

Minority Report: 10,000 Islands by Susan Snyder

Facts about 10,000 Islands:

This area is used extensively by manatees. Although data provided by FWC is dated, manatee aerial surveys (1986 - 1993) show 86.7 manatees per survey (4942 total) for both seasons; 3303 total in the warm season. (1)

This area is used by many boaters. Boat Aerial Surveys (2006-2007) show 257.1 boats per survey (4114 total) for both seasons; 3697 total in the warm season. (2)

Boat-related Manatee Mortality from 1974 to 2015 totals 76 with 36 killed in summer months and 40 killed in winter months. **Mortality numbers in the last 15 years (2000-2015), 31 deaths, equates to 41% of all manatees killed by boats in the last 41 years.** (3) This number proves current speeds are not protecting manatees.

Unlike other counties in Florida, Collier County manatee population is not increasing, and we cannot afford to be complacent about speed zones. The average number of manatees per synoptic survey for the county between 1991 and 2015 is 184 with the low being 98 in 2002 and the high of 354 in 2001. (4)

Seagrasses in this area form discontinuous beds (5) Section 379.2431(2) F.S. (The Florida Manatee Sanctuary Act), 68C-22.001 Scope and Purpose lists conditions where restrictions are necessary to protect manatees or manatee habitats. The Act recognizes “the existence of features within the area that are essential to the survival of, or are known to attract, manatees, such as seagrasses or other food sources...” (6)

Existing Zone: According to FWC, there are existing 30/20 zones in most waters of 10,000 Islands outside of Everglades National Park with the exception of the Faka Union Canal/Port of the Islands area and the immediate vicinity of Everglades.

Minority Opinion: Change 30/20 zones to 30/Slow Speed zones where there are marked channels, and 20 shore-to-shore speed zones where there are no marked channels.

Rationale for Minority Opinion: These changes will better protect manatees by giving both manatees and boat captains more time to react to prevent possible collisions. Further, if there are collisions, blunt force injuries to the manatees will be much less severe. Finally, slower speeds will reduce turbidity, creating less stress on the seagrasses.

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- (1) Figures 55 & 56 (pg. 78 & 79) Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Materials for Collier County LRRC March 25, 2016.
 - (2) Figures 57 & 58 (pg. 80 & 81) Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Materials for Collier County LRRC March 25, 2016.
 - (3) Figures 59 & 60 (pg. 82 & 83) Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Materials for Collier County LRRC March 25, 2016.
 - (4) <<http://www.colliergov.net/home/showdocument?id=64884>> FWC Manatee Synoptic Survey Results for Collier County 1991-2015. This graph was plotted from data provided to the LRRC on April 1, 2016 by Scott Calleson.
 - (5) Preliminary Data Benthic Habitats map: The Journal of Wildlife Management 75 (2): 399-412; 2011;DOI: 10.1002/jwmg.41 “New Aerial Survey and Hierarchical Model to Estimate Manatee Abundance:
 - (6) “Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission... Materials for Collier County LRRC, March 25, 2016,” Section 2, page 5, 68C-22.001 Scope and Purpose (2) (a) 1. c