

The Florida Manatee



Photo by Tom Scott, Florida Geological Survey

A mother manatee nurses her calf while feeding on hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*), one of Florida's exotic aquatic plants. Contrary to popular myth, manatees were not brought to Florida for aquatic plant control. The Florida manatee is one of Florida's true native species.

A Florida Treasure



Miocene Sea Cow/Dugong
(*Metaxytherium crataegense*)

This skeleton was unearthed during mining operations at a quarry in Northwest Florida and donated to the state in 1929. When alive, this early relative of present day manatees inhabited the shallow bays and rivers of Florida 15 million years ago.

When boating, look out for swirls that indicate manatees are nearby.



To report manatee deaths, injuries, harassment or orphaned manatees, call the FWC Law Enforcement at 1-888-404-FWCC (3922) or #FWC on your mobile phone

Manatees have lived along the Florida coast for millions of years. Since 1978, the State of Florida has increased protection for these animals and citizens have embraced them, in part because of their gentle nature, immense size and surprising vulnerability. The successful recovery of the manatee population ultimately relies on people learning to respect them and the habitat needed for their survival.

Protect one of Florida's treasures— the Florida manatee

Please follow these guidelines when you are on the waterways:

Operate your boat at a safe speed based on travel conditions and speed zones

Stay in the marked deep-water channels

Designate someone to be a proper lookout when you are underway

Wear polarized sunglasses to help you see better while boating

Be a better boater~ take an approved boating safety class

Obey all posted manatee speed zones and caution areas



The Save the Manatee specialty license plate funds manatee research programs, rescue and rehabilitation of manatees, manatee protection plans, habitat protection, rule promulgation, sign posting and educational materials and programs. Thank you for your continued support of these programs.

For more information about the state's manatee protection program, please visit our web sites at: <http://www.floridaconservation.org/psm> and <http://www.floridamarine.org>, write to: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 620 South Meridian Street, DOW-BPS Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600 or call: (850) 922-4330



07/03bj