

An Arial Tour of Florida's East Coast

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by Peb Elliott, Florida

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I was invited to take a ride in a Cessna for a short trip up the East Coast of Central Florida, so of course I took my camera with me. I'm constantly amazed at the quality of photo I can get out of such a little point-and-shoot camera!

As you can easily see, Florida life is built around water.

The St. Johns river and marshlands are inland, and the coast has the Indian River Lagoon and the Banana River separating islands and coastline from the Atlantic ocean. The beachside is covered with homes, using all available land, and huge condominiums line the shore.

Some of the islands are long, narrow strips of land with river on both sides where well-to-do people have large homes with tennis courts, pools, and boat docks.

The narrow, two lane road that goes down the middle of this island is a lovely drive, you just need to go slowly so you don't run over flocks of peacocks wandering about.

Less affluent homeowners live in neighborhoods where the soil dug up from canals and retention ponds creates the land needed for construction. Mosquitos can be a real problem in these areas since they breed in massive quantities in the still water.

Orange groves used to cover much of central Florida, but many groves have been wiped out by freezes, fruit canker and, worst of all - developers.

We did fly over some groves, but you can see where the older groves are thinned out and scraggly looking.

We flew up the coast as far as the Kennedy Space Center. Though the day was becoming more overcast, and we had to stay clear of the Space Center's air space, we could still make out the Vehicle Assembly Building and launch pads. My last assignment when I worked for United Space Alliance was in the building just to the right of the VAB.

The marshlands around the Space Center are a wildlife sanctuary and help to isolate the complex from the mainland, and shuttles are launched out over the Atlantic ocean to avoid inhabited areas.

On the return trip, we could see off to the west where the land is marshy and the St. Johns river connects a chain of lakes of different sizes as it winds it's way north.

For stories and photos of the St. Johns river, visit www.marshbunny.com.
Peb Elliott

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