DADE COUNTY MANATEE PROTECTION ZONES

SLOW SPEED MANATEE ZONE
On November 14, 1991, the Governor and the Cabinet adopted an Interim Manatee Protection Plan for Dade County which included a number of boat speed regulatory zones designed to minimize the number of accidental strikes by boats to manatees. The plan is now Florida Law Section 16N-22.025 F.A.C. This brochure gives the locations and regulatory levels of these zones. Also note that there are boating safety zones in Dade County where boat speeds are regulated for public safety.

Regulatory zones are designated by signs along the waterway. The signs provide information concerning the beginning of the zone, the regulated speed, the area of the regulation, and the end point of the zone. We encourage you to study this brochure before leaving the dock so that you are more aware of the regulatory zones that you will encounter and the specific regulations of each one.

Regulatory zones are enforced by several law enforcement agencies including the Florida Marine Patrol. The maximum fine for speeding in a manatee protection zone is $500.00 and/or 6 months in jail.

**SPEED DEFINITIONS**

**Idle Speed** - A vessel that is operating at idle speed is proceeding at the minimum speed that will maintain the steerageway of the vessel.

**Slow Speed** - A vessel that is operating at slow speed is completely off plane, has settled into the water and is proceeding without wake or with minimum wake. Slow speed also means no speed greater than that which is reasonable and prudent to avoid either intentional or negligently annoying, molesting, harassing, disturbing, colliding with, injuring or harming manatees and which comports with the duty of all persons to use due care under the circumstances.

**35 MPH Maximum Speed** - A vessel that is operating at a minimum of 35 mph is not operating at an unsafe speed for the specific waterway conditions, does not have an elevated bow which restricts visibility and is not producing an excessive wake which unreasonably or unnecessarily endangers other vessels or natural resources of the state.

**PROTECTION ZONES**

Boating collisions cause many deaths and injuries each year in Florida waters. Accidental strikes by boats may cause manatee deaths or injuries. To minimize these hazards, boaters should stay in deep water navigation channels and reduce speed when operating in shallow waters outside navigation channels or in congested areas. To alert the boater and protect the manatee, a number of signs are utilized for marking regulatory speed zones. These signs are illustrated and defined below. The protection zones in Dade County are displayed on the following pages.

- **ENTERING MANATEE ZONE**
  - **LOW EXEMPT**
  - **SLOW SPEED**
  - **OUT OF ICW**

Sign marking the beginning of a regulated zone where the channel is exempt.

- **MANATEE ZONE**
  - **25 MPH IN ICW TO NEXT BRIDGE**

Sign marking a regulated channel area and stating how far the regulation extends.

- **MANATEE ZONE**
  - **SLOW SPEED CHANNEL INCLUDED**
  - **NOVEMBER 15 TO MARCH 31**

Sign marking a seasonally regulated zone with the channel included.

- **MANATEE ZONE**
  - **SLOW SPEED**
  - **50' FROM SHORE NEXT 5 MILES**

Sign indicating a slow speed zone along the shoreline.

- **LEAVING MANATEE ZONE**
  - **RESUME SAFE NORMAL OPERATION**

Sign marking the end of a regulated zone.
INSET A
DADE COUNTY
MANATEE PROTECTION ZONES

- SLOW SPEED ALL YEAR
- NO ENTRY NOVEMBER 15 THROUGH APRIL 30, IDLE SPEED REMAINDER OF YEAR

INSET B
DADE COUNTY
MANATEE PROTECTION ZONES

- SLOW SPEED ALL YEAR
- IDLE SPEED ALL YEAR
- NO ENTRY NOVEMBER 15 THROUGH APRIL 30, IDLE SPEED REMAINDER OF YEAR
MAP 3
DADE COUNTY
MANATEE PROTECTION ZONES

SLOW SPEED ALL YEAR
SLOW SPEED NOVEMBER 15 - APRIL 30,
30 MPH REMAINDER OF YEAR
SLOW SPEED NOVEMBER 15 - APRIL 30,
35 MPH REMAINDER OF YEAR
IDLE SPEED ALL YEAR
NO ENTRY ALL YEAR
MOTORBOATS PROHIBITED
35 MPH ALL YEAR
30 MPH ALL YEAR

MAP 3A
DADE COUNTY
MANATEE PROTECTION ZONES

SLOW SPEED ALL YEAR
SLOW SPEED NOVEMBER 15 - APRIL 30,
30 MPH REMAINDER OF YEAR
IDLE SPEED ALL YEAR
MAP 4 WEST
DADE COUNTY
MANATEE PROTECTION ZONES

- SLOW SPEED ALL YEAR
- IDLE SPEED ALL YEAR

MAP 5 WEST
DADE COUNTY
MANATEE PROTECTION ZONES

- SLOW SPEED ALL YEAR
- IDLE SPEED ALL YEAR
- NO ENTRY NOVEMBER 15 THROUGH APRIL 30, IDLE SPEED REMAINDER OF YEAR
WEST INDIAN MANATEE FACT SHEET

POPULATION: highly endangered

REPRODUCTION: mature at approximately 5 years of age; gestation approximately 13 months; one calf born every 2-3 years; cows nurse calves up to 2 years.

PROBLEMS: boat/barge collisions; habitat loss; crushing/drowning in flood gates and canal locks; cold-related illnesses; ingestion of fish hooks and monofilament line; entanglement in crab trap lines and fishing trawl nets; pollution.

PROTECTION: violators of state and federal laws protecting manatees are subject to fines up to $20,000 and prison sentences up to 1 year.

BEHAVIOR: gentle and slow moving; surfaces to breathe every 3-4 minutes; spends time eating, resting, and traveling; often shy and reclusive; has no system of defense and is completely harmless.

HABITAT: shallow, slow-moving, rivers, estuaries; saltwater bays; canals; coastal areas; particularly where seagrass beds flourish.

RANGE: Winter—manatees concentrate in natural warm-water springs of industrial power plant warm-water outfalls in Florida. Summer—move widely throughout entire habitat; sometimes swim just offshore to travel or graze; sometimes travel as far as the lower Carolinas on the East Coast and to Louisiana on the Gulf Coast

FOOD: submerged (e.g. Hydrilla), emergent (e.g. Spartina), and floating (e.g. Water-hyacinths) aquatic plants.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION WRITE OR CALL:

Florida Dept. of Natural Resources
Bureau of Marine Research
100 Eight Avenue, S.E.
St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5095
(813) 896-8626

Save the Manatee Club
1101 Audubon Way
Maitland, FL 32751
(407) 539-0990

The 1990 Florida Legislature directed the Florida Inland Navigation District (F.I.N.D.) to be responsible for posting and maintaining regulatory markers for manatee protection zones along the east coast of Florida. Dade County is responsible for posting and maintaining signs for boating safety. F.I.N.D. is an independent special taxing district created in 1927 to assist the federal government in the construction, maintenance and operation of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. F.I.N.D.'s district includes the eleven coastal counties from Dade to Duval.

Please contact the District if you observe signs that are in need of maintenance or repair. We wish to maintain our signs so that they are effective and do not become a boating hazard.

This brochure is produced by the Florida Inland Navigation District to educate the boating public about manatee protection zones. Brochures are available for other counties with approved Interim Manatee Protection Plans. The brochures are free and may be obtained by contacting the District at 1314 Marcinski Road, Jupiter, FL 33477. Telephone (407) 627-3386.
TO REPORT
manatee harassment
dead or injured manatees
tagged manatees
regulatory zone violations
CALL: 1-800-342-5367 RESOURCE ALERT

For more information concerning Manatee Protection Zones, please contact:

District 6 Florida Marine Patrol
(305) 325-3346

Dade County
Dept. of Environmental Resource Mgmt.
(305) 372-6851

Florida Dept. of Natural Resources
(904) 488-6058

Florida Inland Navigation District
(407) 627-3386

For information concerning manatees, please contact:

Save the Manatee Club
(407) 539-0990

Florida Dept. of Natural Resources
(813) 896-8626