

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION



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IMPERILED SPECIES MANAGEMENT SECTION
(850) 922-4330 FAX (850) 922-4338

January 19, 2007

Mr. David Childs
Hopping Green & Sams
123 South Calhoun Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Dear Mr. Childs:

This is in response to your letter of January 3, 2007, in which you ask three questions regarding issues related to personal watercraft (PWC) and how they are affected by manatee protection rules established by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Each of your questions is addressed below.

Question 1: Whether FWC has any records or verified documentation in its possession of a PWC causing a manatee death or injury

Response: We do not currently have any documentation in either the manatee mortality database or the rescue database of any manatee death or injury resulting from a collision with a PWC. Mignucci et al. (2000) report manatee mortality related to PWC-collision in Puerto Rico, but no specific details are provided (*Manatee Mortality in Puerto Rico*, in *Environmental Management* 25(2): 189-198. "...*Watercraft collisions included both power boats and jetskis. Jet-ski caused mortalities were determined by a combination of examining the head trauma, the history of the case, and circumstantial evidence....*").

Question 2: Whether FWC distinguishes between PWC and other vessels with respect to the establishment of boating speed zones designed to protect imperiled species or otherwise enforces different speed limits on PWC than other vessels in such zones

Response: No. All FWC manatee protection boating speed rules apply to all motorboats regardless of vessel size or type.

Question 3: Whether FWC, in its management of imperiled species, enforces any regulations that explicitly distinguish PWC from other vessels and, if any such regulations exist, the rationale for such disparate treatment

Response: No FWC regulations explicitly distinguish PWC from other vessels.

If you have any questions or comments, please call me at 922-4330.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Kipp Frohlich".

R. Kipp Frohlich
Section Leader
Imperiled Species Management