

Ten Ways to Play Outdoors on Florida's Space Coast

Florida's Space Coast is so much more than rocket launches and the space program. Facing the Atlantic Ocean to the East, The Indian River Lagoon and St. John's River border the West, and it's only 45 minutes from Disney World (aka Orlando).

Most visitors who travel to Florida have their sights set on the crowded beaches and theme parks. Here on the Space Coast, the residents pride themselves on thriving estuaries, diverse ecosystems, and untouched nature.

Wildlife refuges, scenic trails, and the Indian River Lagoon are truly paradisaical playgrounds for visitors. From biking the trails in Titusville to birdwatching in the Merritt Island National Refuge, there are so many avenues to celebrate the wild side of Florida's Space Coast.

Here are ten ways to take you from being just an onlooker to a happy participant.

1.

Go for a Guided Turtle Walk

Florida's beaches provide a nesting habitat for more loggerhead turtles than any place in the Western Hemisphere and more green turtles than anywhere in North America.

Sea turtles' nest on the beaches at [Archie Carr National Seashore](#) from June to October. The best time to view sea turtles nesting is in June and July when guided, nighttime sea turtle watch programs are offered.

The Turtle Conservancy has a limited number of spaces for the public to join a [guided walk](#) for a chance of seeing nesting turtles.

2.

Kayak through the Brevard Zoo

One of the Country's most unique small zoos, the [Brevard Zoo](#) is the world's only zoo with on-site kayaking. For something very out of the ordinary, join white rhinos, giraffes, and antelopes at the new Expedition Africa exhibit at the Brevard Zoo.

In a new exhibit resembling the Nyami River Delta, the 10-acre African savannah built in a lush native Florida habitat bears a resemblance to the Africa bush. Kayaking the Nyami River is the safari of a lifetime for newbies or seasoned paddlers.

3.

Take to the Trails in Titusville

Love to hike or bike? This region is a Mecca with miles and miles of bucket list trails. Titusville is the junction of three converging multi-use hiking and biking trails that crisscross the area, including the [Coast-to-Coast Trail](#) and the [St. Johns River to Sea Loop](#).

Not feeling like long-distance cycling, but still want to escape on a trail? There are plenty of shorter paths to explore that are perfect for the whole family.

4.

Birdwatching Heaven on Merritt Island

Bird watching in Florida is a really BIG deal. In fact, birding is second only to beach-related activities as outdoor recreation for both visitors and residents. Avid birdwatchers flock year-round to the Space Coast's [Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge](#)—one of the State's most diverse wildlife habitats.

The refuge's coastal location, tropical climate, and a wide variety of habitat types contribute to its diverse bird population. The Refuge Visitor Center boardwalk is a quarter-mile loop trail that is lightly trafficked and isolated. It features a lake and habitat for migrating birds and a sanctuary for the Florida Scrub-Jay. The seven-mile [Black Point Wildlife Drive](#) follows a dike road around several shallow marshes and through pine flatwood forests.

5.

Pet Friendly Beach Breather

Traveling with your furry friend? [Canova Beach Dog Park](#) is Brevard County's only dog-friendly beach. Located in Indialantic, the pocket-sized stretch of sand is welcoming to our four-legged friends, where both of you can get your paws wet on a stroll along the sea.

I loved watching the dogs joyously catching balls, chasing frisbees out into the water, and surfing the Atlantic waves. There is a leash requirement for our furry friends, but I wonder if that includes the famous four-legged surfers?

There is a picturesque boardwalk surrounded by local shops serving homemade ice cream, pizza, and a cold beer when you get hungry.

6.

Meander through the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary

The [Enchanted Forest](#) in Titusville is a designated wildlife sanctuary. People can observe several ecosystems here, from majestic oak hammocks to wet prairie, all within one short hike.

The natural landscape and native habitats make for excellent wildlife observation. The beautiful property has multiple trails and indoor educational centers for kids that include interactive exhibits.

7.

Woosh Over the Water on an Air Boat

Air boating is a Florida thing. It has been an integral way for people to experience the beautiful ecosystem of natural, undeveloped Florida. You can zip around the St. Johns River on an [airboat tour](#) or navigate the Indian River Lagoon on [Airboat Rides of Melbourne](#).

As you explore by airboat, Florida wildlife is in abundance, getting a close-up view of animals and birds living under or near the water in the marshes, rivers, and swamps.

8.

Beyond Surfing and Sand-Castle Building

The Space Coast coastline extends for 72 miles of coastal paradise and showcases many beach options. The [Canaveral National Seashore](#) is undeveloped and secluded, the beauty of the sand dunes left as Mother Nature intended.

One of the best surfing beaches at the south end of the Space Coast is [Sebastian Inlet State Recreation Area](#). It is the epicenter of East Coast competitive surfing, where local celebrities

learned to rip in the powerful waves.

Must-try watersports include surfing, kayaking, kiteboarding, Stand Up Paddle Boarding, and more. There are rental shops and experienced instructors for enthusiasts of every level.

9.

Kick Back, Relax, and Catch a Fish or Two

Cast into the Space Coast's famous fishing holes. Called the Redfish Capital of the world, there are massive target fish in this area and drum, snook, and snapper. You can cruise through wetlands, waterways, and lush mangroves in the calmer waters to experience the area's unique wildlife in its natural habitat.

Known more for its inshore fishing, you will find fishermen casting their line from the beach, bridges, and piers, enjoying the day and dreaming of the big one that got away.

10.

Walk the Centennial Trail

Pelican Island is a tiny dot on the map with a unique history. Thanks to President Theodore Roosevelt, it distinguishes being our nation's first [National Wildlife Refuge](#).

The [Centennial Trail](#) meanders almost a mile through restored wetlands, tidal mangroves, and hydric hammocks. It incorporates over 560 engraved planks—one for each refuge established between 1903 and the present, spaced throughout the length of the elevated boardwalk. Each engraved plank includes the refuge name, its State or territory, and establishment year. An observation tower located among the mangrove and cabbage palm fringe of the Indian River Lagoon provides the closest land-based opportunity to view Pelican Island.

Conclusion

Florida's Space Coast is a must-visit for anyone who enjoys getting outside and discovering nature. So maybe it's time for you to experience something new ... paddle a kayak through the meandering estuaries, soak in the sunshine, sand, and waves ... and relax.

For More:

- Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism: [VisitSpaceCoast](#)
- On our site: [Birdwatching: Where to View and Photograph Florida Birds](#)
- On our site: [Florida Everglades: Diversity and Natural Beauty](#)
- Also on our site: [DeLand, Florida: West Volusia County's New Vibe](#)
- Also on our site: [Lake Worth and Lantana: A Florida Culinary Tour](#)
- Visit Florida, <https://www.visitflorida.com/en-us.html>

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