

UME Weekly Update: 3/30/2022

[Video Update](#)

The FWC and the USFWS Unified Command staff continue to provide lettuce to the remaining manatees at the Temporary Field Response Station. However, this will be the last week of the temporary feeding trial as manatees continue to disperse from wintering warm-water sites. Once the feeding trial is completed daily monitoring will occur in the waters surrounding the Response Station and staff and partners will continue responding to manatees in need of assistance.

As manatees naturally disperse from warm-water refuges, people are more likely to see them while enjoying Florida's waterways. Public reports about distressed manatees to the FWC's Wildlife Alert hotline are essential to allow trained, expert staff to determine the best course of action. If you see an injured, sick, orphaned or dead manatee, please contact the FWC's Wildlife Alert at 888-404-FWCC (3922).

While people may want to help manatees by attempting to feed them, please leave this to the experts. Feeding manatees is prohibited by state and federal law. However, emergency exemptions allow for authorized FWC and USFWS staff to provide food to manatees impacted by the Unusual Mortality Event. The short-term supplemental feeding trial is being done by experts in ways that prevent negative impacts to manatee behavior and habitat.

People can help manatees by making sure to go slow and looking out below while boating and reporting sightings of injured, sick or dead manatees to the FWC Wildlife Alert Hotline. For more ways to help, visit: <https://myfwc.com/research/manatee/rescue-mortality-response/ume/>.

As the manatees continue dispersing with warming waters and weather, the Joint Unified Command's 2021-2022 winter enhanced support efforts are starting to scale operations to a spring and summer response mode. Scaling down the enhanced winter season support does not mean the work ends. A core group of UC staff will remain active for future planning and contingency response. Meanwhile, agency staff, volunteers, and our many partners within the Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation Partnership will continue to work tirelessly to rescue and care for manatees needing help. Recovery efforts will also continue as staff collect and examine carcasses to add to our understanding of this ongoing mortality event.

Statewide Rescues:

3/24 – The FWC and Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute rescued a male manatee with watercraft wounds and transported it to SeaWorld. Due to the extent of the animal's injury, it was euthanized on 03/28/2022.

3/25 – The FWC and ZooTampa rescued a small emaciated male manatee in St. Petersburg. Unfortunately, the manatee died during transport to ZooTampa.

3/29 - FWC, Mote Marine Laboratory, and FPL staff rescued an emaciated manatee reported in Port Everglades. The adult female was transported to SeaWorld for rehabilitation.

Statewide Releases:

There were no releases this week.