



Dauphin Island Sea Lab's MANATEE SIGHTING NETWORK

Fall/Winter 2021 Newsletter



New paper on manatee migration in the northern Gulf

A new publication from MSN researchers, led by Dr. Carl Cloyd, uses GPS data from tagged manatees to better understand manatee migration across the northern Gulf of Mexico. These data show that manatees use migratory strategies to expand their range into the northern Gulf, with many individuals spending cumulatively more time in the region than in peninsular Florida. The article also defines stopovers and endpoints most frequently used by manatees along migration routes.

Results from this paper may be used to guide conservation decisions for manatees with implications for other migratory species.

[Read more here:](#)

[Cloyd et al. \(2021\) *Frontiers in Marine Science*. doi:10.3389/fmars.2021.725837](#)



Credit: C. Berchem

Migratory stopover and endpoints (top) of tagged manatees (left)

Highlights

- **New paper on manatee migration**
- **Staff attend satellite tag training**
- **In-person outreach events return!**
- **Record highs and lows for manatees**
- **New eco-friendly manatee plush**



Credit: DISL/MSN Contributor

MSN staff train with manatee tagging experts

This November, MSN staff traveled to Green Cove Springs, Florida to train with experts at Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute (CMARI) on building manatee tagging gear. During the 2-day training, staff learned how to assemble and program satellite GPS tags used to track manatee movements. MSN team members also gained experience constructing tagging belts, specially designed by CMARI and custom-fitted to tagged manatees. We look forward to using this knowledge as part of an upcoming collaborative project with CMARI and other partners in 2022!



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**

Outreach update!

With COVID-19 precautions in place, MSN staff and volunteers returned to in-person outreach events to raise awareness for manatees! We attended school and community events and were especially happy to meet finalists from the AL Species Initiative, a collaboration with K-6 students and teachers in Baldwin County, AL to raise awareness for AL species like manatees!



Alabama Species Initiative finalists visit the Marine Mammal Research Center at DISL



MSN presents to pre-K students at Corpus Christi School in Mobile, AL



Information booth at Alabama Coastal Birdfest Conservation Expo in Fairhope, AL

2021 brings record highs and lows for manatees

Through November 2021, MSN has received 330 opportunistic manatee sightings in AL waters, breaking last year's record high annual total of 319 sightings. This year, we also saw the largest documented group of manatees in the northern Gulf of Mexico when 26 manatees were observed near Destin, FL in mid-August.



Credit: DISL/MSN Contributor

Also this year, an ongoing Unusual Mortality Event (UME) linked to large-scale seagrass die-offs in southeast Florida has led to more than 1,000 manatee deaths, surpassing the previous annual mortality record set in 2013. MSN's citizen-science network will be an important tool in monitoring long-term effects of the UME on manatee migration and habitat use.

New eco-friendly plush toys!

Support MSN by purchasing one of our new **eco-friendly manatee plush toys!** Each toy is made from recycled fabrics without any plastic parts or tags AND wears an MSN T-shirt!

Visit www.manatee.disl.org to order!



Use this QR code!

