



Manatee Insanity: Inside the War over Florida's Most Famous Endangered Species (Florida History and Culture)

Craig Pittman

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Loveable or loathed? Poster child for conservation efforts or impediment to development? Nuisance or in need of protection? For the past two decades, the quiet manatee has been a flash point of frequent environmental debates.

Included on the very first endangered species list issued in 1967, the docile creatures have stirred curiosity and passions for more than a hundred years. They are Florida's most famous endangered species, as well as its most controversial. Manatees appear on hundreds of license plates, attract hordes of tourists, and expose the uneasy relationships between science and the law and between freedom and responsibility like no other animal.

As passions have flared and resentments have grown, the battle over manatee protection has evolved into a war, and no reporter has followed the story more closely than Craig Pittman. He's flown with scientists trying to count manatees from overhead. He's been on the water with the leader of the biggest pro-boater group. He's observed biologists dissecting the animals and politicians discussing their fate.

Manatee Insanity provides the first in-depth history of the attempts to provide legal protection for the manatee. Along the way, Pittman takes a close look at the major and minor players in the dispute, from Jacques-Yves Cousteau to Jeb Bush, from Jimmy Buffett to O. J. Simpson, from a popular children's book author to a federal lawman who dressed in a gorilla suit for the ultimate undercover assignment.

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