

## Manatees in Clam Bay

The Pelican Bay Services Division, per Collier County ordinance, has responsibility for the maintenance of the Clam Bay conservation area and is responsible for advising the County on dredging Clam Pass.

My comments will focus on manatees in Clam Bay.

From the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) report published in January 2016, we know the following:

- The manatee aerial survey data for 2006-08 recorded that the Wiggins Pass/Cocohatchee River and Clam Bay zones had significantly higher densities of manatees than the other three zones in Northern Collier County. (Page 6)
- The Manatee PTT Telemetry Data from 1991-2008 recorded three manatees in Clam Bay which was the same number of manatees recorded in Moorings Bay. (Figure 20)
- The Manatee aerial survey data from 2006-2008 recorded five manatees in Clam Bay. (Figure 5)

The above data confirm the presence of manatees in Clam Bay. These data are supplemented by recent manatee sightings reported by residents and Conservancy volunteers who conduct Thursday morning nature walks in Clam Bay.

Thus the water level and sea grass conditions in Clam Bay are more than adequate to provide a safe foraging and resting habitat for migrating manatees. We know that the amount of seagrass in Clam Bay declined significantly from 1994 to the present. Some of this decline may be due to increased high-speed boat activity in Outer Clam Bay in the last several years. To help restore seagrasses which are critical to manatees I ask that the committee recommend that Clam Bay be designated as an idle-speed manatee protection zone.

Thank you.

Susan O'Brien, Chair  
Pelican Bay Services Division's Clam Bay Committee