



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Florida Manatee Recovery Plan, 3rd Rev.

Background

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service developed the initial recovery plan for the West Indian manatee in 1980. This plan focused primarily on manatees in Florida, but included Antillean manatees in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In 1986, the Service adopted a separate recovery plan for manatees in Puerto Rico. Then in 1989 the Service revised the original plan to reflect new information and planning needs specifically focused on Florida manatees. This first revision covered a 5-year planning period ending in 1994.

The Service revised and updated the plan again in 1996, which again covered a 5-year planning period ending in 2000. In 1999, the Service initiated the process to revise the plan for a third time. An 18-member recovery team, made up of both public and private groups that have an interest in manatee recovery and/or could be affected by proposed recovery actions, was established to assist the Service in drafting this revision.

Issue

After reviewing and addressing public comments on our two previous drafts, the Service has released the Florida Manatee Recovery Plan, 3rd Revision.

Status

In this revision to the manatee recovery plan, the Service recognizes that significant progress has been made towards recovery and that the species may warrant reclassification to threatened status, if recovery criteria are met and threats are reduced or removed. Additionally, great care has been taken in this revision to provide what the Service believes are "objective measurable criteria" which, when met, would result in a determination that the species be removed from the list of threatened and endangered species. These criteria set benchmarks for standard population demographics such as survival and growth rate, that are a means to evaluate the success of conservation measures to reduce or remove existing and long-term threats to recovery. The recovery criteria specifically relate to the threats identified in the Endangered Species Act's (ESA) five (5) listing factors.

The Service published a Federal Register notice announcing the availability of the Draft of the 3rd Revision of the Florida Manatee Recovery Plan in November 2000. Public comments were sought on this draft for a period of 60 days. On July 10, 2001, an updated Draft was released with a comment period of 30 days. As a result of comments received during these public comment periods in January and August, significant changes were made to the final draft.

Questions?

A copy of the Florida Manatee Recovery Plan, 3rd Revision, is available for download at our web site (<http://northflorida.fws.gov>). You can also find this factsheet and Frequently Asked Questions at the site. If you have specific questions or need special assistance, please contact the USFWS Jacksonville Field Office at 904-232-2580 ext. 109.

Revised: October 30, 2001