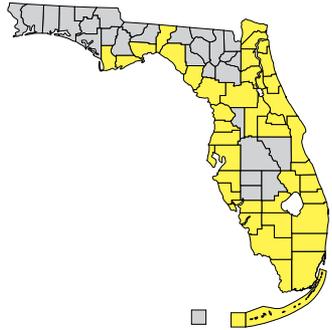


MANATEE

Trichechus manatus

Order:	Sirenia
Family:	Trichechidae
FNAI Ranks:	G2/S2
U.S. Status:	Endangered
FL Status:	Endangered



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Description: A large (182 - 400 lbs. = 400 - 900 kg), gray, nearly hairless, walrus-like aquatic mammal. Tail is broad, rounded, and flattened. Front limbs are flipper-like, with three nails; hind limbs are absent. Head is broad and undifferentiated from body. Upper lip deeply cleft and bearing stiff bristles. Eyes are small. No external ears.

Similar Species: Dolphins (Delphinidae) have dorsal fins and long, cylindrical snouts. Mermaids have long, flowing hair.

Habitat: Coastal waters, bays, rivers, and (occasionally) lakes. Requires warm-water refugia such as springs or cooling effluent during cold weather. Sheltered coves are important for feeding, resting, and calving.

Seasonal Occurrence: Wide-ranging during warm months; restricted to springs and other warm-water areas during the winter.

Florida Distribution: May be found in any coastal or estuarine waters, but most common in peninsular Florida.

Range-wide Distribution: During warm-water periods, coastal waters from Texas to North Carolina, but restricted to Florida during the winter.

MANATEE

Trichechus manatus

Conservation Status: There are no reliable population estimates because of the difficulty in censusing. Recent winter counts at aggregation areas have been in the vicinity of 2,000 individuals. Overall population may be stable, but is threatened by increased boat traffic and other accidents associated with expanding development in Florida. Sanctuaries have been established to protect some wintering and calving areas.

Protection and Management: Reduce boat traffic in waters that manatees use regularly. Provide sanctuaries to prevent accidental collisions and harassment. Implement the manatee protection plan developed by the USGS Caribbean Science Center's Sirenia Project.

Selected References: Brown 1997, Hall 1981, Humphrey (ed.) 1992, Whitaker 1996.