

Palm Beach County 2017-2018 Manatee Season

Summary:

Palm Beach County's (County) manatee season ended on March 31st. During this manatee season (November 15, 2017 to March 31, 2018), the County's Manatee Law Enforcement Program (MLE Program) provided funding for an additional **1,635** hours of on-water law enforcement throughout the County's waterways. The MLE Program has produced impressive results for the eleventh year in the row. This manatee season, nine local law enforcement agencies participated in the MLE Program: Tequesta, Jupiter, North Palm Beach, Riviera Beach, West Palm Beach, Lantana, Boynton Beach, Boca Raton and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. Together these law enforcement agencies made **989** educational contacts, and issued **538** manatee zone warnings and **87** manatee zone citations. Since its inception in 2007, the MLE Program has produced over **19,211** hours of enhanced patrols, **23,693** educational contacts, **6,378** manatee zone warnings and **1,594** manatee zone citations. Boaters receiving Manatee Speed Zone citations were ticketed up to \$90 while boaters receiving Manatee Warnings were educated about posted slow speed zones and cautioned to be aware of manatees present throughout the County's waterways. Unfortunately despite these efforts, **three** manatee watercraft related mortalities were reported in the County during this past season, in comparison with two watercraft mortalities reported for the 2016-2017 manatee season. These losses are a reminder to the boating public of the need to watch for manatees and obey boating safety zones and manatee speed zones. It also highlights the importance of continuing on the water speed zone enforcement, public education and outreach efforts through the County's MLE Program. The increased law enforcement presence during manatee season improves speed zone compliance and reduces risks to manatees and boaters alike. To report a sick or distressed manatee, call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 1-888-404-FWCC (3922) or text to: Tip@MyFWC.com



Picture 1. Officer Pike with the Village of Tequesta Police Department conducting a boater education and safety stop.

Additional Information for the County's Manatee Law Enforcement Program, Manatee Education and Protection Efforts during the 2017-2018 Manatee Season

As part of the County's Manatee Law Enforcement Program, our local law enforcement partners assist with manatee protection, boater education and safety, and speed zone enforcement during manatee season. Law enforcement officers educate the boating public on the importance of sharing our waterways with manatees and obeying the posted speed zones for the areas they are traveling through, especially during manatee season when there are more manatees present in the County as they move south for the winter and back up north at the end of March. As part of the educational outreach, officers instruct boaters to obey the posted speed zones, and hand out a two page laminated information card with tips on how to protect Florida's manatees. Tips include slowing down, looking out for manatees, and wearing polarized sunglasses while operating a boat so you can better see objects under the water's surface.

ERM staff worked with our contracted law enforcement agencies to re-allocate enhanced manatee patrol funding to maintain a strong law enforcement presence within the County's waterways during manatee season. Three agencies relinquished funds in January after evaluating their current and estimated spending projections, while another three agencies were awarded these additional funds totaling \$28,412.50 (18.9% of total funding) after committing to additional manatee patrol hours on the water. The re-allocation of available funding to participating agencies resulted in 95% of available funding being utilized this past manatee season, with a total of **\$143,112** out of the \$150,000 utilized for enhanced manatee law enforcement.

Tequesta and Boynton Beach Police Departments (PD) had the most hours on the water with 336 hrs and 307 hrs, respectively. Tequesta PD also issued the most Written Warnings to boaters, totaling 336 and including 205 Manatee Warnings. Boynton Beach PD issued the most Citations with 41 and including 36 Manatee Citations given to boaters that violated posted slow speed zones. Tequesta PD also had the most educational contacts with 246 interactions, followed by Boca Raton PD with 193 educational contacts and Boynton Beach PD with 169 educational contacts.

Overall the top five agencies in terms of total boater contacts and stops, as determined by the number of total citations, total warnings and educational contacts reported per hours on the water, were Boca Raton, PBSO, Tequesta, Riviera Beach and Boynton Beach PD's with rates of 1.6, 1.6, 1.4, 1.1 and 0.9 stops per hour, respectively. Complete season statistics are included as Tables 1-4 and Figures 14 at the end of this summary report.

As part of the enhanced manatee law enforcement patrols two of our partners identified missing Manatee Zone and Slow Speed signage which was reported to Florida Fish and Wildlife

Conservation Commission's, Boating and Waterways Section to be replaced by the State's Marker On-Call Program.

County staff participated in three ride-alongs during this manatee season with our partner law enforcement agencies (Tequesta, Riviera Beach and Boynton Beach PD's) to see firsthand the efforts involved in educating the public and enforcing existing slow speed zones throughout the County's waterways.

As part of ERM's outreach and education efforts, Operation Mermaid, a media advisory/press conference took place January 17, 2018, at Florida Power and Light's (FPL) Manatee Lagoon in Riviera Beach. Staff provided information to the public on manatee season and law enforcement efforts in the County aimed at protecting manatees and enforcing existing speed zones throughout our waterways. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Mammal Rescue along with law enforcement officers from Riviera Beach and West Palm Beach Police Departments participated in the event; several media outlets covered the media advisory getting the information to the community via local news and radio. County staff also participated as a guest speaker at FPL Manatee Lagoon in March and gave a presentation about manatees in the Lake Worth Lagoon which highlighted the County's manatee protection efforts and Manatee Law Enforcement Program.

County staff assisted FWC with a manatee stranded in shallow water along the shoreline within the Town of Hypoluxo. After a health assessment was conducted and the manatee was tagged by FWC personnel, local neighbors, volunteers, law enforcement officers from Lantana and Boynton Beach PD, and County staff safely moved the manatee to deeper waters enabling the manatee to swim away.

ERM is currently renewing our manatee law enforcement agreements with ten local agencies that have participated in the program throughout the years. These new agreements will ensure the continued protection of manatees and enforcement of waterway speed zones in the County for the next five manatee seasons, beginning in November 2018 and running through March 2023. ERM appreciates the efforts of all partners and looks forward to continued successful efforts in protecting this valuable resource.

Table 1. Manatee Law Enforcement Program 2017-2018 Season Totals

	Total Manatee Citations	Total Manatee Warnings	Total Educational Contacts	Hours on the Water	Rate of Citations, Warnings and Education Contacts per Hours on the Water
Tequesta	4	205	246	336	1.4
Jupiter	0	8	23	121	0.3
North PB	10	4	48	171	0.4
WPB	2	70	72	171	0.8
Riviera Beach	20	55	133	185	1.1
Lantana	0	39	43	126	0.7
Boynton Beach	36	78	169	307	0.9
Boca Raton	10	66	193	168	1.6
PBSO	5	13	62	50	1.6
Totals	87	538	989	1,635	

Table 2. Summary of Manatee Law Enforcement Program from 2007 to 2018

Manatee Season	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Total
Educational Contacts	789	2,321	3,276	4,868	3,341	2,226	2,150	1,244	1,464	1,025	989	23,693
Total Citations	255	370	239	292	232	227	183	147	125	125	104	2,299
Manatee Zone Citations	153	215	151	178	137	202	152	118	100	101	87	1,594
Total Written Warnings	293	1,152	815	1,409	1,002	591	931	621	670	698	762	8,944
Manatee Zone Warnings	165	712	872	1,589	649	283	467	349	362	392	538	6,378
TOTAL HOURS	1,000	2,179	2,341	2,193	1,669	1,604	1,717	1,643	1,657	1,573	1,635	19,211

Note: Variations in numbers throughout the years is dependent on the number of law enforcement agencies participating, rate per hour for on the water law enforcement services and differences in total funding allocated to the Manatee Law Enforcement Program each year.

Table 3. Manatee Deaths reported in the County during the 2017-2018 Manatee Season

Cause of Death	Month	Location	Sex	Size (ft)
Watercraft	January	LWL-Boynton Beach	M	7.7
Watercraft	January	ICW-Delray Beach	F	7.6
Watercraft	February	LWL-Lantana	M	10.2
Cold Stress	January	LWL-Palm Beach Shores	F	9.8
Other Human Related	January	LWL-North Palm Beach	M	9.9
Perinatal	March	ICW-Highland Beach	F	4.7
Undetermined Other	December	Atlantic Ocean-Riviera Beach	F	11.4

Table 4. Manatee Deaths reported in the County during the 2016-2017 Manatee Season

Cause of Death	Month	Location	Sex	Size (ft)
Verified Not Recovered	January	Atlantic Ocean-Riviera Beach	U	6.9
Watercraft	February	ICW-Highland Beach	F	10.5
Watercraft	February	Lake Okeechobee-Belle Glade	M	9.3
Undetermined Too Decomposed	February	Atlantic Ocean-Manalapan	M	6.9
Cold Stress	March	Loxahatchee River-Tequesta	F	9.4
Cold Stress	March	Lake Worth Canal-Palm Beach Gardens	F	5.1

Figure 1. 2017-2018 Manatee Season: Total Manatee Citations, Manatee Warnings, Educational Contacts and Hours on the Water

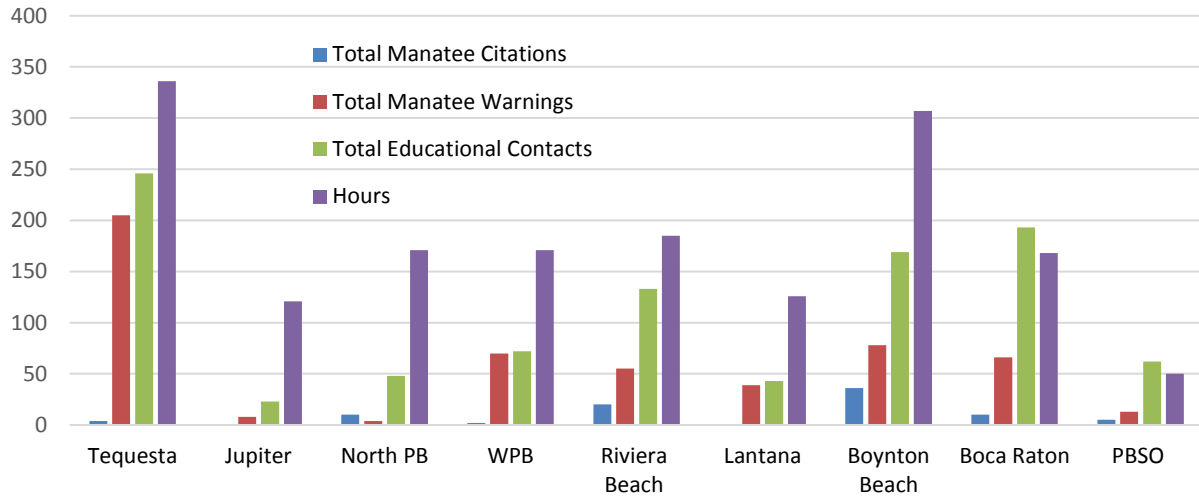
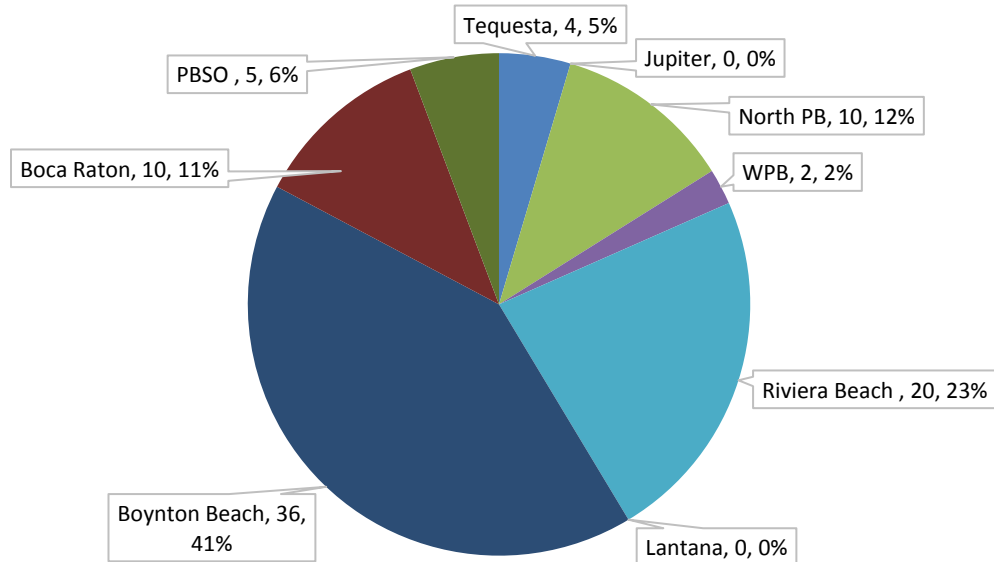
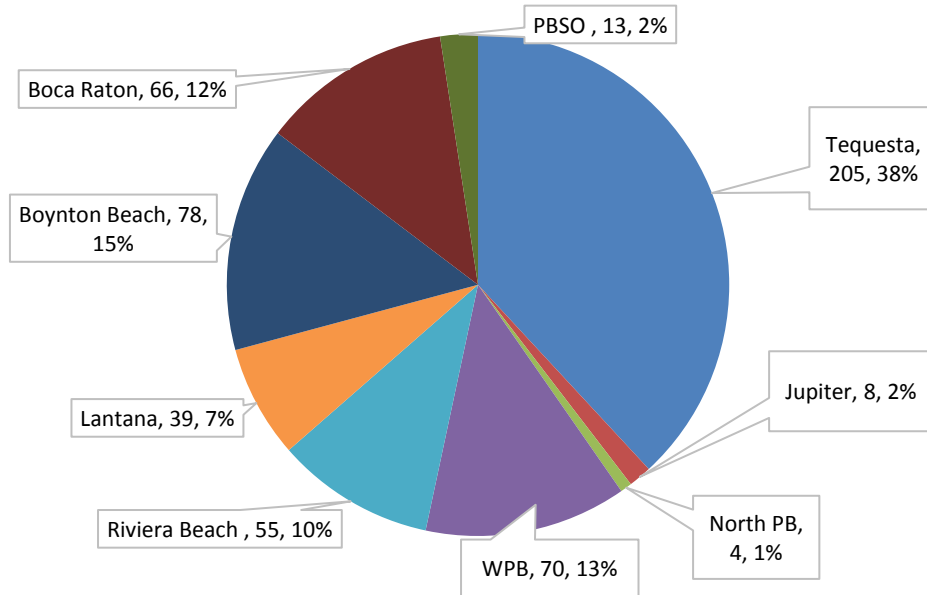


Figure 2. 2017-2018 Manatee Season Number and Percentage of Total Manatee Citations



**Figure 3. 2017-2018 Manatee Season
Number and Percentage of Total Manatee Warnings**



**Figure 4. 2017-2018 Manatee Season
Number and Percentage of Total Hours on the Water**

