



Dauphin Island Sea Lab's MANATEE SIGHTING NETWORK

Spring/Summer 2017 Newsletter



Winter sightings suggest year-round occupancy

MSN received an unusually high number of cold-season manatee sightings from the Florida panhandle through Louisiana this past winter. Manatees were sighted in Mississippi and in the Gulf of Mexico off Grand Isle, Louisiana as late as January 2017. Manatees also were sighted in Mississippi and Louisiana in February and March, with regular seasonal sightings in Alabama beginning in April. None of the animals sighted west of Florida this winter is known to have suffered mortality due to cold stress, and in one case an attempted rescue was called-off due to the manatee's remarkably good condition. These observations suggest that mild winter temperatures (like those on the north-central Gulf of Mexico coast this year) may allow some manatees to overwinter locally. Study of year-round local habitat use by manatees is ongoing.

Highlights

- Winter manatee sightings
- New MSN publication
- Manatee conservation status
- Local students support MSN
- Kayak event raises funds for stranding aid
- Support MSN!



Credit: E. Poche



Credit: DISL/MSN



Credit: Contributor

New publication highlights MSN's citizen-sourced data

- Sighting demographics of the West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) in the north-central Gulf of Mexico supported by citizen-sourced data. *Endangered Species Research* 32:321-332 (E. Hieb, R.H. Carmichael, A. Aven, C. Nelson-Seely, N. Taylor, doi:10.3354/esr00817).

MSN's latest research article summarizes the timing, locations, and other aspects of manatee sightings documented in Alabama and Mississippi since the early 1900s.

These data contribute to current knowledge of manatee ecology and demonstrate how citizen-sourced data can enhance research, conservation, and management for many species worldwide.

Manatee migration season is underway!

Report all sightings online or by phone!

**Manatee.disl.org
1-866-493-5803**

**Like! Us on Facebook:
Mobile Manatees Sighting Network**



Credit: Contributor



Credit: Contributor

New manatee conservation status

In April, the US Fish & Wildlife Service reclassified West Indian manatees from an endangered to threatened species. This federal decision recognizes the success of recovery efforts for the US manatee population; however, threats to manatees, such as boat strikes, harmful algae blooms, and cold stress, remain the same. Manatees are still protected by federal law under the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act and remain listed as endangered at the state level in Alabama and Florida. MSN remains dedicated to conducting scientific research and enhancing awareness for manatees in Alabama and nearby waters to facilitate a positive trajectory for population recovery.



Credit: R. Kollegger

MSN research & outreach continue as manatees are downlisted.

Help Support MSN

Tacky Jack's gift cards, T-shirts, Manatee plush toys, and NEW can huggers!

All available at manatee.disl.org



Go Green! Receive our newsletter via email! Contact manatee@disl.org.

Local students support MSN

- Fairhope Elementary's 2nd grade class created colorful posters to raise awareness for local manatees.
- St. Luke's Episcopal School in Mobile raised nearly \$400 to fund educational waterway signs to alert boaters that manatees are nearby.

Thank you!



Credit: DISL/MSN

St. Luke's 5th graders present their donation to MSN

Thank you to the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program for funding 150 new manatee awareness waterway signs!



5K-ayak supports ALMMSN

This March, local paddlers took to the waters of Baldwin County for a 5K-ayak event organized by WildNative Tours. The inaugural paddle raised more than \$200 for MSN's sister network the Alabama Marine Mammal Stranding Network (ALMMSN). ALMMSN responds to dolphin, whale and manatee strandings in Alabama waters.

Watch for the 5K-ayak next year!



Credit: J. Gertsch, WildNative Tours