



January 14, 2014

Commissioner Steven Abrams

Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners

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News Release

Manatee Protection Increased

Commissioner Abrams announced today that the Board of County Commissioners has approved an interlocal agreement with the City of Boca Raton for increased law enforcement services in the estuaries during manatee season.

“This program has a proven track record, and local manatee deaths are significantly down because of it,” said Abrams.

Manatees are currently on the endangered species list and are protected under state and federal laws. Unfortunately, a high number of manatee fatalities are caused by boats.

The county has approved \$150,000 for increased law enforcement patrols on county waterways through April 30, 2014. Since its inception in 2007, the program’s 10,000 hours of enhanced manatee patrols have played a significant role in protecting the local manatee population.

The Florida manatee is a large plant-eating aquatic mammal found in shallow, coastal waters, rivers, and canals. They are present in Palm Beach County year-round but in much larger numbers during manatee season which is from November through April when they gather in higher numbers. The average adult manatee is about 10 feet long and weighs between 800 and 1,200 pounds.

Popular manatee feeding locations in Palm Beach County are seagrass beds found in shallow coastal waters. These include Lake Wyman, Lantana/Boynton area, Jupiter Sound, MacArthur Beach State Park and the Loxahatchee River.