

SAVE THE MANATEE CLUB

The voice for manatees since 1981

Our mission is to protect endangered manatees and their aquatic habitat for future generations.

In addition to these recent accomplishments and new initiatives, Save the Manatee Club is engaged in on-going outreach, education, and advocacy efforts with schools, individuals, organizations, and governmental agencies, to ensure protections for manatees and their habitat, both in the United States and around the world.

Key Accomplishments for 2013

- Contributed directly to, and led advocacy efforts to, ensure essential funding for manatee rescue and rehabilitation programs in Florida as well as in other countries. Over 300 manatees have been treated under these programs in Florida alone. Without the funding for the critical care of sick and injured manatees, many more would have needlessly suffered and died.
- Led additional efforts to secure state funding for the University of Florida, Marine Mammal Veterinary Program and its research efforts related to manatees.
- Accepted a leadership role with the state's Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP), working with critical care and other manatee facilities and agencies that provide rescue, rehabilitation, and release of injured manatees. Pat Rose, SMC's Executive Director, chairs the MRP Finance Committee, and Dr. Katie Tripp, SMC Director of Science and Conservation, serves as co-chair of the entire MRP.
- Provided direct support, with funds from SMC members and donors, to the Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs State Wildlife Park in order to feed and care for manatees in rehabilitation suffering from detrimental effects due to red tide events in their natural habitat.
- Facilitated the initiation of a study, in cooperation with the University of Florida, to test genes and proteins expressed when manatees are exposed to toxins. The study is designed to see if there is a distinct biological signature for manatees responding to toxin exposure. If so, it can be tested for in cases of unusual or unknown manatee mortality, such as the strange deaths in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL).
- Actively monitored the development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) around the state, as these are important to protect waterways inhabited by manatees from nutrient pollution.
- Worked to legally hold Florida Water Management Districts and the Department of Environmental Protection to the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act, when setting Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) for Florida's springs and rivers. Currently, these state agencies do not recognize the critical link between water quantity and water quality that continues to jeopardize essential aquatic habitats. This work is in partnership with Save Our Springs NOW.
- Stopped illegal dredging of critical manatee habitat in Kings Bay, Crystal River, Florida.



Red tide affected manatee, Cheer, getting a final checkup before release in July 2013. Photo courtesy of Lowry Park Zoo.



Cida being prepared for release, after recovering from red tide exposure, June 2013. Photo courtesy of FWC.

- Celebrated the appointment of Dr. Katie Tripp to Florida’s Boating Advisory Council, providing an essential voice for manatees and key advice on boating-related issues to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
 - Secured funding from the Protect Florida Springs license plate fund for Blue Spring Alliance to conduct two springshed academies for residents within the Blue Spring springshed. The academies teach residents about the springshed, their impact on it, and ways to preserve and conserve water, with a concentration on how to become more effective advocates for the system.
 - Provided guidance and support to the newly formed Kings Bay Springs Alliance, a citizen’s group advocating for protection of Kings Bay and its important freshwater springs, in Citrus County, Florida.
 - Advocated for local fertilizer ordinances in Brevard County communities, to reduce nutrient loading into the IRL.
 - Strategically partnered with local, state, and federal agencies to seek solutions for the mass mortality threats within the Indian River Lagoon.
 - Collaborated with key agencies to tag and monitor manatees from the IRL to better understand the impact of seagrass losses, algal blooms, and other environmental issues on manatee health and survival.
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- Promoted Manatee Alert, the first app available to boaters on Florida waters, alerting them to the presence and location of Manatee Protection Speed Zones. Developed in partnership with EarthNC, a Florida-based corporation, through their conservation venture Conserve.IO, the app encourages voluntary compliance, making the waterways safer for boaters and manatees.
 - Distributed extensive one-of-a-kind genealogies for the Blue Spring manatees developed by Wayne Hartley, SMC’s long-standing Manatee Specialist. Featuring the unique scar patterns of the manatees who frequent Blue Spring, it can be used to identify individual Blue Spring manatees on the web cam during winter.
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- Archived Wayne Hartley’s extensive historic and contemporary field data, including notes and photographic images, building our knowledge of the Blue Spring manatee population (the most intensely studied group of manatees in the world, due to Wayne’s long-standing work). SMC’s Blue Spring webcams provide an additional source of behavioral data and documentation of individual manatees present at Blue Spring.
 - Archiving thousands of hours of video footage posted on our **manatv.org** website for future production of educational videos. The archives include interesting manatee behaviors, including many interactions with very large alligators.



Photo © David Schrichte



Join our lifesaving efforts today, to ensure a safer tomorrow for these gentle, peaceful, and amazing creatures.