



## Manatee Protection Zones

### What are Manatee Protection Rules?



Manatee protection rules are rules that are established by FWC to restrict the speed and operation of vessels where necessary to protect manatees from harmful collisions with vessels and from harassment. In areas that are especially important to manatees, the rules can prohibit or limit entry into an area as well as restrict what activities can be performed in the area. FWC is authorized to adopt these rules by the Manatee Sanctuary Act, 379.2431(2), Florida Statutes (FS). The rules appear in Chapter 68C-22 of the Florida Administrative Code (FAC). [Click here for maps of these](#)

[areas.](#)

### Local Government Ordinance

Local governments can also establish manatee protection zones through the adoption of a local ordinance. These zones must be approved by FWC before they can take effect, as required by 379.2431(2)(p), FS. Local manatee protection zones cannot include waters within the main marked channel of the Florida Intracoastal Waterway or waters within 100 feet thereof.

### Rationale for Reducing Vessel Speeds

The rationale for reducing vessels speeds to reduce risks to manatees is discussed in a peer-reviewed paper FWC staff authored in 2007: [Calleson, CS, and RK Frohlich, 2007, Slower boat speeds reduce risks to manatees, Endangered Species Research, Vol. 3, pp. 295-304.](#)

### [Ongoing and recent rule making actions.](#)

### How are Manatee Protection Rules Established?

FWC's manatee protection rule making process is described in Rule 68C-22.001, FAC. The process is started when the FWC evaluates all available information and determines that a new or amended rule may be warranted.

**Note:** The initial step of identifying an area to be evaluated can be undertaken internally by FWC or can be done by someone outside of FWC by submitting a request. The December 2007 Manatee Management Plan describes the factors FWC considers when prioritizing areas to be reviewed.

