



Dauphin Island Sea Lab's MANATEE SIGHTING NETWORK

Fall/Winter 2015 Newsletter



Well-known Alabama manatee dies

On August 21st, Zewie, one of Alabama's well-known manatees was reported dead in Mobile Bay. Necropsy results identified the cause of death as a probable acute watercraft strike, marking the first known boat strike related manatee mortality in Alabama. Zewie was tagged by the MSN team in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta in 2010. During the past five years, he proved to be an explorer, traveling from Crystal River, FL as far west as Lake Ponchartrain, LA during his seasonal migrations.

Zewie was a gregarious manatee, often seen socializing with other manatees. He became a familiar sight among local residents, often visiting Dog River and the southern stretches of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. Zewie was first documented as a calf in Crystal River in 1987 and was at least 27 years old.



MSN 2010

The MSN team first met and tagged Zewie in 2010.

Highlights

- *Well known Alabama manatee dies*
- *MSN launches winter retag efforts*
- *MSN shares research with international audience*
- *Mapping thermal refuges in Alabama*
- *MSN Koozies, COMING SOON!*

MSN team plans to retag missing manatees



MSN 2015

MSN researcher, graduate student Kayla DaCosta, retags manatee "Cas" in 2015.



P. Wilbur 2015

Wilson, pictured here in Wakulla Springs, FL, is among manatees to be retagged.

This winter the MSN team will travel to Crystal River, FL to launch a retagging effort for formerly tagged Alabama manatees. This work will help the team gather additional data on known animals who seasonally migrate to Alabama. MSN continues to ask for the public's help to locate Brodie, who currently is equipped with a temporary tag, and Magnolia, who is equipped with a tracking belt. The MSN team will also use photo identification methods to identify other Alabama visitors such as Cas, Wilson, Aven, and Bama. Each manatee's unique scar pattern, much like a fingerprint, will be used to distinguish them for potential retagging.



MSN 2015

Manatee stranding season started Nov 15th!

Report all sightings online or by phone!

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

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

MSN team shares northern Gulf of Mexico manatee research

This October, MSN director Dr. Ruth H. Carmichael and PhD candidate Allen Aven (top right) traveled to Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) to present MSN's work on manatee migration to an international audience at the Marine Megafauna Movement Workshop.



In November, PhD student Kayla DaCosta presented her research on manatee genetics at the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) biennial conference in Portland, Oregon. The study is a collaboration with USGS Sirenia Project and focused on genetics of manatees sampled in northern Gulf of Mexico waters outside FL.



This December, the MSN team will travel to San Francisco, California for the 21st Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals. MSN and AL Marine Mammal Stranding Network researchers will share data on manatee sightings, strandings, and habitat use.

Upcoming Outreach Events

Mobile Boat Show, Mobile, AL

February 19-21, 2016

Biloxi Boat Show, Biloxi, MS

March 4-6, 2016

DISL Discovery Day, Dauphin Island, AL

April 9, 2016

Delta Woods & Waters Expo, Spanish Fort, AL

April 30, 2016

Mapping warm water hideaways

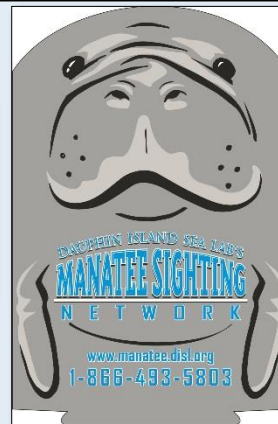
Manatees rely on warm water refugia during the coldest months of the year, when water temperatures drop below 20°C (~68°F). While many such shelters exist in Florida, potential refuge sites in Alabama have not been identified.

This winter, the MSN team will use thermal imaging and aerial surveys to map areas of warm water that could provide temporary refuge for manatees during cold periods. This study is important to define critical manatee habitat in Alabama and will aid rescue efforts for manatees remaining in Alabama when water temperatures become too cold.

In 2015 three manatees stranded alive in Magnolia Springs. Thermal data would have helped researchers locate these at-risk animals.

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- **Adopt an Alabama manatee** at savethemanatee.org.



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