

## Manatee Time Line

What are some Important Dates or Notable Information about Manatees in Florida?

|             |             |                    |                |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1492 – 1785 | 1903 – 1965 | 1976 – 1985        | 1996 - 2005    |
| 1824 – 1893 | 1966 – 1975 | <u>1986 – 1995</u> | 2006 - Present |

### References

**1986** The Marine Mammal Commission contracted for an overview of the federal and state efforts to protect manatees and their habitat in Florida.

- Two captive-bred and born manatees from the Miami Seaquarium, Sunrise and Savannah, were released from Homosassa Springs State Wildlife Park after living at the park for two years. Scientists hoped that the captive breeding of manatees could help increase the manatee population. After a few weeks, both manatees lost their tracking tags and were never seen again. Scientists do not know if they were disoriented as they took off in unfamiliar territory and ended up far out to sea or if they survived. As captive manatees, both manatees had not learned the travel paths or skills for surviving that wild manatees learn from their mothers.
- Tampa Electric Company opened the Big Bend Manatee Walk to the public—the warm water discharge canal of the Big Bend Station was later designated as a state manatee sanctuary.
- State manatee protection zones were adopted for Manatee Cove (Brevard County) and portions of the Withlacoochee River (Citrus and Levy counties).

**1987** – Federal and State agencies and private organizations cooperating in the manatee conservation program met at the Marine Mammal Commission's Annual Meeting to review and reexamine priority needs and to agree on future actions. The meeting provided guidance and initiative to the manatee recovery program of Florida.

- The MMC requested an update of the Manatee Recovery Plan—the USFWS agreed to revise and integrate the two plans (see 1980/1982 above)
- Rick Baquero (Tiite) formed Manatee Alert, Inc., as an experimental model for the environmental recovery of the manatee.

**1988** –Marine Mammal Protection Act reauthorized.

- Endangered Species Act reauthorized.
- The West Indian Recovery Team was reactivated to review and comment on the draft of the Recovery Plan.
- The Marine Mammal Commission's contract report entitled, "Protection of West Indian Manatees in Florida" was completed and provided to USFWS and the manatee recovery team for consideration for inclusion in the Draft Recovery Plan.
- USFWS received funds to purchase a site on Kings Bay to headquarter the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge offices and visitor center.
- The State Land Acquisition Selection Committee purchased the Homosassa Springs project through its Conservation and Recreation Lands program.
- The National Marine Fisheries Service began a comprehensive review of the structure and operation of Regional Marine Mammal Stranding Networks in order to improve operations, participation and standardized procedures.

- Marine Mammal Commission contacted the National Oceanic Atmosphere Administration about putting manatee speed zones on charts (NOAA noted that it would consider any new requests received provided that the information did not clutter the charts use as a navigational tool).
- Marine Mammal Commission noted that the principal threats to East Coast manatees were boat traffic and coastal development—they submitted a report to the USFWS and other federal and state agencies entitled, "Preliminary Assessment of Habitat Protection Needs for West Indian Manatees on the East Coast of Florida and Georgia."
- The Marine Mammal Commission provided funds to DNR to develop curricula for public schools on manatee and ecosystem protection and later allocated funds for seven additional manatee related projects:
  1. Geographic identification system (GIS) development
  2. Age based study on bone growth
  3. DNA fingerprinting
  4. Seagrass impacts in Hobe Sound
  5. computer to use with field work
  6. support for the Manatee Technical Advisory Council
  7. Scientific article about the importance of manatees.

**1989** – Meeting of the Governor and Cabinet – per directive of the Cabinet several recommendations were approved including requiring Manatee Protection Plans of 13 coastal counties, identified as , Dade, Duval, Collier, Citrus, Brevard, Broward, Martin, Lee, Indian River, Palm Beach, St. Lucie, Sarasota and Volusia.

- Governor and Cabinet approved portions of the DNR "Recommendations to Improve Boating Safety and Manatee Protection on Florida Waterways" report, which addressed the unsafe conditions for swimmers, boaters and manatees caused by vessel traffic and provided guidelines for County speed zone rules and sign posting.
- USFWS completed its revision of the original Manatee Recovery Plan—approved by USFWS, MMC, Army Corp of Engineers (COE), DNR, GFC, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Regulation, Department of Community Affairs, Marine Industries Association, Save the Manatee Club, Sirenia, Sea World of Florida and FPL.
- The Florida Advisory Council for Environmental Education (FACEE) is formed.
- The Florida Power & Light Company updated its booklet, "The Florida Manatee," which continues to be popular for manatee education efforts.
- The National Marine Fisheries Service took steps to establish a National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank.
- GIS Workshop convened to address access and use of manatee data for management purposes.
- State manatee protection zones adopted for the Banana River (Brevard County), a portion of the Caloosahatchee River (Lee County), and the Tomoka River (Volusia County).

**1990** – The DNR Office of Protected Species Management was established with ten full-time employees—Patrick M. Rose hired to lead the office.

- Save the Manatee License Plate Authorized—Florida Statutes Chapter 320.08058.



- The Save the Manatee Trust Fund was established. FACEE slated to receive half the revenue from license plate sales to use for environmental education grants in Florida.
- State manatee protection zones were adopted for a portion of the Indian River (Brevard County), the Sebastian River (Indian River County).
- Countywide manatee protection rules were adopted in Collier, Martin and Palm Beach counties.
- The USFWS purchased a 3.3-acre site on Kings Bay for its Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge headquarters.
- First manatee-age-determination study completed.
- The National Marine Fisheries Service published a policy statement in the Federal Registry, which stated that it would no longer accept or review requests (from groups or businesses) seeking authorization to feed marine mammals in the wild. NMFS and the MMC concurred that feeding wild marine mammals constituted a "take." NMF submitted a proposed rule to clarify its regulatory definition of the term "take."
- Governor Bob Martinez officially dedicated a large bronze sculpture entitled "Manatee Dance" at the Governor's Mansion in Tallahassee, Florida (artist – Hugh Bradford Nicholson).
- Number of boats registered in Florida – approximately 717,000 boats (pleasure and commercial).

**1991** – Countywide manatee protection rules adopted in Dade and Volusia counties.

- FMRI Marine Mammal Research Project biologists begin to track manatees via satellite and radio transmitters.
- Manatee Protection Plan approved for Citrus County.
- State manatee protection zones adopted for a portion of the Mosquito Lagoon (Brevard County).
- Statewide aerial survey of manatees reported 1,268 manatees in Florida's waters.
- USFWS banned the mixing of sexes at captive facilities to prevent overcrowding.
- DNR directed Conservation and Recreation Land (CARL) state lands purchase program authorized—coastal properties purchased with support from mandated manatee habitat review process.
- The U.S. Congress provided the USFWS with \$200,000 for research on manatees.

**1992** – Manatee decal Voluntary Contribution Campaign began – Vessel registrants donate to help manatees. A decal is distributed for each \$5 donation. Campaign is held in June each year through the Florida County Tax Collection offices.

- Countywide manatee protection rules were adopted in Citrus, Duval, Indian River and Sarasota counties.
- The Marine Mammal Pathobiology Laboratory on the Eckerd College campus was completed—the facility was designed to include a manatee-sized dissecting table, winch, scales, cold storage room, ultra-cold tissue storage freezers, chemical safety hoods and a crematorium.
- Liquid-nitrogen-cooled refrigerated trailers were designed and one prototype built to reduce decomposition of carcasses during transit to research facilities.
- The National Marine Fisheries Service published a program development plan for the National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank and Stranding Network Program.
- The Ocean Act of 1992 (Pub. L. 102-587) was signed into law—Title III addresses wild marine mammal health and stranding problems, which amended the Marine Mammal Protection Act by adding the Title III—The Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Act.

- Manatee Population Workshop sponsored by the USFWS and DNR.
- Preservation 2000 (10 year bond program) created to purchase land in Florida to preserve it from development—half of the allocated money would go to the Conservation and Recreation Lands program.
- The Save the Manatee Committee announced its intention to incorporate itself as an organization independent from the Florida Audubon Society. After some legal struggles with the society, the committee formed the Save the Manatee Club. Judith Vallee served as the club's executive director until 2004.
- (Sirenews-October) – "Missing Link" in Dugong Evolution discovered in Florida. The nearly complete and preserved fossil skull was found in a shell pit near Punta Gorda on Florida's Gulf Coast. At print time in 1992, the skull appeared to be of Late Pliocene age, perhaps less than 2 million years old, and therefore the latest known record of a dugongid of any kind in the Caribbean-West Atlantic.



1992-1993 Manatee Decal

**1993** – DNR and the Department of Environmental Regulation merge to form the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)—the manatee program was moved to the Division of Marine Resources.

## DNR + DER = DEP

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

- Federal manatee research shifted from the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service to the newly created National Biological Survey (NBS). Under NBS, the National Fisheries Research Center administered the Sirenia Project.
- The Florida Manatee Recovery Team completed a preliminary draft plan for the USFWS and public review.
- Countywide manatee protection rules adopted in Broward County.
- Captive breeding programs discontinued at oceanaria facilities.
- Sea World of Florida opens its manatee exhibit—"Manatees: The Last Generation?" to the public.
- DEP forms the Blue Spring Manatee Habitat Working Group to address the nuisance aquatic plant management efforts for manatees wintering at Blue Spring (Volusia County).
- Tampa Electric Company's Environmental Education Building opened to the public.
- The manatee monument by artist Tiite, "Homage to the Orange River Valley" was erected in the Caloosahatchee River in Lee County. (See 1987 entry as well.)

**1994** – Roger W. Portell and other personnel of the Florida Museum of Natural History (Gainesville, Florida) discovered a terrestrial (four-legged) link to present day manatees, *Pezosiren portelli* (Family—Prorastomidae), in Jamaica. (*Pezosiren* means, "walking sirenian") Dr. Daryl Domning of Howard University Department of Anatomy continues excavation of specimens and study of this discovery (2002).

- Countywide manatee protection rule was adopted in St. Lucie County.
- First International Manatee and Dugong Research Conference was held in Gainesville, Florida.
- A press conference with Governor Lawton Chiles and singer/song writer Jimmy Buffett was held on the steps of the Capital to emphasize the importance of continued support for the Save the Manatee license plate, which is used to fund the state's manatee recovery efforts in Florida.
- USFWS established three additional manatee sanctuaries in the Kings Bay area (Citrus County), bringing the total number of federal sanctuaries in the area to six—for a total of about 39 acres.
- The Marine Mammal Protection Act was amended and reauthorized for a six-year period.
- State manatee protection zones were adopted for the Canaveral Barge Canal and Sykes Creek area (Brevard County).
- The USFWS constructed a "soft release" facility in the upper Banana River within the Kennedy Space Center on Florida's East Coast. The pen allowed rehabilitated or "unreleasable" manatees an opportunity to adjust to natural conditions and foods while they remained under observation to ensure they were adapting. One adult male rehabilitated manatee was released successfully.
- Chessie the manatee discovered in Chesapeake Bay, Maryland. The animal was captured in October and flown back to Florida and released in the soft release pen before being released back into the wild. He wintered in Florida.

**1995** – Manatee Protection Plans were approved for Collier and Dade counties.. As a result of a rule challenge, a proposal to establish a countywide state manatee protection rule for Lee County was ruled invalid. The state was required to re-initiate the rulemaking process and develop a new proposal.

- David Arnold appointed as the first bureau chief for the Florida DEP Bureau of Protected Species Management--BPSM (formerly the Office of Protected Species Management), which administers the state manatee program.
- Manatee Individual Photo-identification System (MIPS) installed at FMRI to help determine life history research.
- New manatee web site created for the manatee management and research programs.
- The FPL Riviera Power Plant opened its manatee viewing area to the public.
- The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers developed plans to test and further install gate reversal systems on its water control structures.
- The Water Management District contracted for a study to assess use of the piezoelectric strip to activate the reversing mechanism at water control structures.
- Rescue attempts for manatee entanglement cases notably increased (50+) from previous years (15-25).
- Four young manatees raised in captivity were released through the soft release pen—one was recaptured in poor condition and recovered, one was recaptured in very poor condition and died, two appeared to have been adjusting well but were struck and killed by boats. In addition to the soft release manatees, 13 successfully rehabilitated manatees were released at various locations along the east and west coasts of Florida, usually near their capture sites.
- Chessie the manatee tracked all the way up to Pt. Judith, Rhode Island, before he turned and headed back to Florida for the winter. His northern trek earned him the northern record for the species' distribution.

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