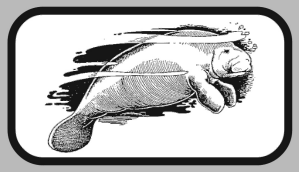
CAUTION

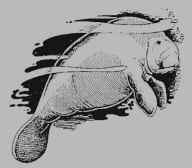


Manatee Area

RESUME NORMAL

SAFE OPERATION

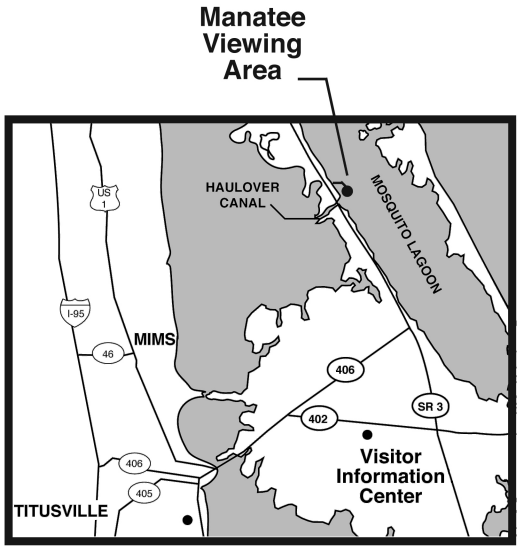
NO ENTRY



Manatee Refuge

Directions to the Manatee Observation Area

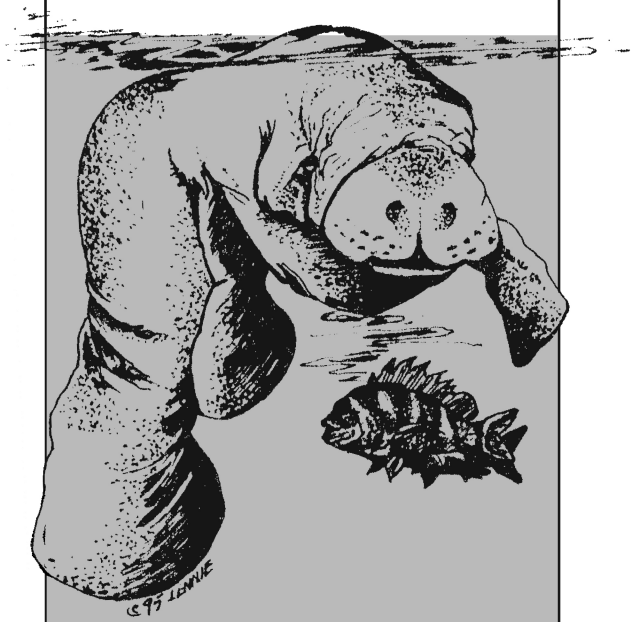
- Go east on S.R. 402.
- Head north on S.R. 3
- Cross over Haulover Canal Bridge (The viewing area is visible from the east side of bridge).
- Make the next right turn onto the orange dirt road.
- Follow this road to the canal and viewing platform.



Observation Area Map

*Although manatees frequent this area, they are not always present. Spring and fall are the most common times of year to find them here.

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge



Manatee Observation Area

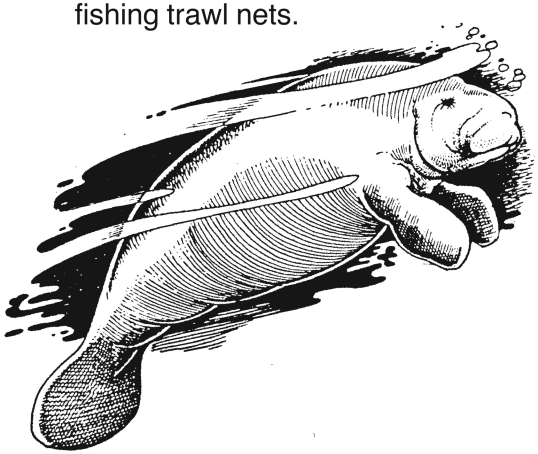
ET-2001-02-003-KSC

Manatee Facts

- The West Indian manatee or Florida manatee (Trichechus manatus) is a large gray to gray-brown aquatic mammal that has a seal-shaped body and a flat round tail. They can grow up to 12 feet long and weigh up to 2000 pounds.
- Manatees live in fresh water, brackish, and marine habitats in the southern United States and are distributed throughout the Caribbean Islands to eastern Central America, Columbia, Venezuela, and southward to the northeast coast of Brazil.
- They may eat 150-200 pounds of seagrasses and other aquatic plants each day.
- They have no natural enemies and may live for over 60 years.
- Gestation lasts for approximately 13 months — one calf born every two to three years. The mother may nurse the calf for up to two years.
- Manatees surface to breathe every three to four minutes — these totally harmless animals spend time eating, resting, and traveling.
- These gentle slow-moving creatures frequent the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. In the spring of 1994, over 300 manatees were counted on Refuge property. This figure represents over 50% of the east coast population.

Problems Manatees Face

- Harassment.
- Boat/barge collisions.
- Ingestion of fish hooks and monofilament line.
- Habitat loss/pollution.
- Crushing/drowning in flood gates and canal locks.
- Entanglement in crab trap lines and fishing trawl nets.



Refuge Response

- A 10,500 acre “No Motor Zone” was established in March of 1990 in the northern Banana River to protect the endangered Florida manatee.
- This area, along with the part of the Banana River in the NASA Security Area located north of S.R. 405 created the largest contiguous manatee protection area in Florida.
- Motorized vessels are not allowed in the area. Canoes, row boats, sailboats, and other human or wind-powered craft, however, are allowed.

What You Can Do to Help

- Please look, but do not approach or harass manatees.
- Please abide by the speed zone signs in areas with manatees.
- Please remain at least 50 feet away from a manatee when operating a powerboat.
- Please do not discard monofilament line, hooks, or any other litter into the water.
- Help educate others about manatees.