

SAVE THE MANATEE® CLUB

The Voice For Manatees Since 1981

2012 HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Save the Manatee Club's (SMC) mission is to protect imperiled manatees and their aquatic habitat for future generations. To accomplish its mission, SMC works closely with federal, state, and local governments, as well as with other conservation partners and the public, at the grass roots level, and supports conservation measures based on the best scientific data available. SMC raises public awareness; educates; conducts research; sponsors rescue, rehabilitation, and release efforts; supports land acquisition; advocates for improved manatee and aquatic habitat protection; and assists conservation efforts in other countries. Many of SMC's supporters are also grass roots advocates, contacting decision-makers throughout the year in support of strong conservation measures and helping to obtain successful outcomes for manatee protection initiatives.

Education and Public Awareness:

SMC's extensive education and outreach efforts have grown over the years with the help of our supporters and volunteers. In 2012, SMC:

- Continued our work with the media, providing radio and television interviews, writing Op-Ed's, and making guest speaker appearances on numerous current topics.
- Printed and internationally distributed free education materials, including metal signage, stickers, book marks, and coloring and activity books; and print, television, and radio public service announcements and press releases to media centers.



Squeaky is the youngest manatee in our Blue Spring adoption program. Photo by Wayne Hartley.

- Produced and disseminated free signage to shoreline property owners in Florida to caution boaters about the presence of manatees.
- Coordinated with a company that makes electronic waterway navigation charts to raise boater awareness and promote manatee and resource protection.
- Expanded our Blue Spring manatee adoption program, helping to raise public awareness through our publications, on our website, and in the press.
- Staffed education booths at festivals and similar venues and gave educational presentations around the country. Grew our Volunteer Corps to over 1,600 participants.

- Continued to improve and expand our extensive educational website.
- Developed and installed webcams at Blue Spring during the 2011/2012 winter season, resulting in the viewing of rarely seen manatee behaviors. Go to manatv.org
- Produced and distributed new video and audio public service announcements, featuring Jimmy Buffett, to media centers across America.
- Increased our educational efforts with additional live and computer-based educational presentations to classrooms and community groups.
- Expanded outreach through our social networks, including Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and YouTube.



Photo © Patrick M. Rose

Conservation and Advocacy:

With the help of our supporters and large grass roots network, we worked in virtually every area of manatee conservation. In 2012, SMC:

- Reviewed and commented on numerous environmental resource and consumptive use permits that threatened important manatee habitat.
- Advocated for improved water quality and spring flows in Kings Bay, Crystal River.
- Compiled recommendations for the state as they prepared to update their Manatee Management Plan.
- Accompanied on-water law enforcement officers around Florida in order to determine strategies for increasing boater compliance.
- Led successful efforts to preserve most of the funding for the state's Manatee Critical Care Program, which funds the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of injured manatees.
- Assisted the Dauphin Island Sea Lab's Manatee Sighting Network by providing funding for signs and contributing outreach materials. Over 100 free signs were distributed and posted in Alabama waters.
- Assisted the Lowry Park Zoo with their manatee rehabilitation efforts, raising the funds needed for a new crane scale and shade cloths for the medical pools, and a new stretcher.
- Advocated successfully for a seasonal speed zone in Flagler County, and continue to campaign for a strong Manatee Protection Plan the County has agreed to create.
- Participated in the Blue Spring Interagency Working Group to ensure that the spring's protective Minimum Flows and Levels, which SMC helped to obtain, remain in place.
- Worked with the Blue Spring Alliance to promote protection of the spring and springshed.
- Addressed the harassment of manatee mating herds in targeted areas around Florida.
- Actively supported efforts to obtain federal Environmental Protection Agency numeric nutrient standards for Florida's impaired waters.
- Opposed a proposal to allow cave diving at Wakulla Springs State Park during the winter months when more manatees are becoming dependent on the spring for survival.
- Advocated successfully for new rules for the Crystal River Manatee Refuge that curb harassment of manatees by swimmers and divers, and expand federal authority during prolonged cold weather.



A manatee mother and her calf at Blue Spring. Photo © Patrick M. Rose.



Debra and Doug Brown working hard volunteering after receiving their Manatee Hero medals from the Club. Photo by Terry Nearing.

- Recommended enhancement of manatee and habitat-related educational elements to the draft management plans for the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge and Big Bend Seagrass Aquatic Preserve.
- Monitored a legislative review of manatee protection speed zones to ensure that Senate staff had all the data and information needed for a thorough assessment.
- Successfully advocated to stop the joint efforts of the City of Crystal River, Citrus County, and Save Crystal River to remove all manatee speed zones from Kings Bay.
- Objected to plans for a multi-lane boat ramp and Port project on the Barge Canal in Citrus County that provides access to a known manatee birthing area.

Research:

Over the years, SMC has given hundreds of thousands of dollars to research with help from our members and supporters. Armed with scientific data, SMC has been able to win new protections for manatees and their aquatic habitat. In 2012 SMC:

- Analyzed data from SMC research to document boater compliance with speed zones in Kings Bay to increase protection measures.
- Analyzed data from SMC's winter study of manatees at Blue Spring and Crystal River to enhance protection policies.
- Continued our research observing the Blue Spring manatees, recording 400 individuals during the winter season: 59 manatees suffered 68 boat strikes with 9 hit twice.
- Compiled many of the genealogies of the Blue Spring manatees, some spanning six generations.



Wayne Hartley, our Manatee Specialist (left), and Patrick Rose, our Executive Director, inspect and photo document manatees and other wildlife in Blue Spring.

International Conservation Efforts:

SMC has helped to perpetuate manatee populations in Central and South America, in West Africa, and beyond, by supporting local education and conservation efforts. SMC has also begun supporting dugong conservation efforts. In 2012, SMC:

- Funded infrastructure improvements at a Belize manatee rehabilitation facility, including a new lift system for large manatees and a new pump for a water heating system.
- Donated funds to the Belize facility to feed two rescued manatees.



Dr. Katie Tripp, our Director of Science and Conservation, receives instruction from a staff member of Tortuguero National Park in Costa Rica on the use of side scan sonar technology to detect manatees. Photo courtesy C. Espinosa.

- Coordinated with a Brazilian conservation group to aid in their education and conservation efforts for Amazonian manatees.
- Expanded our collaboration efforts with a conservation group in Costa Rica, and helped develop a conservation plan for the entire Caribbean Coast of Costa Rica.
- Supported the rescue/relocation of a mother and calf in the Bahamas. Provided transport vessel costs, a GoPro camera, signage, funds for a satellite tag, ARGOS satellite costs to track the pair, and education materials for community outreach efforts.
- Helped to print educational posters for Cuba, where manatees are still taken for food in some areas.
- Collaborated with partners in Cuba, Mexico, and Costa Rica to create and distribute a Spanish version of SMC's coloring and activity books.
- Purchased a computer, camera, and tent for a manatee researcher working in Senegal's Tocc Tocc Reserve with West African manatees.
- Provided funds to an organization in Mozambique for equipment for rangers to patrol Bazaruto National Park to control illegal net fishing that entraps and drowns dugongs.

Our Core Values

Supporting the most effective conservation actions possible, making science-based decisions and supporting science-driven policies, demanding accountability from policy-makers, and working cooperatively.



Save the Manatee® Club

500 N. Maitland Ave. • Maitland, FL 32751
800-432-JOIN (5646) • savethemanatee.org