

1973

Diving Regulations in Manatee Areas

Florida. Department of Natural Resources. Bureau of Education and Information

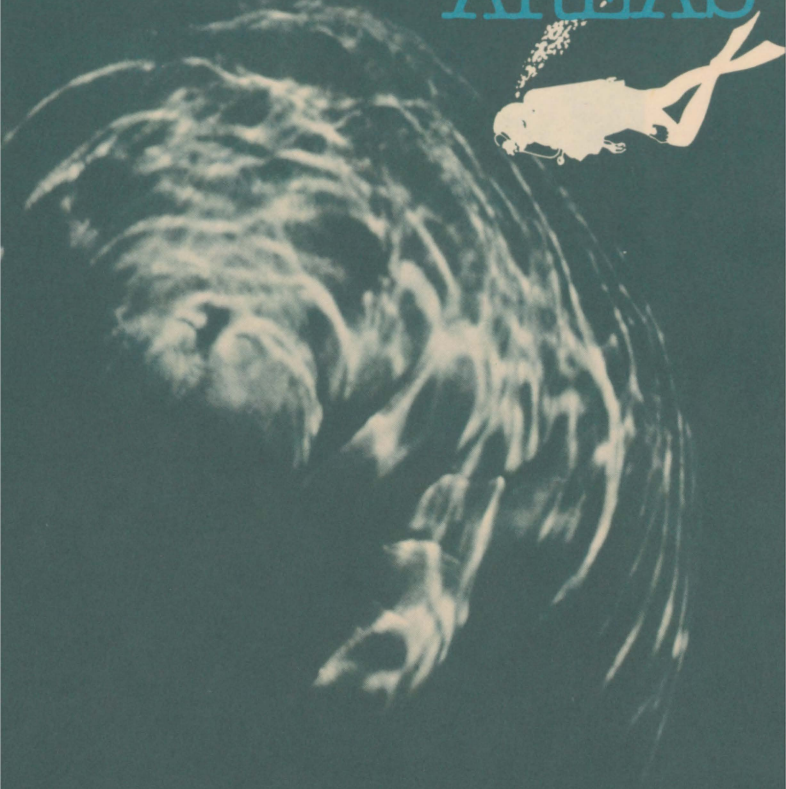
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DIVING REGULATIONS IN MANATEE AREAS



SAVE THE
MANATEE



WARNING TO DIVERS



By diving or boating in Florida's inland waterways, you may be endangering the life of one of Florida's most special animals—the manatee. The West Indian Manatee, an endangered marine mammal, is protected by federal law. The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 make it illegal to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal—including the manatee. These acts also provide protection against intentional or negligent actions that could create the likelihood of injury by disrupting normal manatee behavioral patterns. In addition, the Florida Manatee Sanctuary Act states, "It is unlawful for any person, at any time, by any means, intentionally, or negligently, to annoy, molest, harass, or disturb any manatee."

Manatees can be observed without violating the provisions of these three protection acts. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Natural Resources and concerned conservation organizations such as the Florida Audubon Society, has developed the guidelines listed in this booklet for your use. Following these guidelines will help you reduce the possibility of killing or injuring a manatee by colliding with it in your boat. Manatees are large, normally slow-moving creatures, but they can be surprisingly quick and unpredictable.

During the winter months, manatees seek inland waterways and often congregate in the warm spring discharge areas near power generating plants and natural warm water springs. Boaters and divers should avoid these locations completely, but if you must travel through a concentration area, please follow the guidelines given in this booklet carefully.

Give Manatees The Right Of Way

- ☐ Operate boats at idle speed (minimum required for steering) and in deep water when possible.
- ☐ Steer clear of manatee concentrations. Do not pass over the submerged animals. Keep at least 50 feet away from manatees at all times.

The Following Activities Are Among Those Considered As Manatee Harassment:

- Pursuing a manatee in a boat ☐ Holding, grabbing or riding a manatee ☐ Poking, prodding, or stabbing a manatee with any object at any time ☐ Trying to snag or hook a manatee ☐ Separating a manatee from a group ☐ Separating a manatee cow from its calf or causing animals to leave the area by:
- ☐ Circling over them in a boat with or without the motor running
 - ☐ Following them while swimming or in a boat
 - ☐ Diving down to touch them
 - ☐ Diving down to pursue them
 - ☐ other activities which alter normal behavior may also constitute harassment.

Remember, manatees are very shy and extremely sensitive to disturbance. People violating federal and state statutes can be subjected to maximum penalties—a \$20,000 fine and one-year imprisonment, or both.

For more information, contact
Area Manager, **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,**
Jacksonville, Florida

Telephone: **904-791-2267**

Please call the **Florida Marine Patrol**
Toll-Free Manatee Information Line

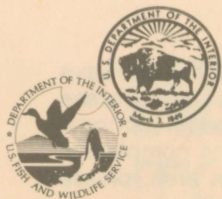
1-800-342-1821

to report any instance of manatee harassment, injury, or death. If you observe any violations, report the name of the boat, its registration numbers, and a description.

CALL TOLL-FREE 1-800-342-1821

**SAVE THE
MANATEE**





U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Division of Law Enforcement
(904) 386-8079
(305) 526-2916



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Law Enforcement
(904) 488-6559

FLORIDA MARINE PATROL
Manatee Information Center
Toll Free

1-800-342-1821

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