

## **UME Update 02/02/2022**

### [Video Update](#)

As anticipated, the arrival of cold weather decreased water temperatures which increased the number of Florida manatees requiring or being considered for rescue along Florida's Atlantic Coast. These winter temperatures further impact many of the manatees compromised by the ongoing starvation event. The FWC and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Unified Command (UC) recovery operations documented a significant increase in carcasses in the Indian River Lagoon, with Brevard County seeing the greatest impacts. These numbers are expected to remain high over the duration of winter.

Due to the UME's emergency status, UC staff are working under a directive to remove as many carcasses from the affected area as possible and are appreciative of the cooperation of various local landfills in accepting manatee remains in greater numbers than in previous years. FWRI scientists examine these carcasses which contributes to our understanding of this ongoing mortality event on the Atlantic coast and informs manatee conservation actions.

The FWC and the USFWS remain committed to responding to the manatee UME and continue to actively implement science-based conservation measures that are making a difference for manatees and their habitat. Responding to live manatees in need of rescue continues to be a top priority for wildlife agencies and partners from the Manatee Rehabilitation Partnership. FWC manatee biologists have been working hard to respond to public reports of distressed manatees and rescue manatees that need assistance.

While we certainly understand the media and public are interested in our operations, we ask that observers do so at a safe distance and allow staff to work without interference. Data and images related to recovery operations, rescues and other UC operations are updated and posted at least once a week to the UME response page below.

### **Statewide Rescues and Releases**

1/26- A rescue team responded to public reports of a lone manatee in Captiva. Once on scene, the team captured the adult male manatee, described as lethargic and thin with some cold stress lesions. The manatee was transported to SeaWorld for rehabilitation.

1/27 - A female calf that was rescued last year in Fort Pierce and underwent rehabilitation at Sea World and Disney was released at Florida Power and Light's Manatee Lagoon by the FWC and volunteers.

1/28 - FWC staff received a report of a buoyant and listing manatee in the Cape Canaveral Energy Center discharge canal. A rescue team of FWC and SeaWorld staff captured the adult

female manatee, which was transported to SeaWorld for rehabilitation. Unfortunately, the manatee died the next morning.

1/31 - A rescue team (FWC, Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute, Volusia County, University of Florida, Save the Manatee Club, and Blue Spring State Park) responded to a manatee in Lake Harris with no access to a warm water site. The adult male was captured and determined to be in good condition, so it was transported to and released at Blue Spring State Park.

2/1 - A subadult female manatee, rescued due to cold stress in Rocky Creek (Tampa) last February, and that was rehabilitated at Sea World and Disney, was released at the TECO Manatee Viewing Center.