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Summer Means It's Time To Go "Fertilizer-Free For Manatees" To Protect Florida's Waterways

June 4, 2024 | [Press Releases](#)



A manatee on top of algae that is smothering the spring and grasses underneath. ©David Schrichte

Nutrient pollution poses a significant threat to Florida's delicate ecosystem, leading to harmful algal blooms in both coastal and inland waters.

Suggested Social Media Post: Summer is here, and manatees need our help! Go Fertilizer-Free for Manatees to safeguard the delicate ecosystems they live in. Together we can protect manatees and their aquatic habitat for future generations. @savethemanateeclub #FertilizerFreeForManatees #SaveOurSeagrass

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—June 4, 2024

Contact: media@savethemanatee.org, 407-539-0990

LONGWOOD, FL— Summer is here, and Save the Manatee® Club is excited to share our Fertilizer-Free for Manatees™ campaign. The campaign aims to underscore that while addressing the overall problem requires a multifaceted approach, the actions of each Florida resident can make a big difference for the health of our waterways.

Starting June 1 and running through September 30, this initiative aims to encourage Florida residents to take a pledge to be fertilizer-free, thereby reducing their contribution to nutrient pollution in the state's waterways.





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An algae bloom. © Save the Manatee Club

What is Nutrient Pollution?

Nutrient pollution refers to the presence of excess nutrients, primarily nitrogen and phosphorus, in water bodies. These nutrients often come from agricultural runoff, wastewater, and the use of fertilizers on lawns and landscapes. While nutrients are essential for plant growth, an overabundance can lead to significant environmental problems.

How Does Nutrient Pollution Cause Harm?

Nutrient pollution poses a significant threat to Florida's delicate ecosystem, leading to harmful algal blooms (HABs) in both coastal and inland waters. The Indian River Lagoon, a critical habitat for manatees, has been particularly affected, with devastating algal blooms causing the loss of native seagrass. Seagrass is essential for manatees, as it is their primary food source. When seagrass is lost, manatees are at risk of starvation. Tragically, this has resulted in the starvation and death of numerous imperiled manatees since 2020.

Furthermore, the occurrence of red tide, a natural phenomenon characterized by the proliferation of toxic algae, can be exacerbated by excessive nitrogen and phosphorus inputs from human sources such as fertilizer and wastewater. Red tide not only affects marine life but can also cause respiratory issues in humans and economic losses for coastal communities.

In pledging to be Fertilizer-Free for Manatees, Floridians commit to:

- Avoid fertilizer use on lawns and landscapes
- Conserve water by irrigating only when necessary
- Keep grass clipping out of streets, waterbodies, and swales
- Learn about Florida-Friendly Landscaping to protect waterway

"Human nutrient pollution from various sources has been a major driver of the harmful algal blooms that have led to a catastrophic number of manatee deaths in recent years," said Patrick Rose, Aquatic Biologist and Executive Director of Save the Manatee Club. "The Fertilizer-Free for Manatees campaign aims to educate the public about how their individual actions, which may seem small, can have a cumulative healing effect on the overall health of our Florida waterways. Together, we can all take steps at home to protect imperiled manatees and their essential habitat."

For more information on the "Fertilizer-Free for Manatees" campaign and how you can get involved, please visit fertilizerfree.org.

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Save the Manatee Club was established in 1981 by the late renowned singer-songwriter, author, and entrepreneur Jimmy Buffett, along with the late former Florida Governor and U.S. Senator Bob Graham. The Club is dedicated to safeguarding manatees and preserving their aquatic habitat. For more information about manatees and the Club's efforts, visit savethemanatee.org or call 1-800-432-JOIN (5646).

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Run, Walk, Paddle, or Ride—Save the Manatee 5K Welcomes Global Participants Virtually

August 7, 2025

Save the Manatee Club is excited to bring the Save the Manatee 5K Run/Walk to Florida and once again to extend the opportunity for virtual participation to manatee lovers from around the world.

Getting Ready For Fun On The Water This Summer? Share the Waterways With Manatees.

May 13, 2025

As we gear up for National Safe Boating Week, keep manatees safe by staying alert, reducing speed in manatee zones, and following boating guidelines.

Manatees Seek Refuge at Blue Spring State Park As Temperatures Drop in Central Florida

January 7, 2025

The public can keep an eye on the action from the comfort of their home via Save the Manatee® Club's above- and underwater webcams, 24/7 at ManaTV.org.

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Connect With Us



Our Mission

Save the Manatee Club's mission is to protect manatees and their aquatic habitat for today and for future generations. We are a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, and our Federal Tax ID is 59-3131709.





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