



Dauphin Island Sea Lab's MANATEE SIGHTING NETWORK

Fall/Winter 2018 Newsletter



Necropsy reveals manatee likely killed by boat-strike

Credit: DISL/MSN



MSN staff perform a necropsy to determine cause of death.

In November, MSN responded to a manatee carcass reported in the Mobile River shipping channel near downtown Mobile, AL. Necropsy results showed the manatee suffered blunt force trauma likely caused by a boat-strike. This adult male had a sighting history in the northern Gulf of Mexico. Nicknamed “Hoth,” he was first documented in Crystal River, FL in 2007 and was at least 12 years old. Last winter, Hoth was rescued in the Florida panhandle and treated for severe cold stress at a rehabilitation facility. Hoth’s story highlights two major threats to our local manatees: cold and boat strikes. Hoth was at least the second manatee possibly killed by boat strike in AL. The first was well-known manatee “Zewie” in 2015.

Highlights

- **Boat-strike mortality in AL**
- **Watching for red tide**
- **Kellogg returns to Alabama!**
- **Late season manatee sightings**
- **MSN on the road! This fall researchers presented data at meetings in Galveston, TX & Mobile, AL**

Tagged manatee Kellogg returns to Alabama waters

“Kellogg” was first captured and tagged in Dog River, AL in summer 2017. He returned to Alabama this summer, spending time in northern Mobile Bay and the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. MSN researchers used satellite telemetry to track Kellogg in the field and collected data on his behavior and habitat use.

Kellogg was mostly observed alone or with one other manatee, feeding and resting in shallow, freshwater areas. In August, Kellogg moved east to Pensacola, FL, where his tag became detached. This December, Kellogg was spotted at the Three Sister’s Spring in Crystal River, FL. We hope to retag Kellogg this winter to learn more about his movements.



MSN staff track satellite tagged manatee Kellogg (center) in Mobile Bay, Alabama.



Credit: DISL/MSN Contributor

It's now too cold for manatees in the northern Gulf of Mexico!

Report all sightings online or by phone!

**Manatee.disl.org
1-866-493-5803**

Like! Us on Facebook: Mobile Manatees Sighting Network

Late season manatees in AL & MS

November 15th marks the start of manatee stranding season in Alabama and Mississippi waters, and our MSN team has been busy with several late season sightings. Local water temperatures are now well below the 20°C (68°F) threshold for manatees, meaning animals remaining in the area are at risk of potentially fatal cold stress syndrome.

Just after Thanksgiving, MSN received numerous sightings of a manatee near Pascagoula, MS. MSN responders in coordination with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service determined the manatee was exhibiting cold stress symptoms and was in need of help. Another manatee, reported December 3rd near Daphne, AL also had signs of severe cold stress, and responders were dispatched to assess the manatee's condition.

Both manatees disappeared before rescue teams arrived, and search efforts to relocate the manatees were unsuccessful. We remain hopeful that these animals moved east toward warmer waters but continue to be on high alert for manatee strandings in our area.

**Report sightings
immediately**

1-866-493-5803

Right: Manatee with signs of cold stress in Pascagoula, MS.



Credit: T. Saucier

Manatee mortalities in 2018

In our last issue, MSN reported on this year's record pace for manatee mortalities. Severe cold temperatures early in the year and prolonged red tide blooms in southern Florida contributed to more than 760 manatee deaths during 2018. This year is currently the third deadliest on record for the U.S. manatee population, and total mortalities may surpass the record 830 animals that died during 2013.

**To report sick, injured or dead manatees
in Alabama or Mississippi, call
DISL/MSN's 24-hour emergency hotline**

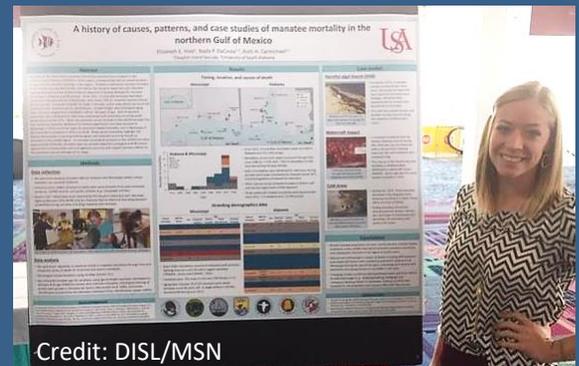
1-866-493-5803



Credit: Wikimedia

Red tide blooms (left) are blamed for nearly 200 manatee deaths in 2018.

MSN at Bays & Bayous!



Credit: DISL/MSN

Researchers from the DISL marine mammal research program attended two key meetings this fall—the *Bays & Bayous Symposium* in Mobile, AL and the *Gulf Estuarine Research Society* meeting in Galveston, TX. At these meetings, scientists, resource managers, policy makers, and industry leaders shared knowledge and discussed challenges facing our coastal ecosystems. We shared data on manatee ecology and causes of death, raising awareness of our research and threats to manatees in local waters.

Support MSN!

Alabama manatee Manfred is asking all his manatee loving friends to support MSN with an end-of-year tax-deductible donation! Your contribution will help fund local manatee research, outreach, and stranding response.

**Donate online at
[manatee.disl.org!](http://manatee.disl.org)**



Credit:
J. Steele