



# Dauphin Island Sea Lab's MANATEE SIGHTING NETWORK

## Spring/Summer 2019 Newsletter



### New publication tracks manatee use of ship channels

MSN's newest publication in the journal *Frontiers in Marine Science* analyzes how manatees move through nearshore and offshore ship channels in the northern Gulf of Mexico. The publication, "Linking use of ship channels by West Indian manatees (*Trichechus manatus*) to seasonal migration and habitat use," synthesizes 10 years of data collected by MSN researchers from satellite tagged manatees and citizen-sourced sightings.

Our data show that manatees used ship channels as migratory and travel corridors, exposing them to a range of vessel types including recreational boats and large container ships. By understanding manatee movement patterns, we can better aid risk assessment for vessel collisions and other shipping related activities for manatees and other migratory marine species.



Credit: DISL/MSN



Credit: DISL/MSN Contributor

*Manatee nudging a boat motor (left) and next to a seismic vessel in the Gulf of Mexico (right).*

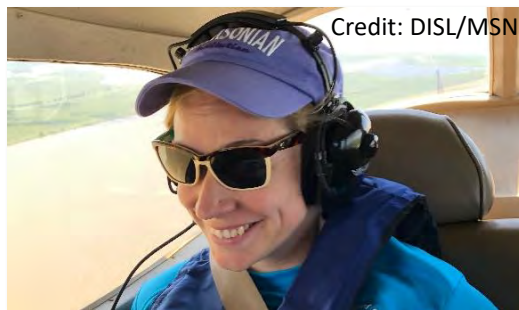
### Highlights

- New publication on manatee ship channel use
- Manatee aerial surveys
- HAZWOPER training
- Spring outreach highlights
- Community running club supports MSN
- How you can help!

### Aerial surveys count manatees in Alabama waters

Throughout 2019, the MSN team is conducting aerial surveys to detect manatees residing in coastal Alabama waters. Funded by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources under the US Fish and Wildlife Service, aerial surveys will be flown nearly year-round to compare seasons of peak and low manatee occurrence in our region.

We plan to compare aerial survey data to opportunistic, publicly reported manatee sightings to estimate the number of manatees occurring in local waters. This information will be useful to guide conservation efforts for manatees throughout their range.



Credit: DISL/MSN



Credit: DISL/MSN

*PhD student Kayla DaCosta (top) sees manatees during aerial surveys (bottom)*



Credit: DISL/MSN Contributor

**It's manatee** sighting season in the northern Gulf of Mexico!

Report all sightings online or by phone!

Manatee.disl.org  
1-866-493-5803

Like! Us on Facebook: Mobile Manatees Sighting Network

## MSN completes HAZWOPER training

This spring, members of the MSN team completed the 24 hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training course at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. This course provides training on identification of hazardous substances and initial spill response, including site safety planning, use of personal protective equipment, and basic decontamination procedures.



Credit: DISL/MSN

*MSN staff practice using personal protective equipment (PPE) during HAZWOPER course.*

This training prepares our team to respond in case of hazardous material contamination, such as oil spills.

## Community running club supports MSN & ALMMSN!

MSN and ALMMSN graciously thank  
**Lower Alabama Fleet Feet Running Club**

for their generous \$2,500 donation to help support our mission to increase capacity for marine mammal stranding response, research, and outreach along the Alabama Gulf coast. We look forward to future partnerships! **THANK YOU!**



Credit: LAFFRC

## Spring outreach highlights

As manatees returned to the northern Gulf of Mexico this spring, the MSN team kept busy with education and outreach events from the Florida panhandle through Mississippi. Outreach opportunities included three boat shows, numerous community presentations, and a river clean-up. See more highlights below from a great outreach season!



Credit: K. Hardman

**Fairhope Elementary School second graders create manatee awareness posters**



Credit: S. Lipscomb

**MSN friends Simone Lipscomb and Linda-Bell Schorer lead a book reading at the History Museum of Mobile**

## Support MSN!

**Did you know MSN is entirely funded by grants and donations?**

We rely on your support to continue our research, education, and outreach efforts for local manatees. You can help by shopping our MSN store or making a tax-deductible donation.

**Donate online at  
[manatee.disl.org!](http://manatee.disl.org)**

