

# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

*A Proposal to Reclassify the West Indian Manatee from Endangered to Threatened*

*Open House & Formal Public Hearing*

*February 20, 2016*

*Orlando, FL*



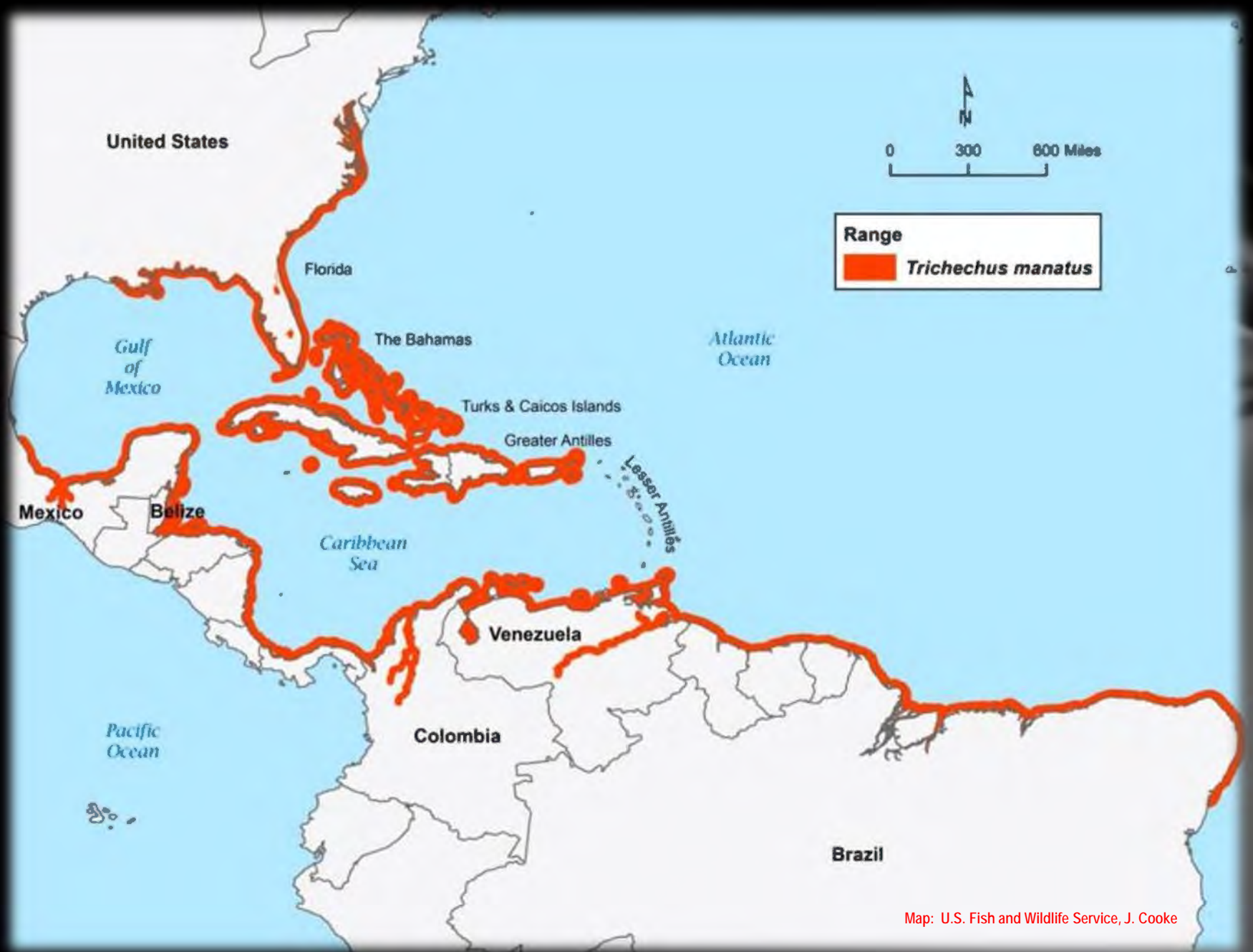
**List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife (from 50 CFR 17.11, January 29, 2016)**

Species		Historic Range	Vertebrate population where endangered or threatened	Status	When listed	Critical habitat	Special rules
Common name	Scientific name						
<b>Mammals</b>							
Manatee, West Indian	<i>Trichechus manatus</i> *	U.S.A. (southeastern), Caribbean Sea, South America	Entire	<b>Endangered</b>	1967 1970	Designated <sup>1</sup>	Adopted <sup>2</sup>

\*Includes both subspecies, the Florida (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*) manatee and the Antillean manatee (*Trichechus manatus manatus*)

<sup>1</sup> Critical habitat was designated in 1976. See 50 CFR 17.95(a) for description.

<sup>2</sup>Manatee refuges and sanctuaries have been designated. See 50 CFR Subpart J 17 for descriptions.



Map: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, J. Cooke

# Status Definitions

An “**Endangered Species**” is a species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

*A species that is in danger of extinction is one that is currently on the brink of extinction in the wild.*

A “**Threatened Species**” is any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

*Not on the brink of extinction but threats remain and must be addressed for full recovery.*

# ESA THREATS EVALUATION

(A) The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range;

(B) Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;

(C) Disease or predation;

(D) The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms;

(E) Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

**Habitat fragmentation**



Original Photo Credit: U.S.F.W.S. J Valade

**Fishing gear entanglements**



Original Photo Credit: FL Fish and Wildlife Comm.

**Loss of warm water habitat**



Original Image Credit: Florida Power and Light Co.

**Watercraft collisions**



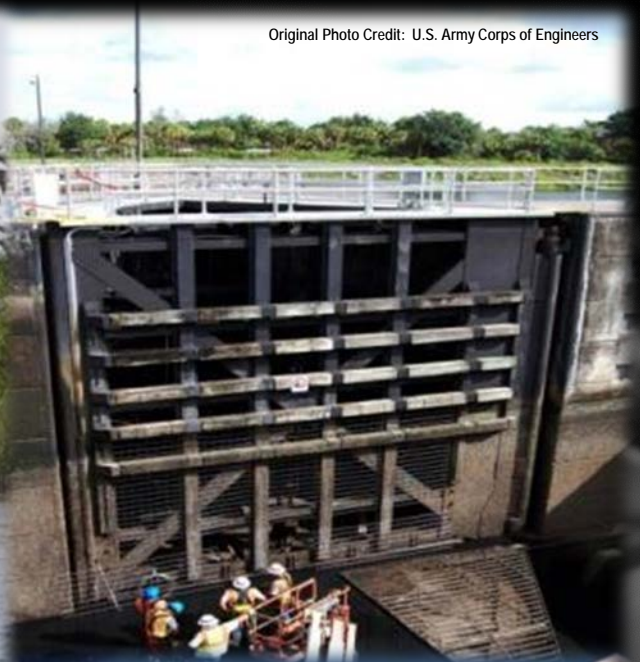
Original Photo Credit: U.S. Geological Survey Sirenia Project



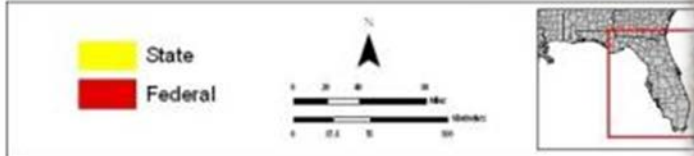
# MANATEE PROTECTION ZONES




Original Photo Credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, J Valade




Original Photo Credit: Crystal River NWR, J Kleen



An aerial photograph showing a vast number of manatees swimming in shallow, greenish water. The manatees appear as dark, elongated shapes scattered across the water's surface. The water has a textured, slightly rippled appearance. The overall scene is a dense gathering of these marine mammals.


**The West Indian manatee population exceeds 13,000 manatees and includes about 6,350 manatees in the southeastern United States and 532 manatees in Puerto Rico.**



A large manatee is the central focus, swimming towards the camera in clear, turquoise water. Its body is covered in a thick layer of green algae. Below it, a large school of small, silvery fish swims in the same direction. The background shows a sandy seabed with some sparse vegetation.

**Models describe  
an Antillean  
population with  
positive growth  
and a Florida  
population with  
a less than 2.5%  
possibility that  
that population  
will fall below  
4,000  
individuals over  
the next 100  
years.**

Original Photo Credit: Crystal River NWR, K Ramos

An underwater photograph showing two manatees swimming in clear, greenish water. The larger manatee is in the foreground, facing the camera, with its head and front flippers visible. A smaller manatee is swimming behind it to the left. The water is bright and clear, with some light reflections on the manatees' bodies.

**Based on our analysis and review of current information, the Service believes the West Indian manatee no longer fits the definition of endangered and as such proposes to change the species' status to threatened.**

# What changes now or if status is changed?

Simply put, regardless of status on the list of threatened and endangered species...**nothing!**

**ALL** federal manatee protection and conservation measures remain unchanged, and additional measures can be added if warranted.

**ALL** manatee protection areas (speeds zones and sanctuaries) remain enforced and compliance mandatory.

Project consultation processes remain unchanged.

Manatee conservation efforts will continue into the foreseeable future.

**Public Open Comment Period  
January 8, 2016 through April 7,  
2016**

**All comments and information received, including those received at tonight's formal hearing, are reviewed and consider by Service staff in making their final decision.**

You may submit information by one of the following methods:

- (1) Electronically:** Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov/>. In the Keyword box, enter Docket Number FWS-R4-ES-2015-0178. Then, in the Search panel on the left side of the screen under the Document Type heading, click on the Proposed Rules link. You may submit a comment by clicking on “Send a Comment or Submission.”
  
- (2) U.S. mail or hand-delivery:** Public Comments Processing, Attn: Docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2015-0178, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Headquarters, MS: BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

**SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED  
ON OR BEFORE APRIL 7, 2016.**