

## **UME Update 1/26/2022**

### [Video Update](#)

With both cooler air and water temperatures throughout the state, manatees continue to gather in large numbers at many warm water sites. This week, staff estimated there were almost 400 manatees in the supplemental feeding trial area of the Temporary Field Response Station.

Because this trial effort is a management action that has not been attempted before, we do not know how much vegetation individual manatees will consume. One of the goals of this action is to reduce manatee mortality. It will not eliminate it.

Unfortunately, with the cooler temperatures, staff are seeing a rise in the number of manatee carcasses. Staff continue to work on manatee carcass recovery operations in coastal waterways. Necropsy teams are investigating manatee health through sampling of select carcasses. The majority of manatee carcasses continue to be in the East Central and Southeast Florida regions.

Staff continue to focus on rescuing animals in need of assistance. They are also working with the Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP) to release rehabilitated manatees into suitable habitat, which will free up room for recently rescued animals at critical care facilities.

### **Statewide manatee rescue update:**

1/19- Over the past two weeks, the Clearwater Marine Aquarium and the FWC monitored a manatee with a severe watercraft-related injury in Spring Bayou in the city of Tarpon Springs. A rescue team made up of staff from the FWC and the Clearwater Marine Aquarium was able to capture the manatee, which was transported to SeaWorld.

1/20- Last April, an emaciated male manatee was rescued in the Halifax River and rehabbed at Jacksonville Zoo. He was satellite-tagged by the Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation Partnership and released into Blue Springs State Park a few weeks ago but has since appeared to be headed toward less suitable winter habitat. On January 20, a response team including the FWC, Jacksonville Zoo and Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute captured, relocated, and released him back into Blue Springs.

1/20- Several manatees were observed on the west side of the St. Lucie Lock. The lock, located in Stuart, typically allows manatees to exit Lake Okeechobee into east coast waters but is currently closed for major maintenance and repairs. We believe the unseasonably warm weather resulted in the manatees not moving through the lock to their wintering site before maintenance began. A large team including the FWC, USFWS, SeaWorld, ZooTampa, Harbor Branch, University of Florida, and Army Corps of Engineers responded to capture and relocate the manatees to the east side of

the structure. The team was successful in capturing and relocating two adult female manatees.

1/20- FWC staff received a public report of an emaciated, unresponsive beached manatee near Jupiter. Unfortunately, the manatee expired before the rescue team could reach it.

1/22- The FWC responded to a report of an adult manatee in Fort Pierce with rapid breathing and a watercraft wound on its back. The manatee was captured but unfortunately passed away before the rescue team could transport the animal to a critical care facility.