

Manatee Time Line

What are some Important Dates or Notable Information about Manatees in Florida?

1492 – 1785	<u>1903 – 1965</u>	1976 – 1985	1996 - 2005
1824 – 1893	1966 – 1975	1986 – 1995	2006 - Present

References

1903 Still intrigued by these curious animals, many places attempted to maintain manatees in artificial environments. A male manatee was shipped to the New York Zoological Society in 1903 and displayed for five months at the New York Aquarium although its survival is unknown.

1907 – Florida State law (Ch. 370.12) – imposed a fine of \$500 and/or six months imprisonment for killing or molesting a manatee.

1911 – A manatee captured in Texas was shipped to New Orleans for exhibition purposes for approximately six months. No information is known about its survival.

1919 – A fisherman netted a manatee near Wilmington, North Carolina, and displayed it in a lakeside enclosure before it died during a November cold spell.

1926 – Florida Power & Light – Fort Lauderdale power plant begins operation.

1939 – New York Aquarium - Early attempts at maintaining Amazonian manatees in captivity led to the discovery of the temperature range that these manatees preferred -- 78 degrees.

1941 – Manatee skull found in Louisiana and several specimens reported in Texas (information is not available about whether the specimens were from Mexican or Florida stock).

1946 – Florida Power & Light – Riviera power plant begins operation.

1948 – “Snooty” the longest surviving captive-born manatee conceived in the wild was born in Miami. In 1949, Snooty was moved to the South Florida Museum in Bradenton, Florida, and became the mascot of Manatee County. Snooty continues to reside at the museum (still alive in 2008).

Late 1940s and early 1950s – Joseph Curtis Moore started the first scar catalog of manatees in the Miami River at the old power plant.

1953 – Amended 1907 statute to allow capture of manatees for research/education purposes.

1957 – Miami Seaquarium captures its first female manatee (Cleopatra) for display—permit obtained from the Florida State Board of Conservation. Cleo gave birth to a female calf in captivity and adopted an orphaned male. All three later died because of DDT and Chlordane poisoning from mosquito control at the park. The park later obtained Romeo and Juliet for display. (As of 2008, Romeo and Juliet still reside at the park).

1958 – Florida Power & Light – Fort Myers power plant begins operation.

1960 - Florida Power & Light – Port Everglades power plant begins operation. The number of boats registered in Florida – 100,000.

1964 – The Flood Control governing board awarded a three-year contract to Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton, (Palm Beach County) Florida, to study using the manatee to suppress aquatic and bank weed growth in essential inland waterways. Miami Seaquarium was contracted to move five test manatees to a selected site. FAU monitored the animals until vandals shot and killed the sole male manatee and cold stress claimed the remaining females in 1965 and 1966. **The study revealed that manatees had the unique potential to be effective economical control agents of obnoxious aquatic weeds IF the manatees were abundant enough and IF they were maintained in an appropriately controlled environment—although in reality such use is not feasible.** *(The press releases about this research program during the '60s probably contributed to the current myth that people have today which leads them to believe that manatees were brought to Florida to control weeds in the waterways. Manatees were not imported to Florida for this study—they are a native species.)*



Manatee using prehensile lips to grasp food.

1965 – Florida Power & Light Cape Canaveral power plant begins operation.

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