Canaveral/ Merritt Island

National Seashore/National Wildlife Refuge
National Park Service/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

U.S. Department of the Interior
Florida



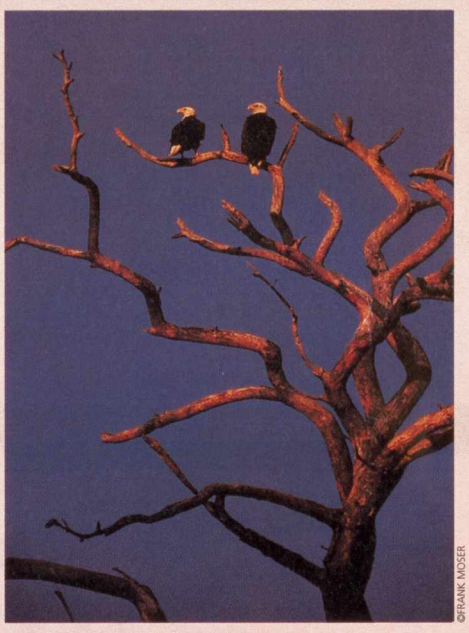
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Sheltering Spaces

No buildings or seawalls disturb this wilderness beach on Florida's east coast. Here, at the national seashore and wildlife refuge, nature affirms its spirit and lives in harmony with human technology.



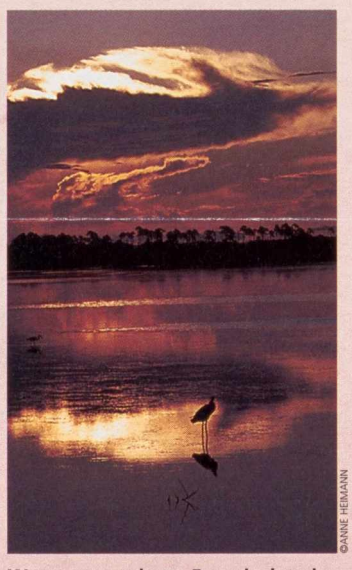
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Don't be surprised; you may see a red-tailed hawk *(above)* or a bald eagle *(top right)* taking in the view.

Water everywhere. From isolated beaches and inland channels to life-filled marshes and lagoons *(photos above)*, water takes command here.



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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 this national seashore and wildlife 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.

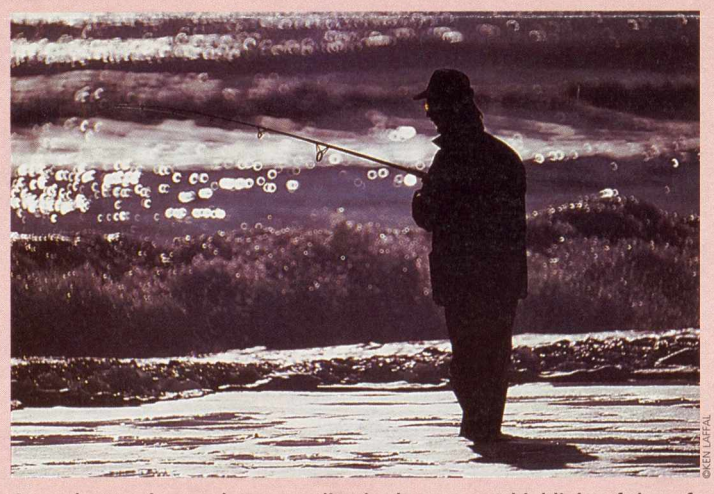
This space in Florida, so different and so unexpected, has been preserved through the teamwork of three federal agencies. It was set aside in the late 1950s as a buffer zone for nearby National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) activities. When the space race launched the John F. Kennedy Space 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 and 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 protective 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 fresh water, engineers divided 69,000 acres of marsh into walled impoundments to control water levels, salinity, and saltmarsh mosquitoes. 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 14 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.

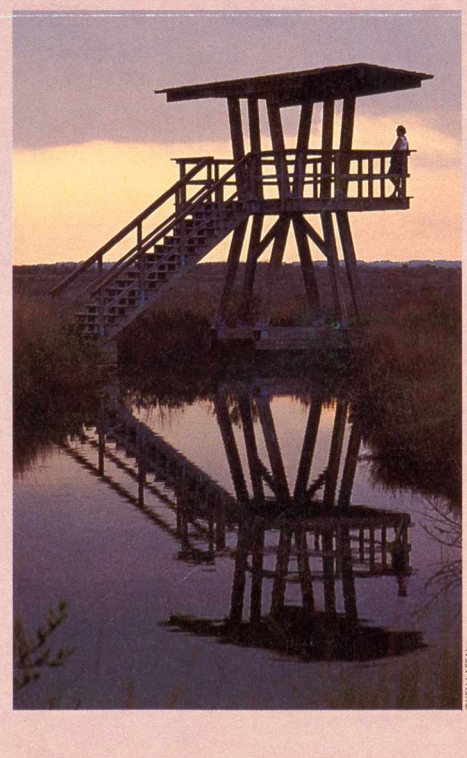
Inviting Spaces

You may not see anyone else, but you won't be alone. Come share the warm sand with shore birds and watch for wildlife and beautiful flowers along quiet trails.



©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.



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

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. American Indians, attracted by the fertile estuaries and temperate climate, harvested oysters and clams and discarded the shells in heaps that archeologists study today as mounds and middens, such as the mounds at Seminole Rest, Turtle Mound, and Castle Windy. In April 1513 Ponce de León'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 saltmarsh 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 town was Eldora, a late 19th-century community built near Mosquito Lagoon. A lone house, Eldora State House, is open to the public. Seminole Rest, site of an ancient Indian mound, dates from about 4,000 to 500 years ago. Archeologists believe that the mound was a place for Timucuan Indians to gather and process clams. Today the mound is 18 feet high. In the early 1900s pioneer settlers refused to sell the contents of the mound for road construction material, thus preserving the evidence of the Timucuan people. Exhibit panels along the 0.5-mile trail tell more about the history of the mound.

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 six-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 national seashore and the wildlife refuge welcome you.

Enjoying the Seashore and Refuge

Getting Here The national seashore and the wildlife refuge, located midway on Florida's east coast between Daytona Beach and Melbourne, are accessible via U.S. 1, I-95, and Fla. 528 (Bee Line Expressway). The northern access, New Smyrna Beach, is on Fla. A1A. Seminole Rest is east of U.S. 1 in Oak Hill on River Road. The southern access, Titusville, is on Fla. 406/402. Playalinda Beach is reached via Fla. 402.

Visitor Information Centers Canaveral National Seashore Visitor Information Center, seven miles south of New Smyrna Beach on Fla. A1A, has exhibits, schedules, publications, and an orientation program. Call 386-428-3384. Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Information Center, four miles east of Titusville on Fla. 402, has exhibits, publications, and information. Call 321-861-0667.

Fees There is a daily use fee to enter the park. Seniors and persons with Golden Age or Golden Access passes receive a discount.

Beaches The seashore has undeveloped beaches and limited services. There are no designated picnic areas, phones, food, beach showers, or drinking water. Lifeguards are on duty from May 30 to September 1 at Playalinda Beach Parking Area No. 8 and at Apollo Beach Parking Area No. 1. These beaches have restrooms and boardwalk access. Beach access points for visitors with disabilities are at Playalinda Beach: Eddy Creek and Parking Area No. 8; and at Apollo Beach: Areas No. 1 and No. 5. First aid and drinking water are at information centers. Surfing is permitted in the park. You may reach Klondike Beach only by foot or bicycle. Horseback riding is allowed on a designated section of the beach in the Apollo District from November 1 until April 15, reservations and permit required. Seashore areas may be closed if parking lots are filled or during shuttle launches at Kennedy Space Center. For recorded information on launch closures at Playalinda Beach, call 321-867-0677.



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

Hiking The seashore and refuge offer short self-guiding trails. Castle Windy and Turtle Mound trails have shell middens left by Timucuan Indians. Turtle Mound Trail boasts a view of the ocean and Mosquito Lagoon. Eldora Hammock, Oak Hammock, and Palm Hammock trails wind through densely vegetated hammocks. Cruickshank Trail has an observation tower and marsh views.

Camping Limited camping is allowed at designated sites on the beach in the Apollo District from November 1 until April 15 and at designated island sites all year, permit required. Camping is not allowed in the refuge. Private campgrounds are 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 For a safe visit observe these 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 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. • Roller skating, in-line skating, and skateboarding are prohibited. • Do not feed or harm wildlife, remove vegetation, or disturb archeological sites—all are protected by federal law.

Seashore Information and Permits
Canaveral National Seashore
308 Julia Street
Titusville, FL 32796
321-267-1110
www.nps.gov/cana
www.nbbd.com/godo/cns

Refuge Information and Permits
Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 6504
Titusville, FL 32782
321-861-0667
www.nbbd.com/godo/minwr

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Getting Around

North

Unpaved road

Trail

Seashore/ Refuge area

John F. Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral AFS—access controlled

Ranger station

Wheelchair accessible

Self-guiding trail

Boat launch

Telephone

Drinking water

0 1 5 Kilometers
0 1 5 Miles

Ponce de Leon Inlet
NEW SMYRNA BEACH
To Daytona Beach
Exit 249
44
A1A
Exit 244
442
EDGEWATER
BETHUNE BEACH
95
1
Turtle Mound
Shipyard Island
Canaveral National Seashore Visitor Information Center
Orange Island
Eldora Hammock
Eldora
Fishing docks
Located at Parking Areas #7 and #8
Riverbreeze Park
Apollo Beach
Castle Windy
Old Channel
Road ends
Seminole Rest
OAK HILL
Plantation Island
BILL'S HILL
INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY
MOSQUITO LAGOON
Kennedy Parkway
Exit 231
5A
INDIAN RIVER
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Pardon Island
Manatee Viewing Area
Haulover Canal
Klondike Beach
Cucumber Island
Dummit Creek
Turtlepen Point
Road ends
Cruickshank Trail
Wildlife Drive
Observation Tower
Black Point
one-way
Bio Lab Road
Scrub Trail
Kennedy Parkway
Eddy Creek
Playalinda Beach
Located at Eddy Creek and Parking Area #8
406
402
Oak and Palm Hammock Trails
Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Information Center
(road closed to public)
Launch Complex 39B
Launch Complex 39A
Shuttle Landing Facility
Vehicle Assembly Building
JOHN F KENNEDY SPACE CENTER
(public access controlled)
False Cape
NASA Parkway
(public access controlled)
Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex
Open to public via 3 and 405
CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION
Cape Canaveral
BANANA RIVER
No motorized boats
Canaveral Barge Canal
Mims
Exit 223
46
SALT LAKE
Loughman Lake
SOUTH LAKE
Exit 220
Canaveral National Seashore Headquarters Information
TITUSVILLE
Exit 215
50
405
Exit 212
407
River
To Orlando
528
Bee Line Expressway (toll)
Johns St
Exit 205
524
COCOA
Exit 202
520
Exit 201
LAKE POINSETT
To Melbourne
To Cocoa Beach

Playing it Safe
Beware of rough surf conditions, strong ocean currents, and stinging jellyfish when swimming, wading, or surfing. Carry ample drinking water; protect yourself from the bright sun and biting insects. Thunderstorms with abundant lightning are common in summer; wait out storms in your vehicle or under shelter, but do not stand under trees.

Fishing
Freshwater, saltwater, and commercial fishing are subject to size and possession limits and may require a license or special use permit; inquire at information centers.

Boating
Launch sites in the refuge and seashore provide access to Mosquito Lagoon and Indian River. Airboats are prohibited.