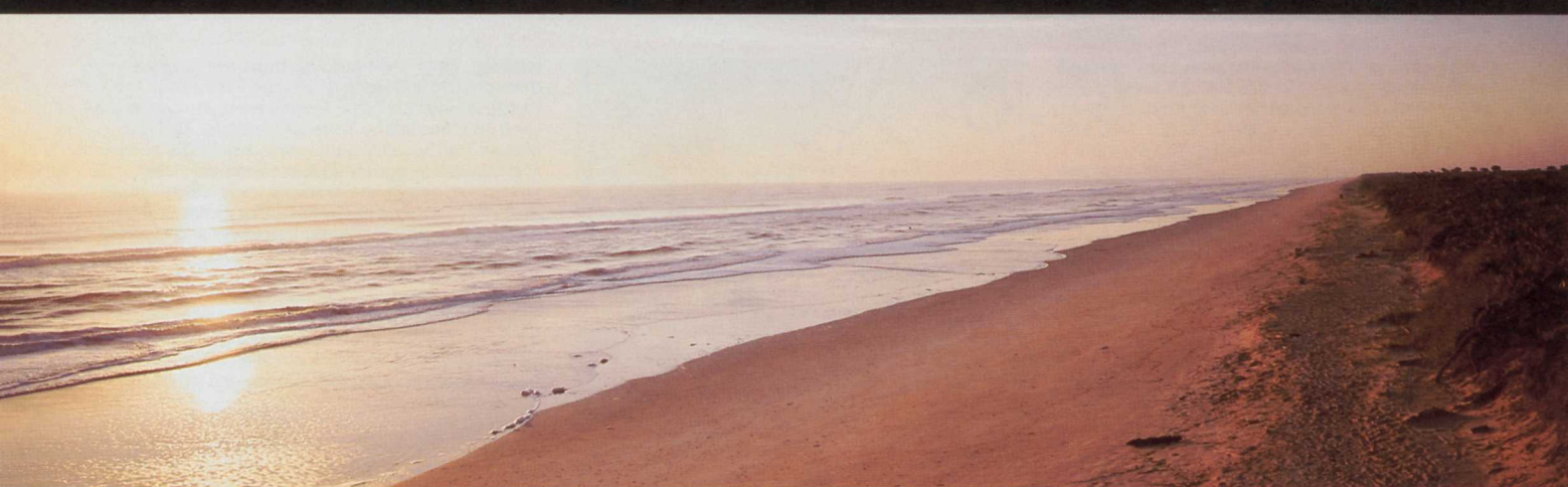


Canaveral and Merritt Island

National Seashore
National Park Service
Florida

National Wildlife Refuge
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Florida



Ken Laffal

Sheltering Spaces

No buildings or seawalls disturb this wilderness beach on Florida's east coast. Here, at the Seashore and Refuge, nature affirms her spirit and lives in harmony with human technology.



Frank Moster



Anne Heimann

Don't be surprised; you may see a southern bald eagle fishing in Mosquito Lagoon or a red-tailed hawk (above) taking in the view.

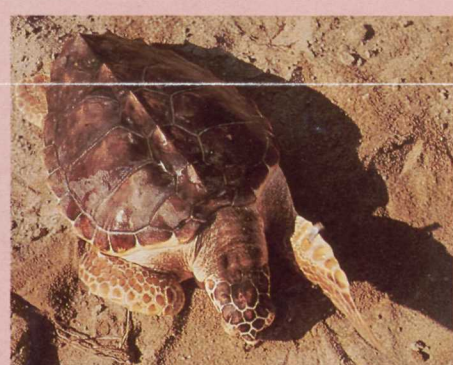


Anne Heimann

Water everywhere—from isolated beaches and inland channels to life-filled marshes and lagoons, water takes command here.



Frank Moster



Anne Heimann

Guided by instinct, loggerhead sea turtles struggle onto the protected beach to deposit eggs into nest cavities dug with their flippers.

Preserving Species

For many plants and animals found here, living at the Seashore and Refuge means more than life as usual—it means life over extinction.

Mention Canaveral and Merritt Island and many people imagine space exploration—the excitement of countdown and the thrill of liftoff. But there is another kind of space here, one that is almost a secret from outsiders. This space can be secluded, where gentle breezes caress miles of primitive beach and endangered sea turtles struggle from their leathery eggs. Or the space can be boisterous, as humid air releases the aroma of tropical blossoms and insects noisily voice their approval.

This space in Florida, so different and so unexpected, has been preserved through the teamwork of 3 federal agencies. It was set aside in the late 1950s as a buffer zone for nearby National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) activities. When the space race launched the John F. Kennedy Space Center into world prominence, preservation of this barrier island was ensured. In cooperation with NASA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has managed Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge since 1963, and the National Park Service has operated Canaveral National Seashore since 1975. These agencies are caretakers of this special area, where species as diverse as bald eagles and alligators, bromeliads and mangroves are nourished by the warm waters and temperate climate.

Winds blow and Atlantic waters splash against the beach, together massaging grains of sand into dunes that parallel the shore as far as you can see. Hidden in this graceful image is the buttress of a barrier island—a low-lying ribbon of land braced with a spine of sand dunes. Behind this protec-

tive island, salty Atlantic water flowing through inlets combines with seasonal rains to form the Indian River and Mosquito Lagoon estuaries. Fish, oysters, clams, and shrimp begin life in these fertile nurseries, which, in turn, attract an abundance of waterfowl. Until the late 1950s the marshes also nurtured saltmarsh mosquitoes, which at times could produce a million mosquitoes per square yard in one day. Because saltmarsh mosquitoes do not lay eggs in freshwater, engineers divided 69,000 acres of marsh into walled impoundments to control water levels, salinity, and saltmarsh mosquitos. The new environment attracted new residents, and today it is common to see waterfowl, alligators, otters, and wading birds, such as snowy egrets, white ibises, and great blue herons.

The barrier island and its waterways offer sanctuary for an abundant blend of plants and animals. Recorded here are 1,045 species of plants and 310 species of birds. Hammocks of ancient oaks draped with Spanish moss grow near sand dunes covered with palmetto and sea oats. Thousands of migratory birds stop over during their journeys north and south. This haven supports 15 wildlife species federally listed as endangered or threatened, including sea turtles, West Indian manatees, southern bald eagles, wood storks, peregrine falcons, eastern indigo snakes, and Florida scrub jays. Together, Canaveral and Merritt Island form a sheltered space, where the countdown is not of spaceships but of endangered animals ensuring life for future generations.

Inviting Spaces

You may not see anyone else, but you won't be alone. Come, share the warm sand with shore birds and the sun-freckled trails with tropical flowers.



Ken Laffal

An early morning angler casts a line in the surf. Near-tropical water temperatures attract scrappy bluefish, whiting, and pompano, making sport fishing a popular pastime.

A highlight of the Refuge's wildlife drive is the Cruickshank observation tower. Bring your binoculars to see some of the 310 species of birds recorded here, including wood storks and reddish egrets.



Ken Laffal

Canaveral, from a word given by Spanish explorers meaning "place of canes," is one of the oldest recorded geographical names in North America. Merritt Island is thought to have been named by Pedro Marratt, a surveyor who charted the island in the early 1800s. But humans left their imprint here long before European explorers ventured ashore. Native Americans, attracted by the fertile estuaries and temperate climate, harvested oysters and clams and discarded the shells in heaps that archeologists study today as middens. In April 1513, Ponce de Leon's sailors claimed the land for Spain, and in 1763 the British gained control of Florida's east coast. But the extensive wetlands, clashes with Seminole Indians, and clouds of salt marsh mosquitoes delayed development until 1830, when Douglas Dummett planted an orange grove that began the Indian River citrus industry.

During the next century villages near citrus groves or water passageways took hold for a while, then lost out to storms, isolation, or occasional killing frosts. One such town was Eldora, a late 19th century community of 250 residents built near Mosquito Lagoon, marked now by a lone house.

Today this inviting space is yours to enjoy. Relax on a deserted beach or hike through tropical forests of live oaks draped with Spanish moss. If you love being on the water, scout Indian River by pleasure boat, sail, or canoe, and explore Mosquito Lagoon for oysters, clams, pink shrimp, and blue crabs. Not to be missed is the 6-mile Black Point Wildlife Drive, which can take an hour or all day, depending on how many stops you make to view wildlife. Whether you seek solace or adventure, the Seashore and the Refuge welcome you.

Canaveral and Merritt Island

National Park Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Getting Here Canaveral National Seashore and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, located midway on Florida's east coast between Daytona Beach and Melbourne, are accessible via U.S. 1, I-95, and Route 528 (Bee Line Expressway). The northern access, New Smyrna Beach, is on Route A1A. The southern access, Titusville, is on Route 406/402. Playalinda Beach is reached via Route 402.

Information Centers The Seashore Visitor Information Center is 7 miles south of New Smyrna Beach on Route A1A. It offers exhibits, activity schedules, publications, and an orientation slide program. Call 904-428-3384.

The Refuge Information Center is 4 miles east of Titusville on Route 402. Here you will find exhibits, publications, and information on the Refuge. Call 407-861-0667.

Beaches The Seashore offers undeveloped beaches with limited services. There are no designated picnic areas, food services, beach showers, or lifeguards. Playalinda Beach and Apollo Beach have parking areas, restrooms, and boardwalk access to the beach. Beach access points for visitors with disabilities are at Eddy Creek and at Apollo Beach parking areas No. 1 and No. 5. First aid and drinking water are available at information centers and at the Playalinda Beach Ranger Station. Surfing is permitted throughout the park. Klondike Beach is accessible only by foot, bicycle, and horseback. To protect nesting sea turtles, horses are allowed only from November 1 through April 30, permit required. Seashore areas may be closed when parking lots are filled or during shuttle launch activities at Kennedy Space Center. For recorded information on launch closures at Playalinda Beach and surf conditions, call 407-867-2805.



Scenic Drive The 6-mile self-guided Black Point Wildlife Drive in the Refuge meanders through pine flatwoods and impounded marsh and provides excellent views of many species of wildlife.

More Information For Seashore information or permits, write: Superintendent, Canaveral National Seashore, 308 Julia Street, Titusville, FL 32796-3521; or call 407-267-1110. For Refuge information or hunting permits write: Refuge Manager, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 6504, Titusville, FL 32782-6504; or call 407-861-0667.

Hiking Short self-guiding trails are located throughout the Seashore and the Refuge. On the Castle Windy and Turtle Mound trails you can see shell middens left by Timucuan Indians. Turtle Mound Trail boasts a panoramic view of the ocean and Mosquito Lagoon. Eldora Hammock, Oak Hammock, and Palm Hammock trails wind through densely vegetated hammocks. Cruickshank Trail is highlighted with an observation tower and views of the shallow marshes.

Camping Limited backcountry camping in the Seashore is permitted on the beach November 1 through April 30 and on designated islands all year, by permit only. Camping is not allowed in the Refuge. Private campgrounds are located in nearby communities.

Hunting Seasonal hunting of migratory waterfowl is allowed in the Seashore and Refuge and is part of the Refuge's waterfowl management. Display or use of firearms, other than for authorized hunting activities, is prohibited.

Regulations Vehicles must stay on the roads and park only in designated spaces. Thefts occur often in parking areas; do not leave valuables in your vehicle. Pets are not allowed on the beach or in public buildings and must be restrained on a leash at all times. Picnicking is permitted on the beach, but no open fires may be built. Use portable grills, and remove coals from beach. Vehicles, glass containers, and metal detectors are not allowed on the beach. Do not feed or harm wildlife, remove vegetation, or disturb archeological sites; all are protected by federal law.

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Visiting the Seashore and the Refuge

