



# Canal Current

A wave of information for Cape Coral's Canalwatch volunteers

Newsletter: 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2023

## Environmental News

### November is Manatee Awareness Month

Manatees can be exciting to see in the wild as they glide through the water or breach briefly to catch a breath. These large, marine mammals are found throughout Florida, the Gulf Coast to Mexico, the Caribbean, and the Atlantic Coast to as far north as the Carolinas and Virginia.

Recently they were considered a model of conservation success in Florida, when its population increased to an estimate of over 7,500 animals. However, in the past few years those numbers have declined as food availability has diminished due to habitat loss, red tide, entanglement in fishing line or other marine debris, and boat strikes lead to many deaths. Florida manatees are classified as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act and are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. In Florida Manatees are protected by the Florida Manatee Sanctuary Act. Conservation efforts through the Florida Manatee Management Plan are helping to conserve this marine mammal and its habitat.

Manatees are herbivores and their diet includes seagrasses and other aquatic plants. They are often called "sea cows". However, they are more related to an elephant than a cow. During the summer months their range throughout Florida is vast and comprises the entire coastline. Where they are free to graze wherever food sources are available.

When water temperatures begin to drop during the cooler months, manatees will seek refuge and congregate in springs, power plant cooling canals or shallow coastal areas that receive plenty of sunlight.

During these fall and winter migrations to seek warmer water, manatees are often more vulnerable to boat strikes. Because they travel in and out of those areas to find food.

Most human-related manatee fatalities occur from collisions with watercraft. Because of this, November is Manatee Awareness Month. It is a crucial time for boaters to be vigilant in spotting manatees, before an incident occurs.

Please obey all posted signs and slowdown in areas where you see manatees or know that manatees might be present.

The City of Cape Coral Environmental Resources Division sometimes receives reports of injured or dead manatees. If you see a manatee that seems injured or deceased, please call Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation's Wildlife Alert Toll-Free Number: 1-888-404-FWCC (1-888-404-3922), press "7" to speak with an operator, or just dial \*FWC or #FWC on your cell phone.



Herd of manatees in a Cape Coral Canal

## Manatee Sighting and Viewing Areas

Seeing a manatee in the wild is often a “by chance” occurrence. However, there are some areas where manatees frequent during the cooler drier months and as water temperatures drop.



Manatee with a prop scar seen in Cape Coral

- Manatee Park in Fort Myers
  - 10901 Palm Beach Blvd

This Lee County Park is located across from the Florida Power and Light power plant. The location of the park comprises a manmade canal that the warm water from cooling power generation equipment is directed. The canal intersects Orange River. Manatees seek this warm water and congregate in the canal. Other park amenities are walking trails, kayak rentals and a visitors center with educational programs spotlighting manatees.

- Sirenia Vista Park in Cape Coral
  - 3916 Ceitus Pkwy

This City of Cape Coral Park is located at the terminus of the North Spreader Waterway, which connects to Matlacha Pass. The park’s seclusion and proximity to Matlacha Pass make it an ideal stopping point for manatees wanting to rest from time spent foraging. Other park amenities include walking trails, fishing platform, kayak launch, and birding. This environmental park has a resident osprey and purple martin nest gourds. It located directly across from the Charlotte Harbor Buffer Preserve State Park lands, so other birding opportunities are available.

If you are interested in supporting manatee research and rescue you can add a \$5.00 donation to your vehicle registration (Florida Tax Collector) and receive a manatee decal along with your license plate decal. Or you can fill out this form by following this link

<https://myfwc.com/media/29710/manateedecalorderform.pdf> anytime.





Path at Sirenia Vista Park Cape Coral

**Other Notable Manatee Organizations**

**Save The Manatee Club**

Save the Manatee Club is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) and membership-based manatee conservation organization established in 1981 by a collaborative effort between the well-known singer/songwriter, Jimmy Buffett, and former U.S. Senator, Bob Graham, when he was governor of Florida.



This organization has many ways to contribute to manatee conservation, protection, and rescue. Members can symbolically, “Adopt-A-Manatee” to target their funding toward an actual manatee.

More information at <http://savethemanatee.org>

**Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium**



Mote’s Manatee Research Program contributes to manatee research involving ecology, habitat, population trends and conservation efforts.

Their resident manatee “Buffett” can be viewed in the marine aquarium.

For more information, please visit <http://mote.org>

	July 2023						August 2023						September 2023						Avg	
	NO2	NO3	NH3	TKN	T-N	T-PO4	NO2	NO3	NH3	TKN	T-N	T-PO4	NO2	NO3	NH3	TKN	T-N	T-PO4	TSI	
	<1.0	<1.0	none set	<2.0	<0.46	<1.0	<1.0	none set	<2.0	<0.46	<1.0	<1.0	none set	<2.0	<0.46	<1.0	<1.0	none set	<2.0	<0.46
3J	0.01	0.06	0.10	0.75	0.82	0.11	0.01	0.02	0.10	0.46	0.49	0.13	0.01	0.01	0.17	0.48	0.50	0.07	42.08	
5D	0.01	0.05	0.10	0.31	0.37	0.09	0.01	0.02	0.10	0.70	0.73	0.11	0.01	0.02	0.36	0.59	0.62	0.08	44.20	
7E							0.01	0.14	0.11	0.94	1.09	0.19	0.01	0.02	0.09	0.40	0.43	0.1	52.14	
9H	0.01	0.13	0.10	0.91	1.05	0.10	0.01	0.08	0.10	0.86	0.95	0.12	0.01	0.03	0.05	0.26	0.30	0.06	49.46	
9I	0.01	0.04	0.60	2.64	2.69	0.22													68.41	
12H	0.01	0.04	0.10	2.00	2.05	0.11	0.01	0.09	0.10	0.95	1.05	0.18							61.83	
13B													0.01	0.01	0.02	0.39	0.41	0.05	38.35	
15G	0.01	0.05	0.10	0.91	0.97	0.15	0.01	3.01	0.10	0.88	3.90	0.12	0.01	0.06	0.15	0.44	0.51	0.05	58.71	
16E	0.01	0.04	0.10	0.62	0.67	0.08	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.67	0.69	0.06	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.31	0.33	0.02	45.65	
16I	0.01	0.04	0.10	0.70	0.75	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.75	0.77	0.06							52.27	
18K	0.01	0.03	0.10	0.78	0.82	0.19							0.01	0.01	0.02	0.76	0.78	0.04	51.36	
18L							0.01	0.02	0.10	0.57	0.60	0.18	0.01	0.01	0.08	0.66	0.68	0.07	51.09	
18M													0.01	0.01	0.02	0.66	0.68	0.04	49.29	
19D							0.01	0.04	0.10	0.89	0.94	0.22	0.01	0.12	0.02	0.56	0.69	0.11	60.14	
21D	0.01	0.31	0.15	1.04	1.36	0.13	0.01	0.09	0.10	0.61	0.71	0.13	0.01	0.04	0.08	0.57	0.62	0.07	54.29	
21I	0.01	0.05	0.10	1.03	1.09	0.09	0.01	0.03	0.10	0.32	0.36	0.07	0.02	0.17	0.02	0.63	0.82	0.04	48.65	
21K													0.01	0.07	0.03	0.79	0.87	0.03	46.46	
24D	0.01	0.04	0.10	0.70	0.75	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.57	0.59	0.04							50.10	
30E	0.01	0.04	0.10	0.69	0.74	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.23	0.25	0.08	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.33	0.35	0.02	44.23	
48A							0.01	0.07	0.10	0.71	0.79	0.05							53.77	
50B	0.01	0.02	0.10	0.81	0.84	0.04							0.01	0.01	0.02	0.67	0.69	0.04	59.38	

58I	0.01	0.03	0.10	0.79	0.83	0.06	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.21	0.23	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.69	0.71	0.04	44.50
63A	0.01	0.04	0.10	2.53	2.58	0.14	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.83	0.85	0.08							67.02
64H	0.01	0.06	0.15	0.82	0.89	0.10	0.01	0.05	0.12	0.10	0.16	0.12	0.01	0.06	0.64	0.56	0.63	0.09	39.77
70H													0.01	0.02	0.05	0.62	0.65	0.12	26.43
72C	0.01	0.03	0.10	0.28	0.32	0.09	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.10	0.12	0.07	0.01	0.02	0.07	0.87	0.90	0.1	42.95
74C	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.20	0.22	0.08	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.10	0.12	0.06	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.63	0.65	0.11	35.85
74G							0.01	0.01	0.10	0.20	0.22	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.69	0.71	0.1	40.85
82A	0.01	0.01	0.10	1.21	1.23	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.19	0.21	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.61	0.64	0.03	45.17
94C	0.01	0.03	0.10	1.18	1.22	0.05							0.01	0.08	0.10	0.00	0.09	0.12	48.16
Median		0.04	0.10	0.81	0.84	0.09		0.02	0.10	0.59	0.65	0.08		0.02	0.03	0.60	0.65	0.07	48.97
Max		0.31	0.60	2.64	2.69	0.22		3.01	0.12	0.95	3.90	0.22		0.17	0.64	0.87	0.90	0.12	68.41

NO2 = Nitrite (inorganic)	TKN = Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (organic + NH4)	High levels of nutrients in our canals can indicate the presence of fertilizer runoff or effluent from wastewater or septic systems. Excessive nutrients can lead to nuisance plant growth and algal blooms.
NO3 = Nitrate (inorganic)	TN = Total Nitrogen (inorganic + organic)	
NH3 = Ammonia (inorganic)	TP04 = Total Phosphate	

All nutrient concentrations shown in mg/L

TSI = Trophic State Index, a quick indicator of canal health. 26 sites this quarter scored as GOOD (<60). 4 site scored FAIR (60-70), and zero scored POOR (>70).  
 Third quarter 2023 water quality decreased at some of the sites, but this was likely due to stormwater runoff causing water clarity issues. Secchi measurements for many of the sites did not reach the bottom. This is a condition of deeper water levels and increased microscopic algae growth. Some Canals along the Caloosahatchee did experience blue green algae, but not as detrimental as past years. About mid October ushered in the dry season, but there is indication that it will be a wetter than normal winter for South Florida.

**For up-to-date City of Cape Environmental Resources Division water quality date visit [https://www.capecoral.net/departments/public\\_works/quarterly\\_water\\_quality\\_reports.php](https://www.capecoral.net/departments/public_works/quarterly_water_quality_reports.php)**



***Thankful for You!***



***Thank you Canalwatch Volunteers for  
your time and dedication to the program.***

***Have a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving  
Holiday.***

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