

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Manatee County Boater's Guide contains maps and information specific to the waterways of Manatee County, emphasizing newly-posted manatee protection and boating speed zones. Many features of interest to boaters and anglers are displayed: locations of boat ramps, marinas, piers, parks and preserves accessible by water, aquatic preserves, watersport recreational areas, artificial reefs, navigational channels, and speed zones. A Resource Directory along with information on marine life and native habitats, boating and angling safety, and ways in which boaters can help protect our local waterways, are also included. This guide should not be used for navigational purposes. Instead, use nautical charts #11400 and #11420, which are available through NOAA.

## BOATER'S GUIDE TO

# Manatee County



Manatee County Government  
Conservation Lands Management Department  
415 10th Street West  
Bradenton, Florida 34205  
941-745-3723

[www.mymanatee.org/conservation.html](http://www.mymanatee.org/conservation.html)

## Welcome to Manatee County



Manatee County is located along the west coast of Florida, south of Tampa Bay, with over 150 miles of coastline and 27 miles of white sand beaches. Mangrove forests, seagrass beds, salt marshes and mud flats are among a few of the important coastal habitats which serve the abundant bird and marine animal populations of the County. Manatee County waters provide excellent recreational boating, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

Fishing has been a major industry in Manatee County for centuries. Today, both commercial and recreational fishing are important economic elements of the region.

Whether visiting or living in Manatee County, you too can make a difference by doing your part in protecting our waterways, through safe and responsible boating and enhanced awareness of the region's precious natural resources.

### Birds of the Bay Area

Some common birds to this region that you might see include the Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Great Egret, White Ibis, Brown Pelican, Osprey, Wood Stork, Roseate Spoonbill, and the endangered Florida Scrub Jay. The maps included in this guide highlight bird viewing opportunities such as bird hot spots, bird rookeries, and bird sanctuaries.

Loss and fragmentation of habitat is a threat to all birds and to all species of animals that inhabit the Gulf Coast Region.

### Birding Tips

- Enjoy viewing bird rookeries from at least 100 yards away. These rookeries harbor nesting colonies and flocks of feeding birds. Boaters and operators of personal watercraft should slow down in order to reduce wakes in these birding areas. Large wakes resulting from higher speeds are responsible for the erosion of bird islands and mangrove areas, and the noise generated from higher speeds are disruptive to wildlife.
- Report injured seabirds that need assistance. Consult the Resource Directory of this guide for contact information.
- Pick up marine debris if you find it and don't discard any fishing line or other trash, which can be lethal to seabirds and other marine life, into the water.
- Remain quiet and move slowly to maximize bird viewing opportunities.



## RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Audubon Coastal Islands Sanctuaries	813-623-6826
FDEP Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve	941-721-2068
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	888-404-3922
Law Enforcement	888-347-4356
Manatee and marine turtle collision hotline; rescue and recovery. Also to report oil spills, fishing violations, boating accidents, and marine mammal injuries or strandings. Information also available on saltwater fishing and shellfish harvesting.	
Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services	850-488-5471
Division of Aquaculture	For more information on shellfish harvesting, <a href="http://www.floridaaquaculture.com">www.floridaaquaculture.com</a>
Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute	727-896-8626
Florida Fishing Licenses	888-347-4356 <a href="http://www.wildlifefl.com">www.wildlifefl.com</a>
Florida Sea Grant Extension	941-722-4524
Manatee County:	
Marine Rescue	941-749-3500
Sheriff's Office	(Emergency) 911 (Report crime or incident) 941-747-3011
Conservation Lands Mgmt. Dept.	941-745-3723
Parks & Recreation Dept.	941-742-5823
Lake Manatee Dam/Water Treatment	941-746-3020
Mote Marine Laboratory	941-388-4441
For assistance with injured marine mammals or sea turtles.	
National Marine Fisheries Service	727-570-5301
Southwest Regional Office, responsible for managing marine fisheries in federal waters.	
NOAA Weather Service Broadcast	813-645-2506
24-hour weather and marine forecast	162.55Kz/VH
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program	941-955-8085
Tampa Bay Estuary Program	813-893-2765
Sea Tow Marine Towing Service	800-473-2869
U.S. Coast Guard Rescue	(Emergency) 911 (Non-emergency) 941-794-1261
For search and rescue assistance VHF Channel 16, Emergency Cell "CG."	
West Coast Inland Navigation District	941-485-9402
For information on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.	
Wildlife Inc.	941-778-6324
For assistance with injured birds.	

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BOAT RAMPS	Address	Open 24 Hours	Useable at all Tides	Boats Over 15'	Restrooms
1 Bishop Harbor	Bishop Harbor Rd., Palmetto	—	—	—	—
2 US Hwy 19 (limited parking)	Off of US Hwy 19, Palmetto	—	—	—	—
3 63rd St. Memorial Park	East end of 63rd St., Holmes Beach	—	—	—	—
4 Kingfish	Manatee Ave. W. (west of Intracoastal), Holmes Beach	•	•	•	•
5 59th St. W./Warners Bayou	5800 Riversview Blvd., Bradenton	•	•	•	•
6 Palmetto	801 Riverside Dr. on Manatee River, Palmetto	•	•	•	•
7 Highland Shores	353 Shore Drive on Manatee River, Ellenton	•	•	•	•
8 State Rd. 64/Bradenton River	Manatee Ave. E. (SR 64) on Bradenton River, Bradenton	•	•	•	•
9 Coquina North	Gulf Dr. S. (SR 789), on Anna Maria Island, Bradenton Beach	•	—	•	•
10 Coquina South	Gulf Dr. S. (SR 789), on Anna Maria Island, Bradenton Beach	•	•	•	•

Clean Marina Designation is given by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to marinas that meet federal and state environmental regulations as well as provide environmental education and services to boaters. For more information visit the Clean Marina website: [www.floridadep.org/law](http://www.floridadep.org/law)

MARINAS	Clean Marina	Fuel Gas/Diesel	Pumpout	Bait	Marker No.	Contact	Address
1 Palm View Marina	—	—	—	—	—	941-729-8384	6817 Bayshore Rd., Palmetto
2 Catcher's Marina	•	•	•	•	53	941-778-1977	5501 Marina Dr., Holmes Beach
3 Tropic Isles Marina	—	•	•	•	—	941-729-8128	509 Marina Dr., Palmetto
4 Cut's Edge Harbor Marina	—	—	—	—	—	941-729-4878	4000 10th St. W., Palmetto
5 Regatta Pointe Marina	•	G D	•	•	19	941-729-6021	1005 Riverside Dr., Palmetto
6 Twin Dolphins Marina	•	G D	•	•	22	941-747-8300	1000 1st Ave. W., Bradenton
7 Bradenton Beach Marina	•	G D	•	•	49	941-778-2288	402 Church Ave., Bradenton Beach
8 Cortez Cove Marina	—	—	—	—	—	941-761-4554	4522 121st St. W., Cortez
9 Cannons Marina	•	G D	•	•	33	941-383-1311	6040 Gulf of Mexico Dr., Longboat Key
10 Sarabay Marina	•	G D	•	•	—	941-355-2781	7150 N. Tamiami Trail, Bradenton

AUDUBON BIRD SANCTUARIES	Address
1 Nina Griffiths Washburn	I-275, Terra Ceia
2 Terra Ceia Little Bird Key	Terra Ceia Rd. & Bayshore Rd., Terra Ceia
3 Dot Dash Bird Nesting Colony	5801 17th St. W., Palmetto
4 Cortez Key	Terminus of 75th St. W., Bradenton
5 Town Island	17th Ave. & 99th St. W., Bradenton
6 Whale Key	Terminus of Manatee Ave., Bradenton
7 Bowlees Creek Bird Island	Southwest side of Anna Maria Bridge
8 Coquina Beach	Gulf Dr. S. (SR 789), Bradenton Beach
9 Leffis Key Preserve	East side of Gulf Dr. north of Coquina Bayside Park, Bradenton Beach
10 Joan M. Durante Park	5550 Gulf of Mexico Dr., Longboat Key

PARKS/PRESERVES	Address
1 Skyway Fishing Pier State Park (South Skyway Fishing Pier)	I-275, Terra Ceia
2 Terra Ceia Preserve State Park/Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve	Terra Ceia Rd. & Bayshore Rd., Terra Ceia
3 Emerson Point Preserve	5801 17th St. W., Palmetto
4 De Soto National Memorial & Riverview Pointe Preserve	Terminus of 75th St. W., Bradenton
5 Robinson Preserve	17th Ave. & 99th St. W., Bradenton
6 Manatee Beach	Terminus of Manatee Ave., Bradenton
7 Neal Preserve	Southwest side of Anna Maria Bridge
8 Coquina Beach	Gulf Dr. S. (SR 789), Bradenton Beach
9 Leffis Key Preserve	East side of Gulf Dr. north of Coquina Bayside Park, Bradenton Beach
10 Joan M. Durante Park	5550 Gulf of Mexico Dr., Longboat Key

FISHING PIERS/POINTS OF INTEREST	Address
1 Skyway Fishing Pier State Park (South Skyway Fishing Pier)	I-275, Terra Ceia
2 Anna Maria City Pier	Terminus of Pine Ave. & Bay Blvd., Anna Maria
3 Green Bridge Pier	US 41, Palmetto
4 Cortez Fishing Village	46th Ave. W., Cortez
5 Bradenton Beach Pier	200 Bridge St., Bradenton Beach

ARTIFICIAL REEFS	Depth	Latitude	Longitude
1 Bulkhead Reef	15'	27° 33.19'N	82° 42.37'W
2 Southeast Tampa Bay Reef	14'	27° 32.90'N	82° 40.30'W
3 Seven Mile North Reef	40'-41'	27° 32.39'N	82° 52.70'W
4 Emerson Point Reef	12'-16'	27° 31.84'N	82° 38.77'W
5 Three Mile North Reef	30'	27° 29.99'N	82° 47.00'W
6 One Mile Reef	20'	27° 29.41'N	82° 44.99'W
7 Bradenton Beach Pier Reef	4'-10'	27° 27.99'N	82° 41.65'W
8 Coquina Near Shore Reef	8'-15'	27° 26.99'N	82° 41.83'W
9 Seven Mile South Reef	40'-42'	27° 26.59'N	82° 49.20'W
10 Three Mile South Reef	30'-31'	27° 26.56'N	82° 44.85'W
11 Bayshore North Reef	10'	27° 24.50'N	82° 36.10'W
12 Bayshore South Reef	10'-11'	27° 23.90'N	82° 35.60'W
13 Whale Key Reef	10'	27° 23.50'N	82° 36.25'W



### FISHING THE SEAGRASS FLATS

- Do not operate your boat in areas that are too shallow for your equipment.
- Use nautical charts and tide tables to plan your course.
- Never cut through seagrass beds with a propeller.
- Watch your prop wash for mud or plant life which may indicate you are too shallow. Remember prop scars take years to recover.
- Pole or use a trolling motor when traveling across or fishing on the flats. Quiet fisherman catch more fish.
- If you run aground, turn off your engine! Raise the motor and push or pole your way to deeper water. If necessary, wait for high tide to move your boat.
- Do not crowd another boat. If you see another boat fishing on the flats, do not approach unless beckoned.
- Stirred-up sediments are harmful to seafife. Always keep at least 12 inches of water under your propeller.

**Special Regulated Watersport Areas**  
The County's Manatee Protection Ordinance designates Warners Bayou East and West as slow speed/minimum wake zones, but under certain restrictions provides for the operation of vessels at higher speeds when engaged in watersports, if the vessel operator and vessel are permitted through the County. Please contact the Conservation Lands Management Department at 941-745-3723 to obtain information on the County's permitting program.

### Bird Sanctuaries/Beach Nesting Birds

- The Audubon of Florida recommends the following to help nesting and migrating birds found in bird sanctuaries or other nesting locations:
  - Always comply with signs and posted areas on nesting islands.
  - Never let dogs or children run through a colony of nesting birds.
  - Birds know dogs are effective predators and are highly disturbed by them.
  - On beaches, stay out of posted bird nesting areas. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) officers will post and "string fence" active nesting colonies. Beach-nesting birds, including state-listed Least Terns, Black Skimmers, and American Oystercatchers, choose sandy beaches as nesting sites in spring and summer.
  - Between April and August, gulls, terns, and skimmers may nest on unmarked beach areas. If you notice birds circling and calling over your head, you may be in a nesting colony. The nests, eggs, and even the chicks will be highly camouflaged, placed in shallow hollows or "scraps" in the sand. Watch where you step, leave quietly, and enjoy the spectacle from a distance. Contact FWC at 863-648-3205 or Audubon's Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries at 813-623-6826 to report nesting colony locations that have not yet been posted.
  - Birds resting and feeding on sandbars and mudflats should not be disturbed. Migrating birds depend on our area's resources to provide critical food and rest stops during their long-distance trips between nesting sites in the far north and wintering locations in South America. Disturbance of birds on sandbars can interfere with normal feeding and resting behavior, reducing weight gain and the endurance needed for long journeys.
  - Important bird nesting colonies are shown in this guide.



**DIVER DOWN FLAG**  
This flag indicates divers in the water. Boaters in the vicinity of a vessel displaying the diver down flag must give 100' clearance inshore or 300' clearance in the open waters, or drop to idle speed within these distances. A flag displayed on a vessel must be at least 20" by 24", and be displayed for 360° visibility. Flags attached to a float may be 12" by 12". A stiffener is also required to keep the flag unfurled.

LEGEND
Intracoastal Waterway
Intracoastal Waterway - 25 mph
Regulated Channel - 25 mph
Regulated Corridor - 25 mph
Regulated Area - 25 mph
Slow Speed/Minimum Wake Zone
Idle Speed/No Wake Zone
Historical Recreation Area - areas historically used for watersports
Manatee Key Security Zone - entry by permit only
Internal Combustion Engine Exclusion Zone
Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve Boundary
Special Regulated Watersport Area - by permit only
Seagrass
Artificial Reef
Marina
Boat Ramp
Draw Bridge
Point of Interest
Park/Preserve
Swim Area - no vessel entry
Bird Sanctuary
Bird Viewing
Exit Number

**BRIDGES**  
Bridge tenders can be contacted on channel 9 of your marine radio. In an emergency, or in the event you are unable to contact the bridge tender by radio, the emergency toll free number is 866-335-9696.

**BRIDGE OPENINGS**  
**Anna Maria and Cortez Bridges:**  
May 16 - Jan. 14: opens on the hour and 20 and 40 minutes past the hour from 7am to 6pm daily and on demand between 6pm and 7am.  
Jan. 15 - May 15: opens on the hour and half hour from 6am to 7pm.  
**Longboat Pass Bridge:** opens on demand.

This chart is not intended for navigational use. For navigation, see N.O.A.A. charts #11400-#11420. Use caution: Speed zones depicted on this map are accurate at the time of printing. Please look for and obey all marked speed zones and informational signs.

### Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve

Terra Ceia Bay has been designated as one of Florida's 42 Aquatic Preserves. These exceptional estuaries and state-owned submerged lands were set aside by the Legislature to be preserved in their essentially natural or existing condition. Seagrass, mangroves, and salt marshes are biologically productive habitats that benefit from this designation. The Aquatic Preserves support a great diversity of fish, shellfish, birds, reptiles, and mammals, and are protected through resource management, research, monitoring, and education. Only through careful management can these resources be preserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

Watch for the posting of a new slow speed/minimum wake zone and obey all regulatory signs.

### SAFETY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

- The following equipment is required on recreational boats:
- **Personal Flotation Device (PFD)** - must be available for every person on board. Children under 6 years of age are required by Florida law to wear a life jacket on boats less than 26 feet long. Federal law requires persons under the age of 13 to wear a life jacket when more than 9 miles off the Gulf coast, except when below deck or in an enclosed cabin.
  - **Fire Extinguisher** - is required on motorboats with built in gas tanks or if constructed in a way that will allow fumes to accumulate. Always keep your fire extinguisher fully charged.
  - **Sound Signaling Device** - Vessels under 39 feet must carry a whistle, horn or other attention getting device. Boats over 39 feet require both a whistle and a bell.
  - **Visual Distress Signals** - Motorboats operating in coastal waters are required to have appropriate visual distress signals. For more information refer to [www.myfwc.com](http://www.myfwc.com).

\*\*The operator of a boat (owned, rented, or borrowed) is responsible for having ALL the required equipment onboard and in good working condition. Different sized vessels may require additional safety equipment.

Contact the FWC Boating and Watersways Section at 850-488-5600 or go to [www.myfwc.com/boating](http://www.myfwc.com/boating) for more information.

### BOATER'S TIPS

- Take a boating education course.
- Call 800-336-2686 or log on to [www.myfwc.com/boating](http://www.myfwc.com/boating)
- Learn and observe the rules of the waterway - remember "red, right, return" when considering channel markers.
- Obey all navigational warnings such as slow- and idle-speed zones.
- Always pay close attention to what's going on around your boat.
- Wear your life jacket.
- Stay sober.
- Know how to swim.
- Know the limits of your boat and your boating abilities.
- Keep your boat in good repair.
- Tell others where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Be aware of changing weather conditions.
- Respect the rights of others.
- Check all boat equipment before each trip.
- Don't litter, properly dispose of all trash.